

THE

# PHALERIST

THE JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
PHALERISTICS ASSOCIATION

VOL. 1 - ISSUE #2  
APR-JUN 2023





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## PERSONNEL

President: Elie Ghossoub  
president@phaleristics.org

Director of Operations: David Devine  
operations@phaleristics.org

Director of Advertising: Erik Müller  
advertising@phaleristics.org

Directors  
Tang Si  
si.tang@phaleristics.org

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internationalrelations@phaleristics.org

Forum Moderators  
Antonio Prieto Barrio

Jerome Hoffart  
jerome.hoffart@phaleristics.org

Secretary: Michael B. Riley  
secretary@phaleristics.org

The Phalerist Editor-in-Chief: Keith Emroll  
editor@phaleristics.org

Jovan Mara  
Lt. Cmdr. Shannon P. Reck  
Hendrik Meersschaert  
Kyrill Bosch

Matthijs Jansen  
matthijs.jansen@phaleristics.org

Director of Treasury: Munroe Swirsky  
treasurer@phaleristics.org

Webmaster: Megan Robertson  
webmaster@phaleristics.org

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COVER IMAGE: Military Order of Saint Ferdinand - Gold Cross (1815-1920)

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## From the President

Two years of hard work and determination driven by our ambition created IPA. The passion we have for orders and medals, and the love to spread the knowledge to every collector, made us publish JIPA with love.

With this second issue now available to the public, we are looking forward to publishing more issues and having more collectors interacting and writing about medals. The more our community grows, the greater the snowball effect will be and our passion will spread more and more worldwide.

Elie Ghossoub  
President, I.P.A.

## Secretary's Corner

Hello everyone! A lot has been happening. Our website is now live and we are accepting new members. As this was written a week before we went public, we now have 21 members, all part of your leadership team. Since the last issue of The Phalerist, Kyrill Bosch and Jovan Mara have joined our team as Moderators, and Lukasz Gaszewski has joined the Board of Directors. Let's welcome them aboard! I would like to welcome you to the International Phaleristics Association. Please feel free to contact me at: [secretary@phaleristics.org](mailto:secretary@phaleristics.org).

Enjoy your membership!

Michael B. Riley  
Secretary, I.P.A.

## The Medal for the Martyrs

by Maxwell Kalman

The Medal for the Martyrs is a commemorative international decoration (medal) and project to commemorate the international fighters and volunteers with the Kurdish forces that were killed while in Syria, or died as a result of their service in Syria.

The way in which the Kurdish people of Syria commemorate those killed in action is different and somewhat alien to the western families of the international volunteers. In this Syrian Kurdish culture, those who were killed are immortalised as martyrs, a concept not familiar to these families. This medal seeks to bring in element of this Kurdish culture and combine them with something more recognisable, a medal. This allows the families to commemorate their loved ones in a more recognisable way.

### Initial Concept

The initial concept first came about in February 2019 as an idea of SDF and YPG veteran Daniel Burke and myself, who has a background in numismatics. We came up with the idea to use an ISIL 25 fals coin and repurpose it as a medal to commemorate the fallen international fighters and volunteers.

The initial medal construction involved having an actual ISIL 25 fals coin (as opposed to a replica) joined to a suspension bar. This was not able to be done because the disc and suspension bar in modern medal production are made as one, meaning that medal manufacturers refused to make a separate suspension bar and then join it to the coin. Another issue was that not enough coins could be sourced in time to make the right number of medals.

### Project Launch

After consulting with other international veterans and related groups, the design was updated and a social media campaign on both Facebook and Instagram was launched. The official campaign and project launched on the 12th of November 2019, the day after Remembrance Day and Veterans Day, to help raise awareness of the project and of the in-

ternational fighters and volunteers who were lost.

## First Issue

On 31 of January 2020, the first order of medals was placed and put into production. On the 8 of April 2020, it was announced that the first issue of medals had been received and the first few were being sent out. The first two medals were received in 2020 by the families of Australians Reece Harding and Jamie Bright in time for Anzac Day, Australia's national day of remembrance. By 26 of July 2022, all the medals of the first order placed have been sent to the families.

## Award Criteria: Medal

The medal is presented to the families (next of kin) of foreign fighters and volunteers with the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), People's Protection Units (YPG), or Women's Protection Units (YPJ) forces in Syria who were killed while fighting against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or Turkish forces. The families of international fighters and volunteers who, after returning home, died as a direct result of their service (such as in the case of a suicide relating to PTSD), are also eligible to receive a medal.

## Award Criteria: Ribbon Bar

A ribbon bar was not issued with the medal. Instead, a small number were made and presented to those that significantly contributed to the project as a token of gratitude.

## Design

The Medal for the Martyrs is constructed around a replica of a captured bronze 25 fals coin that was made and used by ISIL within territory under their control. The metal disc and suspension bar are made as one from a zinc die cast and plated bronze with a brushed finish applied. A ribbon is threaded through the suspension bar with a brooch attached behind at the top.

The idea to use a captured coin for the medal was inspired by the Australian Sydney Em-

den medal, and the idea to reappropriate the ISIL coin came from the reappropriation of the Nazi Germany 1939 Iron Cross medal's ribbon for the Israeli Fighters Against Nazis Medal.

It was an intentional decision for the medal to replicate an ISIL 25 fals coin, as many of these and other similar coins were taken and confiscated by fighters in areas that were liberated from ISIL. ISIL's name and motto from the obverse side were removed and replaced with the acronyms of the three main Kurdish forces and a motto. This was deliberately done to show the liberation of and destruction of ISIL's so-called "caliphate," as well as symbolising an attack on and eradication of their extremist and harmful ideology.

The medal was manufactured and assembled by Cash's Awards and Promotion Solutions located in Frankston, Australia.

## Obverse

The obverse of the medal is a replica of the obverse side of an ISIL 25 fals coin. The medal reads at the top *YPG SDF YPJ*, representing the three main forces that the volunteers were part of. This top line also replaces the original Arabic on the coin that read "دَوْلَةُ الْإِسْلَامِ" (The Islamic State). The bottom line reads in Kurdish a saying and motto *ŞEHÎD NAMIRIN* (Martyrs Never Die). The motto replaces ISIL's motto that was on the coin "قَوْلُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ" (A caliphate upon prophetic methodology). The area around the text *YPG SDF YPJ* and *ŞEHÎD NAMIRIN* is slightly sunken into the surface of the medal to create the illusion that the new text has been overstruck on the original text, symbolising an eradication of ISIL and other hostile entities. In the centre is the coin's value (25 fals) "٢٥" within a segmented circle. To the centre right is the coin's original weight (15 grams) "١٥ غرام"; and to the centre left is the coin's original metal content "ساحن" (copper). The coin's denomination, weight, and metal composition were kept on the medal to create the illusion that the medal was made using a coin.



## Reverse

The reverse of the medal is a replica of the reverse side of an ISIL 25 fals coin. At the centre is the Islamic calligraphy of a Hadith and below is the Gregorian year in Arabic text of the year that the medal was first issued in “٢٠٢٠” (2020); all surrounded by a pattern of interwoven curved lines. The Hadith reads in Arabic “فَقِصْلًا لِّضِفَاءٍ” “لِقَوْمٍ أَدْعَىٰ”, which translates to in English as “The best charity is the effort of the less wealthy.”

One of the reasons why this Hadith was placed on the coin by ISIL was to use Islamic teachings and beliefs to persuade the people under their control to donate these coins back towards their cause. The main reasons why it was decided to keep it on the medal was that it preaches the importance of charity which can be interpreted to preach how important it was for the recipients to volunteer themselves and ultimately pay the highest price for their acts of charity for the Kurdish, Syrian, and Iraqi peoples.

## Ribbon

The ribbon is 32mm wide. At the centre is a 4mm red stripe flanked on either side by black stripes to symbolise the blood and loss of those that were killed. On either side of the central stripes are two 3mm light brown stripes representing the sandy desert terrain of Syria. On the left is a 5mm yellow stripe flanked on both sides by 2mm green stripes, representing the flag of the YPG. On the right is a 5mm green stripe flanked on both sides by 2mm yellow stripes, representing the flag of the YPJ.

Yellow, red, and green also make up the tricolour Flag of North and East Syria, which is used by the Movement for a Democratic Society, the political coalition that governs the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria also known as Rojava.

## Suspension Bar

On the front facing side of the suspension bar is the boxed in text *ROJAVA*, the Kurdish name of the semi-autonomous region of north-eastern Syria and the main region in which the re-

cipients fought in. Connecting the suspension bar to the disc is a five-pointed star, the same that is used on many Kurdish flags, such as those of the YPG and YPJ. The back side has the laser engraved name of the recipient.

## Recipients

The following is a table detailing all the recipients of the medal (click or tap on each thumbnail to see the details of the table).

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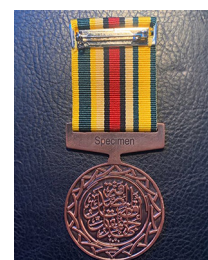
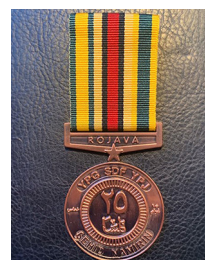
## Images



### Obverse and Reverse of The Medal for the Martyrs



### Obverse and Reverse of The Medal for the Martyrs



### Obverse and Reverse of The Medal for the Martyrs



The Medal for the Martyrs in Presentation Cases



Obverse of The Medal for the Martyrs



Medal next to image of Ollie Hall (R) and Daniel Burke (L).  
Display made by the family of Ollie Hall.



Display made by the family of Luke Rutter



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## Medal for Long Marital Life: The People's Republic of Poland

by Michael B. Riley

The medal for Long Marital Life (Polish: Medal Za Długoletnie Pożycie Małżeńskie) was a medal of the People's Republic of Poland. Established on February 17, 1960, it was awarded to husbands and wives for 50 years of marriage. Additionally, the couple should have at least one child by birth or adoption. The medal is silver. The obverse (Figure 1) is a six-rayed medal with a pink enameled center. In the center are two superimposed roses.



Fig. 1: Obverse of the Medal for Long Marital Life

The reverse (Figure 2) has the letters *PRL* in the center. The words *ZA DLUGOLETNIENIE POZYCIE MALZENSKIE* are in a circle around the *PRL*.



Fig. 2: Reverse of the Medal for Long Marital Life

The ribbon (Figure 3) is 37mm wide and pink with a 4mm white stripe in the center.



Fig. 3: Ribbon for the Medal for Long Marital Life

The medal is still awarded in Polish cities, but the *PRL* has been replaced with *RP* (for Republic of Poland).

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## Digital Media

<http://medals.pl/pl>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal\\_for\\_Long\\_Marital\\_Life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_for_Long_Marital_Life)

## Image

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal\\_for\\_Long\\_Marital\\_Life#/media/File:POL\\_Medal\\_za\\_D%C5%82ugoletnie\\_Po%C5%BCycie\\_Ma%C5%82%C5%BCe%C5%84skie\\_BAR.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_for_Long_Marital_Life#/media/File:POL_Medal_za_D%C5%82ugoletnie_Po%C5%BCycie_Ma%C5%82%C5%BCe%C5%84skie_BAR.svg)



## Camp 337 Coltano Commemorative Medal

by Edward J. Emering

The Coltano Estate is situated in the Tuscany Region of Italy on flat swampy land south of the Northern Italian city of Pisa and the Arno River. Bordered by three mountain peaks and the Ligurian Sea to the west, it functions as a natural antenna and served as the site for one of Guglielmo Marconi's<sup>1</sup> earliest radio stations.

In 1939, Coltano was utilized by the Axis Powers as a center of military communications with its forces in North Africa. The Allies heavily bombed the site in 1944 and it was subsequently evacuated. During the period June through August 1944, the Allies advanced beyond Rome taking Florence and started approaching the Gothic Line (Linea Gotica<sup>2</sup>). This last major Axis defensive line in Italy ran from the coast 30 miles (48km) north of Pisa, along the jagged Apen-

nine mountain chain between Florence and Bologna to the Adriatic coast just south of Rimini.

In 1945, three Allied POW camps were established on the Coltano Estate. They were known collectively as The Disciplinary Training Center (DTC) and individually as Prisoner of War Enclosure (PWE) 336, 337, and 338. The huge Coltano DTC (510m by 700m, slopping from west to east) was the largest POW facility in Italy. It was surrounded by two parallel barbed wire fences, which encapsulated guard towers with spotlights and heavy machine guns. The camp eventually housed more than 38,000<sup>3</sup> German Nazis and Italians sympathetic to Benito Mussolini's Italian Social Republic (RSI). PWE 337 was clearly distinguished by the harsh conditions under which the prisoners were held. There was an issue regarding the applicability of the Geneva Convention to the fate of the RSI POWs and initially the RSI prisoners were not afforded its protections regarding humane treatment.

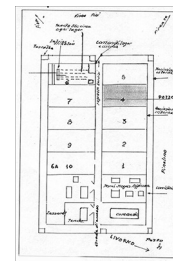


Fig. 1: Camp Coltano Floor Plan

Ezra Pound was interned in Camp Coltano briefly before being extradited to the U.S. Pound (1885-1972) was an American expatriate poet, critic, and intellectual who was a major figure of the Modernist movement in the first half of the 20th century. Pound played a minor role in cultural and propaganda activities for the RSI. On May 3, 1945, he was arrested by Italian partisans and taken to Chiavari<sup>4</sup>, where he was soon released. At his request, he was then brought to the U.S. Command in Lavagna and then on to Genoa. On May 24, 1945, he was transferred from Genoa to Camp Coltano. He spent 25 days in an open cage before being given a tent and it appears he suffered a nervous break-

1 - Marchese Guglielmo Marconi (1874 - 1937) was an Italian inventor, best known for his development of the radiotelegraph system.

2 - Fearing an Allied breakthrough and the subsequent propaganda exploitation, Hitler ordered the name of these defensive positions changed to the Green Line in June 1944.

3 - The actual number has never been confirmed, but based on several sources and a manually inscribed notes, it has been estimated at more than 38,000 prisoners.

4 - Chiavari is a town on the Italian Riviera in the Province of Genoa, Region of Liguria.



down during his confinement at Camp Coltano.

Between May and September 1945, the POW Camps at Coltano were controlled by the 92nd Infantry Division (Colored), a unit of the United States 5th Army. The 92nd was nicknamed the Buffalo Soldiers Division. This segregated unit was the only African American infantry division to see combat in Europe during WWII. Following that brief period, control of the camps was ceded to the Italian authorities.

I have often remarked that every medal tells a story. The Italian Social Republic (RSI) POW Commemorative Medal for Internees of Camp 337 Coltano is no exception.



Fig. 2/3: Camp Coltano Commemorative Medal

The crudely made, rectangular, uniface medal measures 40mm by 30mm. It is made from a base alloy and is bordered by a barbed wire design. To the left (top to bottom) and also bordered by barbed wire are the inscriptions: (1) *P.O.W. 1945*; (2) *211 ALGERI, 339 SAN ROSSORE and 334 SCANDICCI* and (3) the “Gladio” (from the Latin “Gladius” a two-edged Roman broad sword for cutting with a tapered point for stabbing) pointed upright and connected by a laurel wreath. This symbol was widely used as the RSI field cap badge and is used as the central design on the obverse of the RSI Valor Medal. On the right there is the inscription, *CAMPO 337 COLTANO*. The medal is suspended from a solid black ribbon.

“211 Algeri” refers to an Allied operated deten-

5 - Procida is an island off the coast of Campania, Italy about 2 miles southwest of Cape Miseno on the west side of the Gulf of Naples.

6 - Scandicci was located in the barracks of the RSI's Lupi di Toscana Regiment.

7 - Castel Fiorentino is a municipality in the Province of Florence in the Italian Region of Tuscany and lies at the centre of a triangle formed by the important cities of Florence, Siena and Perugia. Situated on a hilltop, 345 meters above sea level, the town overlooks the Val di Chio and the Preappennines.

8 - A military procurator is a special judge empowered to summon witnesses to investigate various matters and make a determination if the matter should proceed to trial.

9 - In 1940 the MVSN was able to muster 340,000 first-line combat troops, providing three divisions (1st, 2nd and 4th - all of which were lost in the North African Campaign). In 1942, a fourth division (“M”) and fifth division *Africa* were formed. Each Division controlled two Legions, plus support formations.

10 - Kapo is a term used for certain prisoners who worked inside POW camps during WWII in various lower administrative positions.

tion facility in Algiers, Algeria, which housed RSI Marshal Rodolfo Graziani. General Graziani (1882-1955) was the only Marshal of the Italian Army to remain loyal to Mussolini following Italy's surrender to the Allies on September 3, 1943. He served as Minister of Defense for the RSI from September 23, 1943 until its end on April 28, 1945. He was transferred to 211 Algeri for his own safety. Originally imprisoned in San Vittore Prison in Milan after the war, it was feared that the partisans would attempt to assassinate or lynch him. He was repatriated to Procida Prison<sup>5</sup> in Italy in 1946. “339 San Rossore” refers to the prison camp at San Marco Rossore in the Pisa region and “334 Scandicci” refers to the first Allied POW Camp<sup>6</sup> located in Tuscany near Florence, Italy.

In 1964, a mass grave containing 350 corpses was located in Castel Fiorentino<sup>7</sup> near the site of the former POW camp at Coltano. An inquiry was opened by military procurator<sup>8</sup> Giovanni Bolla in 1997 to investigate charges leveled against the American troops in the book, *Coltano 1945 - Un Campo di Concentramento Dimenticato* by Pietro Ciabattini.

Pietro Ciabattini was a volunteer in the 97th Legion of the *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale* (MVSN – the Blackshirt Militia)<sup>9</sup>. He later enlisted in the *Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana* (GNR – the RSI Republican National Guard formed by Blackshirts and Carabinieri to serve as military rural police). He was captured by the Americans on April 26, 1945 and initially interned at the Scandicci POW Camp. At Scandicci, the POWs had no way to wash, which made any semblance of hygiene practically non-existent. Food was also scarce. He was subsequently transferred to Camp Coltano. At Coltano, captured Germans, who professed to have seen the error of their former beliefs were employed as “kapos”<sup>10</sup> and allowed to beat Italian POWs with their truncheons. In Coltano, it was forbidden for the POWs to talk to each other. The POWs slept under tents,



but it was forbidden to stand or to leave the tent at night. Any POW who did so could be shot by the sentries. During the day, it was forbidden for the POWs to remain in their tents, even when it was raining. As a result, many POWs died or became ill from sunstrokes or bronchial-pneumonia.

After April 1945, the local Communist partisans from Lagaccio, Italy and the Christian Democrat partisans of Paolo Taviani<sup>11</sup> (the most notorious non-communist partisans) went to the Coltano Camps and allegedly removed (with tacit US Army approval) hundreds of Italian POWs who were summarily executed as revenge for their anti-partisan activities and allegiance to the RSI. Most of these POWs had belonged to the 3rd Italian San Marco Division<sup>12</sup> (RSI Marines) and the 4th Italian Monterosa (Monte Rosa) Division<sup>13</sup> (RSI Alpine Troops). Both units were part of the Lombardia Corps and the Army Group Liguria under command of Marshal Graziani. The Germans did not trust the Italians following the surrender in 1943 and these Divisions were assigned to counter-insurgency (anti-partisan) activities and coastal-defense operations. These two divisions also fought a bitter battle against the US 92nd Infantry Division in the Apennines during the winter of 1944. Their anti-partisan activities and the struggle against the 92nd definitely contributed to the high degree of hostility felt toward these particular RSI prisoners. The unresolved mystery is whether or not these POWs were the source of the bodies unearthed from the mass grave in 1964.

Unfortunately, after such a lengthy period of time, all documents relating to the operation of the Coltano camps had either disappeared or were unavailable. The inquiry produced no conclusive results. This remains just another sad anecdote in the troubled history of WWII Italy and the civil war that raged following the 1943 surrender.

***Special thanks as always to my good friend, Andrea PALEOLOGO, for his invaluable assistance.***



11 - Paolo Taviani (1913-2001) was later credited as founder of the Italian Republic. With the fall of Mussolini in 1943, he became a leader of the local resistance, a member of the regional cell of the National Liberation Committee and subsequently head of the Christian Democratic Party.

12 - Following the Italian surrender in 1943, many San Marco marines fought for the Allies against the Germans, however the 4th (Caorle) Battalion fought for the Germans until the end of the war.

13 - Trained in Germany and formally constituted in Pavia on January 1, 1944, the Monterosa Division was one of the RSI's six divisions.

## The Spanish Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand

by Antonio Prieto Barrio

*Spanish translation by Edward J. Emering*

At the beginning of the 19th century, Spain, allied with the Armies of Portugal and the United Kingdom, was involved in a warlike conflict against the French Empire, which had the goal of installing Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, on the Spanish throne. This war, known as the War of Independence (or the Peninsular War), took place between 1808 and 1814.

At the height of the conflict and with King Fernando VII held captive in France, the Regency of Spain, at the request of the Cadiz Cortes, established a draft decree on May 14, 1811. The decree suppressed all military distinctions, granted either by corps or chiefs, from the time at which the war had begun. This included ribbons and venera (the insignia of an Order, including not only the image of the obverse, but also any crosses, swords, or badges), which had not been approved by the government. At the same time, it created a new military order called *del Merito* (of Merit) with crosses made of silver and gold. Some of the gold crosses had a laurel wreath connecting the arms. Grand Crosses, whose insignia in addition to the crowned venera would include a wide band or sash hanging from the shoulder right to left, and a silver embroidered plaque in the same design as the veneras on its left side. The ribbon was red for all with narrow orange fillets at the edges. The Cross consisted of four equal arms that joined in a circular center (the gold crosses were enameled and the silver ones were engraved) with two crossed sabers. The obverse was inscribed with the circular legend *LA PATRIA RECONOCIDA (THE RECOGNIZED HOMELAND)* and the reverse was inscribed, *AL MERITO MILITAR (TO MILITARY MERIT)*.

With no time for the formalization of concessions or to create the insignias, the *Orden Nacional de San*

*Fernando* (National Order of Sant Ferdinand), a military Order of Merit was created on August 31, 1811. Its first regulation was to reward distinguished actions performed during war by any military man (from soldier to General without distinction).

The name of the Order refers to King Fernando III, the Saint, unifier of the Spanish Kingdoms of Leon and Castile, conqueror of Seville, Almeria, and Cordoba, and founder of Castilla on the Iberian Peninsula.

Silver and gold crosses were established, but their design was modified. The cross had four equal arms, joined in a circular center containing the effigy of Saint Ferdinand. Both the gold and silver versions were engraved. The obverse was engraved with the legend *AL MERITO MILITAR (TO MILITARY MERIT)* and the reverse *LA PATRIA (HOMELAND)*.

For the accreditation of a distinguished action, it was required, in addition to its exceptional nature, that a summary of the information be formally recorded.

For the first distinguished action of a commanding General, he would be awarded the Grand Cross with the crowned *venera*. For a second distinguished action, the use of the sash and a border of laurel around the *venera* would be granted. For a third distinguished action, a lifetime pension of 30,000 reales would be awarded.

The General of a division, for a first distinguished action, would receive the crowned *venera*. For a second, the use of the sash and border of laurel around the *venera*. For a third, a lifetime pension of 15,000 reales would be awarded.

Colonels and other Chiefs of the Corps would be awarded the Gold Cross for the first distinguished action. For a second, a laurel border around the *venera*. For a third, a lifetime pension of 10,000 reales would be awarded.

Captains would receive the same awards as the Chiefs of Corps for the first and second actions. For the third, a lifetime pension of 6,000 reales would be awarded.

Junior officers would receive the same awards for the first, second, and third actions with no other difference other than the lifetime pension of 4,000 reales.

For the first distinguished action, Sergeants would be awarded the Silver Cross. For a second, a laurel border around the *venera*. For the third, a pension of three reales a day would be awarded, and for the fourth, a pension of six reales a day would be awarded. The pension would be continued posthumously to any minor children; or to his spouse until she remarried; or to his parents for life. In addition, those who had performed four distinguished actions would enjoy nonhereditary personal nobility (recognition).

Corporals, soldiers, and drummers were awarded in the same manner as sergeants for the first and second actions. For a third, they would receive a pension of two reales a day and for the fourth, a pension of four reales a day, continued posthumously in the same manner as the pension for Sergeants.

To all those who were not nobles and performed six actions as worthy as those indicated in the regulations, hereditary nobility would be granted. In addition, they were permitted to display a laurel wreath on the front of their homes – or that of their parents – as well as on their coat-of-arms.

When a regiment or battalion executed some distinguished action, the unit could be awarded the distinction of adding the motto of the Order embroidered on its flag, and displaying a *corbata* (streamer) in the same color as the ribbon of the Order.

The Government also formed a Chapter of the Order, composed of individuals who had been awarded Grand Crosses and the Golden Cross. The King would preside over the Chapter as Grand Master. One important mission of this body was to keep an exact record of all the individuals who had received Order, and the distinguished actions for which they were recognized.

On January 19, 1815, following the conclusion of the war, a new regulation was approved. The gold Cross would now consist of four arms enameled in white and joined by a circular center with the

enameled effigy of Saint Ferdinand. Silver Crosses would be engraved. Both would be inscribed around the circular center *AL MERITO MILITAR (TO MILITARY MERIT)* and on the reverse *EL REY Y LA PATRIA (THE KING AND THE HOMELAND)*.

There were three types of Crosses: a simple one as a reward for military services involving some degree of risk; a second, which rewarded heroic actions and which had its arms connected by a laurel wreath; and a third, the Grand Cross, which in addition to the crowned *venera* was worn on a wide sash (from the right shoulder to the left side) with a silver embroidered plaque also worn on the left side. The ribbon for all classes was red with narrow orange fillets at the edges.

In addition to acts of war, it was established that meritorious service in other campaigns; the prosecution of criminals and smugglers; the quelling riots or other risky services could also be rewarded.

Barely half a year after the second regulation, a new one was adopted. The third regulation of July 10, 1815 did not modify the Order's design, but did modify the number of classes.

There would now be four types of crosses: (1) a simple one, as previously described; (2) a second one with a laurel wreath border connecting the arms; (3) a third one similar to the first type, which was displayed in the buttonhole of a jacket, but which also consisted of an embroidered plaque; and (4) the fourth class, which was awarded like the second and included a laureate plaque. There were also Grand Crosses with a sash worn from the right shoulder to the left side. These Grand Crosses used an embroidered plaque insignia on the left side and a *venera* pendant (sash badge) suspended from the sash loop. Both the *venera* and plaque would be laureated. The ribbon was red with narrow orange-colored fillets at the edges.

The first class laureate cross was an award for distinguished and risky military services for officers from second lieutenant to colonel, inclusive, and the second class a reward for heroic military services.

The silver *veneras*, in a manner similar to the first

and second class gold sash badges, were distributed as a prize to the sergeants, corporals, soldiers, and drummers, who exhibited the level of merit required for the Gold Cross. The simple cross with a plaque, or third class, was a prize reserved for the generals and brigadiers, for displaying the same level of merit as already explained. The laureate with a plaque, or fourth class, rewarded the generals and brigadiers for distinguished and heroic military services. A Grand Cross, or fifth class, would be awarded to the generals, who having commanded the King's armies, would have done so in an eminently distinguished manner.

A provision of May 20, 1820 regulations would also establish, among other things, that the first and second class knights would always wear the four-bladed Cross on their left side, like the third and fourth class plaque. The best known insignia of this Order was created, the Cross, which is formed by four swords. This insignia would be suppressed in 1823 and restored by Royal Decree of October 20, 1835 for the first and second class crosses.

Numerous and generous concessions were awarded to the Army, a contingent of the French Army, led by the Duke of Angouleme, which invaded Spain between 1823 and 1828 in order to restore Bourbon Dynasty. Many of the French soldiers obtained provisional authorizations from the Duke through letters of recommendation from Count Guilleminot, General of the Army of the Pyrenees. Thus a paradox was created in that the decoration, originally created to reward actions during the war against the French, could now be awarded years later to the French, who were our prior adversaries. During the three Carlist Wars (1833-1876), but especially during the first one (1833-1840), the Order was granted by both contenders with a certain degree of lavishness on numerous occasions.

The fourth regulation was approved on May 18, 1862. It retained the five classes, established in 1815, although the new versions would not be released until the issuance of the Royal Order of May 5, 1897.

The Royal Order of May 23, 1884 established that the basis of the award, which would be en-

tered on the service records of those who were in possession of the Cross of San Fernando, should be for *valor acreditado* (credited courage). For those, who obtained the Cross with no prior disciplinary actions, the basis for award of the cross would be for *valor heroico o distinguido* (heroic or distinguished courage).

The Law of Bases for the reorganization of the Army of June 29, 1918, changed the purpose of the Order of San Fernando and created the Military Medal to reward distinguished courage, resulting in the elimination of the first and third class Crosses.

The Royal Decree of July 5, 1920 created a new regulation, the fifth, which contained important new features. As has already been indicated, to reward heroic military field services, the simple crosses had been annulled, resulting in the Cross of Saint Ferdinand being awarded in all cases for all military ranks and the Grand Cross awarded to only the Generals and Chiefs of the Armies of Sea and Land.

In this way, the Order was displayed on the flags and corbatas of the units, which had been awarded the plaque. The insignia of the Order (Knight's Grand Crosses and Knight's Cross) would be displayed by the corps and ships which lacked a flag or standard.

The Royal Decree of November 26, 1925 provisionally approved a new regulation, which was the sixth of the Order. The classes and design of the insignia did not change and included the following three classes: the Laureate Cross for all military ranks, the Grand Laureate Cross for Generals-in-Chief of the Land and Sea Armies, and the collective Laureate Cross or unit award.

The Knights of the Order of Saint Ferdinand who were in possession of the crosses of the first and third class, would henceforth wear the same insignia as the other Knight Laureates of the Order.

With the proclamation of the Second Republic during April 1931, the sixth regulation of 1925 would be annulled by decree of July 21, 1931, and effectively caused the regulations approved in 1920 to remain in force.

The Circular Order of November 19, 1931 modified the designs of different military decorations, including those of the Order of Saint Ferdinand. On the reverse side of the planchet, the royal crown would be replaced by the mural crown, and the legend *EL REY Y LA PATRIA (THE KING AND THE HOMELAND)* by *LA PATRIA A SUS HEROES (THE HOMELAND TO ITS HEROES)*. The ribbon drape of the cross and the sashes would now have edges in purple, and previous holders of the crosses must comply with these new modifications.

In mid-July 1936 a civil war began which divided Spain into two camps. On one side was the Republic People's Army and on the other the insurgent National Army. Decree 192/1937, of January 26, 1937, established the National Army's rewards for campaign merits. One of the awards was the Laureate Cross of Saint Ferdinand, which would retain the previous categories, rights, pensions, and prerogatives, as those created by the 1920 regulations.

The Civil War ended on April 1, 1939 and the Law of March 14, 1942 approved the Regulation of Awards of the Army in time of war to reward acts or services. Among others established or approved was the Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand, composed of the Cross Laureate of Saint Ferdinand and the Collective Laureate of Saint Ferdinand.

With specific modifications, the sixth regulation of 1920 would be in force until the approval of the seventh by Royal Decree of June 3, 1978.

The rewards of the Order were now intended to reward heroic courage as a sublime virtue, which with a relevant effort of will and self-denial, induces extraordinary military actions, either individually or collectively, involving imminent risk of one's life and always in the service and benefit of the Homeland. The classes or designs remained unchanged.

Finally, the Royal Decree of July 27, 2001, the eighth and current Regulation of the Royal and Military Order of San Fernando, approved the first Spanish Order of a military nature. Its goals were to honor "*the recognized heroic value and the very distinguished virtues, which along with self-denial, induce one to undertake exceptional*



*or extraordinary actions, individually or collectively, and always in the service and benefit of Spain.”*

Other actions of this nature were to be recognized when they occurred during interventions by the Armed Forces, or when the Armed Forces participate in multinational missions, under the mandate of international organizations or alliances of which Spain is a part.

The King is the Sovereign of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand and its members are Knights and Ladies in any of the categories of Laureate Grand Crosses, Laureate Crosses, and Military Medals. Military units, centers, and organizations whose flags and banners bear the Laureate's corbata or the Military Medal or which have been awarded the Guidon-Ensigns of the Laureates or collective Military Medals are also members of the Order.

To reward heroic courage, the Laureate Cross of Saint Ferdinand, Spain's highest military reward, can be awarded as Grand Laureate Cross, Laureate Cross, or Collective Laureate. To reward highly distinguished valor, the Military Medal can be awarded as both an individual medal or a collective medal.

The Grand Cross Laureate, awarded on an individual basis, can be awarded to general officers when they display the merits and meet the requirements established in the Regulations. The Laureate Cross, awarded on an individual basis, may be awarded to personnel of the Armed Forces, the Civil Guard Corps (Guardia Civil), when carrying out actions of a military nature or to civilian personnel who provide services in support of military actions by virtue of competent order, provided that they carry out such actions, events, or exceptional services as those indicated and comply with all requirements established in the Regulations.

The Collective Laureate may be awarded to units, centers, and agencies of the Armed Forces or the Civil Guard Corps, which collectively carry out actions or provide exceptional services as indicated in the Regulations.

The individual Military Medal can be awarded to

personnel of the Armed Forces or the Civil Guard Corps when carrying out actions of a military nature or to civilian personnel who provide services to an organized military force, provided that they carry out extraordinary actions or services as indicated and comply with the requirements established in the Regulations. The collective Military Medal can be awarded to units, centers, and agencies of the Armed Forces or the Civil Guard Corps, which carry out extraordinary actions or services as those indicated, carried out collectively.

The Grand Cross Laureate consists of the following decorations:

The arms of the cross are made up of four gold swords, joined at the pommel of their handles. The cross will be attached to a laurel wreath, formed by two branches of sinople laurel, fruited with (red) gules, joined at their trunks and tied by a loop of gules (red ribbon).

The display of the cross is mandatory on the military uniform. If you have earned multiple Grand Laureate Crosses, then multiple crosses will be worn, but only a single sash.

The sash, made of gules silk, is joined at its ends with a bow of similar ribbon, from which the venera hangs. The venera consists of the Shield of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand, without royal crown, which was replaced by a crown of laurel, and the obverse inscription *AL VALOR HEROICO (TO THE HEROIC COURAGE)*. The reverse is inscribed *1811* on a gold field and in the azure border *ESPANA A SUS HEROES (SPAIN TO ITS HEROES)*, separated between its beginning and end by a gold cross. The laurel wreath of the venera is fastened to the bow with a barrette and a gold ring. Five millimeter from each edge of the sash is an orange fillet 15mm wide.

The sash is reserved for solemn occasions and for gala occasions on the dress uniform. It is worn from the right shoulder to the left side. The use of the sash when entitled to more than one Laureate Grand Cross is indicated by means of gold (slide over) clasps with the inscribed date and the action of its award posi-

tioned on the vertical section of the sash loop.

The arms of the Laureate Cross are composed of four gold-trimmed gules swords joined at the pommel of their gold hilts. The cross is attached to a laurel wreath, formed by two branches of sinople laurel, fruited with gules, joined at their trunks and tied at the base by a loop of gules.

The display of the cross is mandatory when in uniform. If more than one Laureate Cross has been awarded possession, then both crosses will be worn on the uniform.

The collective Laureate consists of the following decorations:

The Laureate's streamer (*corbata*) is made of silk in the same colors as the sash. It is 80mm wide with a loop of two falls 500mm long and finished with gold fringes. On the first of these falls is embroidered the Laureate Cross and below, in black, the unit, action, and date of the action. The *corbata* is attached to the moharra (spearhead) of the flag or banner, hanging at the height of its center. Additional *corbatas* are added for multiple awards.

The silk Guidon-Ensign of the Laureate is a 560mm square in the same colors as the sash and in proportion to its size. At its center, a cross similar to that of the Laureate Cross will be embroidered on both sides, and below, in black, the identity of the unit, the action, and date of such action. The Guidon-Ensign will be attached to a pole of regulation dimensions for banners. It will have a golden fringe of 60mm. When more than one Collective Laureate is awarded, there will be as many Guidon-Ensigns as awards.

The rectangular silver Laureate plaque, with dimensions proportionate to the place where it is to be displayed, bears a cross similar to that of the Laureate Cross superimposed on its left side in the same enamels and colors. Below engraved in gold and in capital letters, the identification of the unit, center, or military body, as well as the actions, facts, or services, which formed the basis of the award and the date on which this took place. On its right, also in gold, is the inscription *AL VAL-*

*OR HEROICO (TO THE HEROIC COURAGE).*

The individual insignia representative of the collective Laureate consists of a laurel wreath, embroidered in silk or green yarn on the cuff of the uniform. In the center of the wreath is the action for which the award is based and the date on which it occurred in red.

No more than one individual insignia may be displayed in the laurel wreath. Credit for award of multiple collective Laureates is recognized by means of gold bars for each additional award embroidered under the individual insignia. The action which motivated the award and the date on which it occurred will be embroidered in red.

The individual oxidized-iron Military Medal is circular with a rectangular ring at the top and rounded edges. The obverse, concentric to its edge, bears a silver ring. Inside the circle there is a rising sun behind the sea and a standing matron representing Spain offering a laurel wreath in her right hand and holding a shield with a lion's head in her left hand. Outside the circle, between the ring and the edge, there is a border of laurel and oak leave wreaths with two lions and a castle and at the bottom, a placard with the motto *AL VALOR MUY DISTINGUIDO (TO VERY DISTINGUISHED VALOR)*. The reverse, inside the ring, depicts the shield of Spain.

The silk ribbon drape is divided into three parts. The central segment reflects the Spanish national colors and those on either side are white with a yellow edge. The ribbon is 45mm long and fastened by a gold buckle. A rectangular gold metal clasp reflects the date corresponding to the action inscribed in red.

The display of the Military Medal on the uniform is mandatory. It is always displayed in a prominent position among other individual decorations, except those of the Laureate Cross of Saint Ferdinand, which takes precedant. Only one Military Medal may be worn on the uniform. Additional awards are recognized by means of additional rectangular gold metal clasps added to the ribbon drape.

The collective Military Medal includes the Military Medal silk streamer (corbata) in the same colors as the medal's ribbon, 80mm wide, with a loop with two falls of 500mm in length, finished with 50mm gold fringes. The first of the falls includes the trimming (decorative material) of the collective Military Medal, in this case the border made up of a laurel and oak wreaths with two lions and a castle and at the bottom, an embroidered plaque of the Military Medal. The central circle is embroidered in red, with the action and its date in gold, and the unit name below it in black.

The corbata will be attached to the moharra of the flag or banner, hanging over it and at the height of its center. The display of multiple corbatas is required when more than one of them has been awarded.

The Guidon-Ensign of the Military Medal will be formed by two superimposed 560mm square cloths of silk damask in the same colors as the medal ribbon. In the square, the Medal will be embroidered in the center and below, in black (in this order) the unit, the action, and its date. The Guidon-Ensign will be attached to a pole of regulation dimensions for banners. It will have a silver fringe of 60mm.

The Military Medal plaque is made of silver, rectangular in shape and in dimensions proportionate to where it is to be displayed. It bears an oxidized-iron engraving on its left side of the obverse of the Medal in gold. It will also state, in this order, the unit, the action, and its date. On the right side will appear the gold inscription *AL VALOR MUY DISTINGUIDO (TO VERY DISTINGUISHED VALOR)*.

The representative individual insignia of the collective Military Medal consists of the trimming (see above) of the collective Military Medal. The central circle is embroidered in red, with the action and date determined by the royal concession decree in gold.

No more than one individual insignia may be displayed in the described design, accrediting the possession of additional collective Military Medals by gold bars 40mm long and 4mm wide for each additional award; and embroidered separately under the insignia, the action which led to the additional award and the date on which it occurred in red.

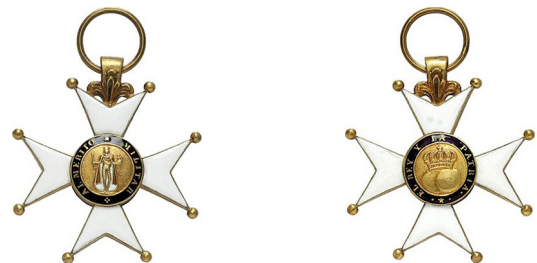
Currently, none of the Knights of the Order are still alive, either as Laureate Crosses of Saint Ferdinand or Military Medals. Does this mean that the Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand Fernando is about to disappear?

No, but It has promoted a review of recently awarded Military Merit Crosses with a red badge for distinguished services performed with courage in order to analyze whether the actions for which they were awarded could be eligible for upgrade to the Order. It has also indicated that all units, which hold a collective decoration of the Laureate Cross or the Military Medal are integral members of the Order. This ensures in any case, the permanence of the Order.

### Annex I. Types of Crosses:



Gold Cross (1811-1815)  
AL MÉRITO MILITAR - LA PATRIA



Gold Cross (1815-1920)  
AL MERITO MILITAR - EL REY LA PATRIA



Silver Cross (1815-1920)  
AL MERITO MILITAR





- # 1. Sash ribbon. # 2. Venera of the Cross of 4th class.  
# 3. Id. 3rd class. # 4. Id. 2nd class. # 5 Id. 1st class. #  
6. Laureate Cross of 2nd class. # 7. Cross of 1st class. #  
8. Reverse of the crosses. # 9. Ribbon. # 10, 11 and 12.

#### Ribbon and Miniature Crosses

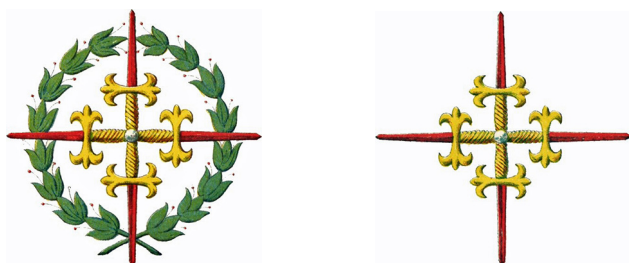
(*Historia de las Órdenes de Caballería y de las Condecoraciones Españolas, 1865*)



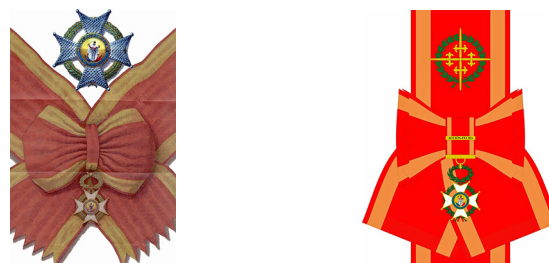
The Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand



Plaques of 4th and 3rd Class



Designs of 1897 Embroidered Crosses  
Laureate and Single



Grand Cross and Insignia of the Royal and Military Order  
of Saint Ferdinand (Rules of 2001)



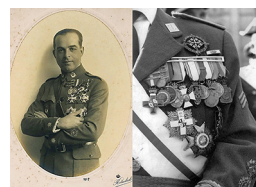
Silver Plaques – 2nd Class and 1st Class Laureates



Silver Veneras



Plaques of 2nd Class Laureate and 1st class



Lieutenant Colonel José Enrique Varela Iglesias (L)  
(Foto Kaulak. Archivo Municipal de Cádiz, fondo Varela, VF 98-9)  
and General of the Guardia Civil Enrique Serra Algarra.  
Uniform Detail (R)

On the Lieutenant Colonel's medal bar: Rif Campaign Medal (with four Wound Crosses), the individual Military Medal, Cross of the Order of San Fernando, Medal of Suffering for the Homeland (with Wound Cross), and Cross of the Order of Military Merit (1st Class) with red badge with three repeat bars. On the cover of the pocket, two Laureate Crosses of San Fernando and below the Cross of the Order of Military Merit (2nd Class) with red badge and Plaque of the Real Maestranza de Caballería de Sevilla. On the left forearm, the Collective Military Medal.

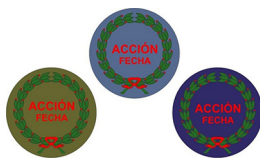
On the General's Uniform: Laureate Cross of San Fernando and Advance on the Scale Bar. Medal bar with: Cross of the Order of Military Merit



(2nd class) with red badge and three repetition bars, Medal of Suffering for the Homeland with three bars and two Wound Crosses, 1936-1939 Campaign Medal (vanguard), Military Medal of Morocco, Cross of the Order of Saint Hermenegildo, Medal of the Russian Campaign, Medal of the proclamation of Alfonso XIII, Peace in Morocco Medal, Africa Medal and Medal of Tribute of the City Councils to Their Majesties. Sash and Plaque of the Grand Cross of the Order of Military Merit with white badge, Plaque of the Order of San Hermenegildo. Embroidered on the lower left sleeve, the Laureate of San Fernando and collective Military Medal, in addition to three wound marks on the upper left sleeve.



Laureate Cross (Rules of 2001)



Collective Laureates (Army, Air Force, and Navy)



Individual Military Medal (Obverse and Reverse) and Collective Military Medal (Individual Insignia)

Table 1: Individual Awards by Class

Silver Cross	641	Simple Crosses 14,416	Total 16,643
Cross of 1st Class	13,368		
Cross of 3rd Class	407		
Laureate Cross of 2nd Class	1,608		
Laureate Cross of 4th Class	171		
Cross of 5th Class or Grand Cross	261	Laureate Crosses 2,227	
Laureate Cross	179		
Laureate Grand Cross	8		
Military Medal	1,767		
Naval Medal	33		
Total	18,443		

Table 2: Simple and laureate crosses of Saint Ferdinand by campaign

Campaign	Simple Crosses					Laureate Crosses			Total
	Silver	1st	3rd	2nd	4th	5th	LC	GLC	
Peninsular War (1808-1814)	5	517	83	30	9	48			692
Independence of Spanish America (1809-1841)		195	11	209	7	18			440
Constitutionalist War (1820-1823)	5	876	43	882	97	46			1,949
Political events (1820-1875)	97	2,462	57	56	12	34			2,718
First Carlist War (1833-1840)	184	3,270	122	184	37	49			3,846
Philippines (1843-1852)		40		1		2			43
Expedition to Portugal (1847)	10	132	18			2			162
Second Carlist War (1847-1849)	8	792	15	10		1			826
Melilla (1848-1849)		18							18
Expedition to the Papal States (1849-1850)		17	1			1			19
Cuba (1850-1851)	76	18		1		1			96
Crimen War (1853-1856)		6							6
Cochinchina (1858-1863)	11	108							119
African War (1859-1860)	206	2,147	28	1		2			2,384
Santo Domingo (1863-1865)		4							4
Great War of Cuba (1868-1878)		19		45					64
Third Carlist War (1872-1876)		29	5	24	1	11			70
Philippines (1887-1898)		30		42		2			74
Melilla (1893-1894)		2		1					3
Little Cuban War (1895-1898)		43	2	31	2				78
Morocco Campaigns (1909-1927)		21		52		1	98	2	174
Revolutionary events in Asturias & Barcelona (1934)							1	2	3
Civil War (1936-1939)							69	4	73
Russia (1941-1943)							8		8
Ifni and Sahara (1958)							2		2
Other	12	2,318	16	6	2	41			2,396
Accidents and fires		25		1			1		27
Other national operations	11	78		3					92
Rest of overseas operations	2	4	1	11	2				52
Permites	14	163	5	18	4				205
Totals	642	13,367	407	1,608	171	261	179	8	16,643

Table 3: Individual Awards to Foreigners

Country	OSF simple	OSF laureated	Military Medal	Totals
Germany	9	3	76	88
Belgium	8	3	1	12
France	793	951	2	1,746
United Kingdom	118	24	—	142
Italy	4	10	110	124
Morocco	—	1	43	44
Poland	28	1	—	29
Portugal	19	7	4	30
Others	4	5	1	10
Totals	978	1,005	237	2,225

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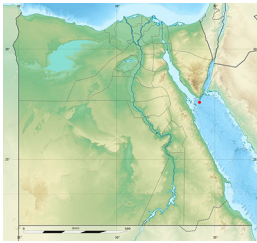


# War of Attrition: The Shadwan Decoration

by Elie Ghossoub

**The War of Attrition**, as named by Egyptian President **Jamal Abdel Nasser**, is also known by the Israelis as The 1000 Days War. This war started on July 1, 1967 and ended on August 7, 1970 by a cease fire. It involved fighting mainly between Israel and Egypt with the support for Egypt coming from Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and their allies.

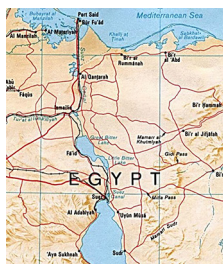
The battlefield was the Sinai Peninsula (approx. area: 60,000 km<sup>2</sup>) which Israel occupied from Egypt during the Suez Crisis, known in Egypt as the *Tripartite Aggression* due to the simultaneous coordinated attack by the UK, France, and Israel of October 1956, and during the Six-Day War of 1967 or the June War, known as the 1967 Arab–Israeli War or Third Arab–Israeli War.



Egypt & Sinai with Shadwan being the red dot

© Wikipedia

**The War of Attrition** is the fourth Arab-Israeli war that lasted for three years and was centered largely on the Suez Canal. The first Arab-Israeli war was the 1948 Palestine War, then the Suez Canal War of 1956, and the third was the Six-Day War of 1967.



The Suez Canal

© Wikipedia

President Gamal Abdel Nasser, on March 8, 1969, initiated the launch of the War of Attrition, by large-scale bombardment along the Suez Canal. Fighting continued until August 1970 and ended with a ceasefire, but the frontiers did not change, with no commitment to serious peace negotiations.

**Shadwan** is a barren rocky island of around 48 kilometers southwest of the Egyptian city of Sharm el-Sheikh on the Sinai Peninsula and 32 kilometers northeast of El Gouna. It is the largest of a group of islands in the mouth of the Gulf of Suez in the northern Red Sea and measures 16 kilometers in length, and between three to five kilometers wide. It was formerly also called **Shaker Island** and features a lighthouse. The island is famous as a tourist site for underwater diving and fishing.



The Island of Shadwan

© Wikipedia

One of the main Israeli raids during the War of Attrition was Operation Rhodes on the Egyptian island of Shadwan on January 22, 1970. The Island was protected by a company of commandos or Thunderbolt Forces (Sa'eka Forces) securing the light house and the radar to secure maritime navigation in the region. In all, approximately one hundred Egyptian soldiers were present on the island, of which 60 were commandos and the rest Egyptian Navy and technical personnel. The attack was carried out by Israeli paratroopers and naval commandos (sea and air) and was met with fierce resistance for 36 hours until the Israeli withdrew from Shadwan. Egypt admitted to 80 soldiers killed, wounded, or missing, whereas Israel claims capturing 62 Egyptian soldiers as prisoners of war.

The decoration was instituted on January 22, 1970 and issued in one class in commemoration of the heroes of the Egyptian Commando and Thunderbolt Forces defending the Shadwan Island from the Israeli invasion. Awarded to all army men, officers and soldiers, who were on the island at

that day and totaling to one hundred. It is a scarce award.

Obverse: A bronze polygonal shape with a maximum diameter of 45mm of dark blue enamel featuring the arm of an Egyptian soldier holding the Egyptian flag implanted in the Shadwan soil next to the lighthouse which is the symbol of the island. Below is the word "Shadwan" in Arabic on green enamel. The medal is suspended to the 40mm ribbon by a loop.



The Shadwan Decoration Obverse and Obverse in Detail

Reverse: Gilded metal, uppermost the Arabic text *UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC* with the Eagle of Egypt (known as the Eagle of Saladin) on the center. Lowermost the inscription *DECORATION TO COMMEMORATE SHADWAN 22-1-1970*.



The Shadwan Decoration Reverse and Reverse in Detail



The Eagle of Egypt

The ribbon consists of a central dark red stripe and on both sides simultaneously of brown, blue, red, and blue stripes with a bronze suspension pin at the upper edge of the ribbon.



The Shadwan Decoration Ribbon

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## Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev

by Kyrill Bosch

### Military & school career of Major Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev

Major Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev was born on the 10th of April 1920 in the Russian village of Orlovka in the Khabarovsk region, which is located in the Amur region, in the far east of Russia. Before he joined the Red Army, he attended seven years of school until 1937, and was at the Driver-Mechanic boarding school at the Lenin plant in the town of Blagoveschenk in 1938, an education which he did not finish.



Fig. 1: Major Korolev in 1956

In the same year that he was drafted, he became a father. His wife, Anna Mitrofanovna Koroleva gave

birth to a son called Victor. In a document stating that he traveled to Odessa from the Nesvitevich station by train his full name, Victor Alexandrovich Korolev, is mentioned, as well as his mother or mother-in-law's name: Praskovia Vasilievna Bondar. This document is issued the 25th of March 1956 and is in the possession of the author.

He joined the Red Army on the 15th of October 1940, being drafted by the Saryshevskij district military commissariat of the Armour region in the Khabarovsk area as a private. He joined the NKVD troops by decree #379 on that same date becoming a member of the 198th Regiment of NKVD troops for guarding the high priority industrial sites.

In the same year, he became a cadet of a regimental school under the 198th regiment in the city of Vladivostok by NKVD decree #0420/17 on the 13th of December 1940.

After the start of the war, he was still a private and a regimental cadet, but wasn't sent to the front straightaway. Major Korolev enjoyed his first military training in 1942 when he started an officer training for Junior Lieutenant at the Saratov city military NKVD school. He started his training on the first of February 1942 by NKVD decree #46. He completed his training successfully on August 5, 1942 when he became Platoon Commander of the 146th Rifle Regiment of the 16th Rifle Brigade. This brigade was stationed at the town of Rybinsk and he eventually became Platoon commander of a machine gun company of the 202nd Separate Rifle Battalion at the end of 1942.

In 1943, the 202nd Separate Rifle Battalion got sent to the front to fight against the German forces in the liberation of USSR which eventually resulted in the defeat of Nazi-Germany. In that year, he was promoted to Deputy Commander.



Fig. 2: Medal Bar from Major Korolev as worn in the photo of Fig. 1

## Medal for Combat Merits, 26th of April, 1944

Major Korolev earned his first (of two) medals for Combat Merits in 1944 while serving as a Junior Lieutenant and commanding officer of his (heavy) machine gun company in Poland near the town of Osowicze. His medal for Combat Merits #1201635 was earned for courage and bravery amongst his men in which his fire organization of the heavy machine guns he commanded fended off all the counter-attacks of attacking and armed "bandits." He also helped the troops in their advance and ordered cover fire so they could advance. Being acknowledged by his superior, Captain Kotlyarov, who commanded the units during the attack, he was recommended for the Medal for Combat Merits as a state award on the 24th of May 1944, which immediately got acknowledged by Colonel Ivan Stepanovich Yakhimovich on the same day. Yakhimovich was commanding officer of the 16th Rifle Brigade of the internal NKVD armed forces.

The final approval of the award medal came in 1944 (the exact date wasn't written down – likely an oversight at the clerical office of Marshall Konev) by the military council and was approved by Marshall of the Soviet Union, twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Ivan Konev, holder of the Order of Victory and Commander of the 2nd Ukrainian Front. Marshall of the Soviet Union Konev was highly decorated and was awarded with many orders from the Soviet Union and from foreign nations. After his death in 1973, he was buried in the Kremlin Wall. Konev, who served as a soldier in the First World War and the Russian Civil War, was one of the few (41 in total) Marshalls of the Soviet Union. Although being highly decorated, he remained one of the most admired Soviet Marshalls.



Fig. 3: Marshall of the Soviet Union Konev



A stamp shows that the medal was awarded on the 16th of July 1944.

His citation (as translated and researched by Koronev, I) reads as follows:

“Jr. Lieutenant KOROLEV commanded machine-gun company on 26 April 1944 in the engagement against an armed group of bandits near the khutor Osowicze, Stepan’ district, Rovno district. He exhibited courage and bravery in this combat engagement. As the result of masterful fire organization of his heavy machine-guns, Jr. Lieutenant KOROLEV fended off all the bandits counter-attacks and assisted our troops in their advance. For courage and bravery exhibited in the battle against a group of bandits, Jr. Lt. KOROLEV deserves a state award - medal “FOR COMBAT MERITS”

Major Korolev also participated in the fighting which led to the capture of Warsaw, as can be seen from his ribbon bar. More about this will be explained at the sub-section of “Other medals and jubilee medals”.

On the second of October 1944, he was promoted to full Lieutenant, his highest rank during the war. After his feats which earned him a medal for Combat Merits, he was promoted to Commander of the machine gun company, which he earlier led as Deputy Commander.

After the war, he became Deputy Commander of the 4th Rifle company of the 445th Rifle Regiment, 81st Rifle Division and was sent to become a cadet of the advanced officer courses in the town of Sartovalva on the 17th of October 1946, which led to shifting companies in both 1947 and 1948. He finished his course in 1947, and was promoted to Senior Lieutenant on the 11th of November 1948 within the 8th Rifle Company of above said regiment and division. 1948 was another turbulent year with many replacements for Major Korolev when he shifted commands of two companies and one platoon.



Fig. 4: Reverse of the medal bar worn in the photo of Fig. 1

### **Medal for Combat Merits, 24th of November 1950**

Major Korolev his second Medal for Combat Merits is a long service award. This medal was awarded 10 years after entering the Red Army. Eventually the long service awards changed in the Soviet Union towards the 10, 15, and 20 years of Impeccable Service medals, and subsequently, the Veteran of the Armed forces of the USSR medal instituted in 1976, which major Korolev never got or could have gotten, given his service entry date and the date leaving the army. The medal for Impeccable Service replaced the medal for Combat Merits as a 10-year service award, as well as the Order of the Red star for 15 years of service, the Order of the Red Banner for 20 years of service, and lastly, the Order of Lenin for 25 years of service. During the time between 1958 and 1976 the Soviet Union did not have a medal for 25 years of service. This medal does not have a serial number due to the fact that after 30 January 1947, the Secretariat of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR decided to stop striking the serial numbers for the medal for Courage and the medal for Combat Merits. They were eventually phased out with serial numbers around 1948, according to the range of serial numbers listed by Auke de Vlieger.

He became Deputy Commander of the 18th border guard base, 26th Red Banner border guards' detachment of the Internal MGB troops in the Moldavia District on the second of November 1951, being promoted to Captain on the 25th of December that same year. It was in this and his latter command that he probably earned Medal “For Distinction in Guarding the State Border of the USSR” in silver, which is in the collection of the author and which can be seen in Figure 5.

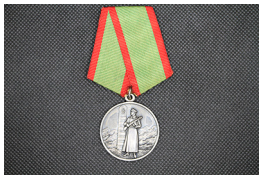


Fig. 5: Medal for the Distinction in Guarding the State Border of the USSR in silver

Major Korolev's final reassignment was in 1955. Then Captain Korolev became commander of a border guard base within the 26th Red Banner border guards' detachment of the internal MGB troops in the Moldavia district in the city of Odesa, in which he served from 1951 to 1955.

In 1956, Captain Korolev became Major Korolev, as which he served until his "retirement," when he was sent to the reserves on the 31st of December 1959.

This was done under the following decree:

*"30. 12.1959 - sent to reserve according to the article 59"B" (general reduction of the forces) by the order of the 26 Red Banner border guards detachment of the internal MGB troops approved by the Ministers council of the South-Western USSR region. Ground: decree #583 of the head of the State Security committee issued on 26.11.1959."*

This was signed by Major Levchenko, who was the District Military Commissar of Odessa at the time, thus ending the active military career of major Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev.

In 1958, however, Major Korolev had a photograph taken of his family in which he can be seen with his wife and his three children: two sons and one daughter, as can be seen in Figure 6. The date "1958" is written on the back of the photo.



Fig. 6: Major Korolev and his family in 1958

## Other Medals and Jubilee Medals

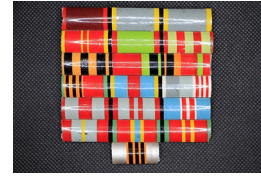


Fig. 7: Post-war (after 1985) Ribbon bar of Major Korolev

## Campaign Medals of Major Korolev

Major Korolev fought in the second world war, earning him a total of two campaign medals, as well as having fought in multiple places.

### *Defense of Moscow Medal:*

Probably awarded as a "voenkomat" medal (later recognition), since the first medal bar of Major Korolev, which he is wearing in Figure 1, is not showing a medal for the Defense of Moscow. The photo of Figure 1 was taken in 1956.

### *Medal for the Capture of Warsaw:*

This medal is probably awarded as a "voenkomat" medal as well, as it does not appear on Major Korolev his medal bar in his photo in 1956 (Figure 1), but they do appear in his medal bar on the photo in 1958 (Figure 6).

### *Medal for the Victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945:*

The medal for the Victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945 isn't exactly a campaign medal, but it does qualify in the list of war medals. As there are no papers to most of the awards, we can't exactly verify the age of it but presumably it was awarded in 1945 or 1946.

## Jubilee medals for "said years" in the RKKA

Major Korolev had been in the Red Army since 1940, when he started as a Private, till his retirement from the army due to shrinking down the Army Corps in 1959/1960, retiring at the rank of Major. He was sent to the reserves on article 59 "B" (general reduction of the forces) on the 30th of December 1959. He earned the medals for 30

and 40 years during his active career, and earned the medals for 50, 60 and 70 years of the RKKA after his retirement.

Sadly, the collection of his medals isn't complete. All jubilee medals, including the numbered 1985 jubilee Order of the Great Patriotic War (second class), are sold separately, as well as one of the ribbon bars.

## Political career of Major Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev

Major Korolev became a member of the communist party in 1945 with ID 04270715, according to his service record. Little more is known about Major Korolev or his political views in his life.

## Later life of Major Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev

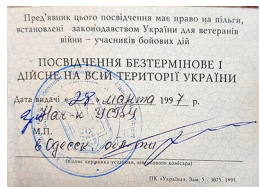


Fig. 8: Participant of War document issued in 1997

Regarding the later life of Major Korolev, we can say that he lived at least until 1997, as shown in the document in Figure 8. This document is a participant of War document showing a photo of major Korolev as an older gentlemen, presumably the photo is taken in 1997 as seen in Figure 9.



Fig. 9: Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev in presumably 1997, at the age of 77

We know that major Korolev received a pension (figure 10) from the military, as his pension booklet shows that he received a pension up until at least 1985. Sadly, little more is known about his life, other than a visiting pass and the photos in

the writer's collection (Figure 6).

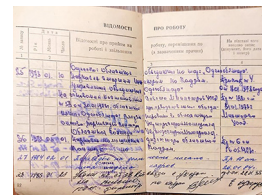


Fig. 10: Aleksandr Kuzmich Korolev pension booklet

As can be seen in Figure 11, Major Korolev had a visit from his son, Victor, and mother (or mother-in-law) in 1956. This visitor pass states the following regarding the visit pass issue date of 25 March, 1956:

*"This document is issued to Korolev, Victor Alexandrovich, that he indeed is the son of a military officer serving in Border Guard Unit #2138 and that he travels from the Nesvitevich station to Odessa train station where his father is stationed. He is accompanied by his grandmother Bondar, Praskovia Vasilievna."*



Fig. 11: Visiting pass for Victor Alexandrovich Korolev and his grandmother

Other than the fact that he had a wife and three children, little is known about his private life. We do know, from photos in the lot being sold, that Major Korolev lived until at least 2005, having earned the 60 years of victory in the Great Patriotic War (jubilee) Medal. The evidence, however, states until at least 1997, regarding the document of Figure 8, stating him as a war participant.

