

French Legion of Honor Award

“It is thanks to your commitment, along with the other Allies’ relentless efforts, that Europeans managed to escape a brutal rule and are able today to enjoy democracy and freedom. France recognizes the tremendous sacrifice and courage that went into its liberation from Nazi occupation. It is our duty to honor those who participated in freeing France and Europe,” said Mr. Fabien Fieschi, Consul General of France for the decoration of Mr. Aurele H. Gamache.

Established in 1802 by Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, the Legion of Honor is exclusively awarded in cases of exemplary military and civilian services. It is the oldest and highest honor in France.

It was the wish of Napoleon Bonaparte, to create a reward to commend civilians and soldiers and from this wish was instituted a Légion d'Honneur. The Legion of Honor was established May 19, 1802, and was first awarded July 14, 1804. There are five classes in the Legion of Honour :

- ***Chevalier*** (Knight): minimum 20 years of public service or 25 years of professional activity, and "eminent merits".
- ***Officier*** (Officer): minimum 8 years in the rank of Chevalier.
- ***Commandeur*** (Commander): minimum 5 years in the rank of Officier.
- ***Grand Officier*** (Grand Officer): minimum 3 years in the rank of Commandeur.
- ***Grand Croix*** (Grand Cross): minimum 3 years in the rank of Grand Officier.

Olivier Serol Almeras
Consul General of France

Frank Bertino
PVO President

Légion d'Honneur



Application Information

Upon presentation of their military file US veterans who risked their life during World War II to fight on French territory, may be awarded this distinction. Those selected are appointed to the

rank of Knight of the Legion of Honor. The Legion of Honor medal is *not awarded posthumously*.

To be eligible to this outstanding award, the veteran has to fit strict criteria :

Interested veterans of all the different armed forces must have fought in at least one of the 3 main campaigns of the Liberation of France: Normandy, Provence/Southern France or Northern France. Actions having taken place in Belgium, Germany, Italy or any other neighboring European country are not taken into consideration.

The file presented must contain a copy of the military separation record (honorable discharge), the Proposal Memory application and a copy of a current identity document with a picture.

If possible, it should also contain copies of citations for all the decorations already received in France or in the United States indicating meritorious action during wartime operations. This is particularly important for decorations that were not shown in the discharge document at the time of separation. To be considered, these citations must have been issued during WWII or the close aftermath, and must relate to events (outstanding actions, wounds, having been made prisoner, evasions, having taken action with the resistance, etc.) that took place on the French territory only which includes ground, airspace and coastal waters. Since only a small number of Legion of Honor medals are awarded each year in the United States, care is taken to nominate only those with the most distinguished records. It is important to have such decorations as the Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Silver Star and higher, earned in French territory in order to have a competitive record.

If the file meets the criteria, it is sent to The Legion of Honor committee in Paris, through the French Embassy in Washington and the French Foreign Affairs ministry. The Legion of Honor committee approves or rejects the candidate presented after appropriate review of his file.

Please note that other than receiving an acknowledgement of your records submittal, you will not receive further word unless you are ultimately selected for the honor. This process can take several months.

If you are interested in an application for the Legion of Honor, please either contact your local French Embassy for the necessary paperwork or call Lenore and she will forward you a copy of the application. It does take considerable time for the application to be processed so please do so ASAP.