

Italian American Recipients of the Medal of Honor *Compiled by the Sons of Italy Commission for Social Justice*

The Medal of Honor is the highest military award for bravery in the U.S. It is conferred for “individual gallantry at the risk of life **above and beyond the call of duty.**” The Army, Air Force, and Navy each has its own distinctive Medal of Honor.

The act of bravery must be supported by the testimony of at least two eyewitnesses and recommendations must be made within defined time limits.

The Medal of Honor is presented by the President of the United States “in the name of the Congress of the United States.” For this reason it is sometimes called the U. S. Congressional Medal of Honor.

It is generally awarded for a deed of personal bravery or self-sacrifice only while the person in the Armed Forces of the United States, fighting an enemy of the United States, but can be given to a military person serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

To date, the Sons of Italy has identified 25 Italian Americans who have earned the Medal of Honor, beginning with Maj. Luigi Palma di Cesnola in the Civil War. Current research expects that number to increase.

ITALIAN AMERICAN MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

NAME	HOME TOWN	SERVICE	RANK	COMBAT
Albanese, Lewis	Venice, Italy	US Army	Private First Class	Vietnam War
Basilone, John	Buffalo, NY	US Marines	Sergeant	World War II
Bertoldo, Vito R.	Decatur, IL	US Army	Master Sergeant	World War II
Bianchi, Willibald C.	New Ulm, MN	US Army	First Lieutenant	World War II
Capodanno, Vincent R.	Staten Island, NY	US Marines	Lieutenant	Vietnam War
Casamento, Anthony	Brooklyn, NY	US Marines	Corporal	World War II
Cavainani, Jon R.	Royston, England	US Army	Staff Sergeant	Vietnam War
Cheli, Ralph	San Francisco, CA	US Army	Major	World War II
Cicchetti, Joseph J.	Waynesburg, OH	US Army	Private First Class	World War II
Colalillo, Michael	Hibbing, NM	US Army	Private First Class	World War II
Dallessandro, Peter J.	Watervliet, NY	US Army	Technical Sergeant	World War II
Damato, Anthony Peter	Shenandoah, PA	US Marines	Corporal	World War II
DeFranzo, Arthur F.	Saugus, MA	US Army	Staff Sergeant	World War II
DiCesnola, Luigi Palma	Rivarola, Italy	US Army	Colonel	Civil War
Fratellenico, Frank R.	Sharon, CT	US Army	Corporal	Vietnam War
Giunta, Salvatore	Clinton, IA	US Army	Staff Sergeant	War in Afghanistan
Martini, Gary W.	Lexington, VA	US Marines	Private First Class	Vietnam War
Merli, Gino J.	Scranton, PA	US Army	Private First Class	World War II
Monti, Jared	Abington, MA	US Army	Sergeant First Class	War in Afghanistan
Petrarca, Frank J.	Cleveland, OH	US Army	Private First Class	World War II

Rocco, Louis R.	Albuquerque, NM	US Army	Warrant Officer	Vietnam War
Valente, Michael	Cassino, Italy	US Army	Private	World War I
Versace, Humbert	Alexandria, VA	US Army	Captain	Vietnam War
Viale, Robert M.	Bayside, CA	US Army	Second Lieutenant	World War II
Vittori, Joseph	Beverly, MA	US Marines	Corporal	Korean War