

WORLD WAR TWO

GERMAN MEDALS FOR WARGAME CAMPAIGNS

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This article covers medals given out for bravery and leadership. It doesn't cover awards given upon reaching a certain criteria, such as wound badges, tank destruction badges or campaign shields. If enough interest is shown for German criteria medals, then a second article will be written.

New medals were also introduced during the war, filling in gaps in the level of importance so to speak. Unless a date of introduction is mentioned in the text, all medals were present at the start of the war.

All the medals listed are listed in increasing order of importance (lowest to highest).

IRON CROSS 2ND CLASS



The official criteria for the award was a single act of bravery in the face of the enemy, or actions that were clearly above and beyond the call of duty. Officers could receive the Cross for leading a successful action in which the unit displayed exemplary performance. It was also possible for an entire unit to receive the Iron Cross 2nd Class.

When presented, meaning during the award ceremony, the Iron Cross 2nd Class was suspended from the ribbon in the 2nd hole of the tunic. The actual Cross, however, was seldom worn after the initial presentation; this practice was reserved only for official functions and portraits. Instead, for every-day wear, only the ribbon was worn either on a ribbon bar or through the 2nd buttonhole.

IRON CROSS 1ST CLASS

The Iron Cross 1st Class was presented considerable more sparingly than the 2nd Class and therefore held more prestige.



In order to receive the Iron Cross 1st Class men would have to perform three to four further acts of courage from the one that earned him the 2nd Class. These were only guidelines, and a single act of great importance or a long steady career could earn the individual the Cross.

The Iron Cross 1st Class was worn on the left breast pocket of the tunic at all times.

HONOR CLASP OF THE HEER



Regulations called for this clasp to be worn on the second buttonhole of the tunic, on the ribbon of the Iron Cross 2nd Class

The Clasp was to be presented to all those members of the military who committed acts of heroism or distinguished themselves by their honorable behavior. These acts, however, were of such a degree that neither the Knights Cross to the Iron Cross or the German Cross could be recommended.

A prerequisite for eligibility was that the individual be in possession of both the Iron Cross 2nd and 1st Class. This medal was introduced on January 1, 1944.

GERMAN CROSS



With the feeling of a significant gap existing between the Iron Cross 1st Class and the Knights Cross, the War Order of the German Cross was created to fill such a roll September 28, 1941.

It was instituted in two divisions; the German Cross in Gold was to be presented for Military bravery in the face of the enemy while the Silver Cross was awarded for leadership not directly involving combat operations. For this reason only the Gold Cross will be covered in this article.

The Gold Cross had a prerequisite of an Iron Cross 1st Class and an individual would have to distinguish themselves a further six to twelve times above and beyond the deeds which earned them the 1st Class of the Iron Cross.

KNIGHTS CROSS TO THE IRON CROSS



In order to be recommended for a Knights Cross personnel needed to perform an additional five to seven acts of distinction above and beyond those which earned them the Iron Cross 1st Class, although a single act of great significance could earn them the award. It was also awarded for particularly successful commands of attack or withdrawal operations, career achievements or services rendered.

OAK LEAVES TO THE KNIGHTS CROSS



The Western campaigns saw a new grade for those who had received the highest grade of the Iron Cross. On June 3rd, 1940 the Oak leaves to the Knights Cross was introduced. The award was to be worn above the Cross, in the place where one would normally see the ribbon loop.

Criteria for the Oak Leaves was based on continued excellence in command, bravery of the highest order or actions of significant importance.

OAK LEAVES AND SWORDS TO THE KNIGHTS CROSS



As Germany's Armed forces moved into the Soviet Union the next successive grade of the Knights Cross, the Oak Leaves and Swords, was authorized on July 15th 1941, and was created as a further incentive to the Legions of men now moving East.

This award was composed of an Oak Leaves cluster identical to that of preceding grade, but with the addition of a pair of crossed silver swords soldered at the base.

Once the Oak Leaves with Swords were awarded, the recipient would replace the Oak Leaves clasp with the Swords.

The criteria for the Swords followed the same pattern as the Oak Leaves. Individuals needed to have the most impressive portfolio in order to be considered, not only bravery but also combat and leadership skills were needed to rise above the rest and be recognized with the Swords.

OAK LEAVES, SWORDS AND DIAMONDS TO THE KNIGHTS CROSS

The next grade of the Knights Cross, the Oak Leaves, Swords and was created on July 15th, 1941, although it didn't become official until September 28th, 1941. This Clasp consisted of an Oak Leaves and Swords set which, instead of being die struck, was hand crafted by specially selected jewelers and decorated with diamonds.

Only men with the up most dedication and outstanding military career were considered, in short, the aces among aces. It is worth noting that only 27 members of Wehrmacht were bestowed with this award, so even in wargaming terms, not many of these should be given out.



On December 29, 1944 the Golden Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds was created. This was to be the highest gallantry decoration of the Third Reich and only one was ever given out. Due to this, I haven't included it in the system for winning awards; I have put it in for interest only.

THE AWARDING PROCEDURE FOR WARGAMES

In campaign games, just to add a bit of colour to the game and develop your soldiers further, medals can be awarded to individual soldiers. This way you will start to get attached to the soldiers as they flesh out, and maybe you will think twice about having them make a frontal assault on a bunker system.

To win medals, a number of points have to be gained per battle - the more points the higher the medal that can be won. Depending on the actions of a character as to how any points he will gain.

Once a battle is over and potential medals have been rolled for, all points gained in the mission are lost. The following charts are a general guideline: if a character performs a stupid (oops, heroic) action not listed here, match it up to a similar action.

POINTS FOR HEROISM MEDALS

Act	Points
Character throws self on live grenade to save others	12
Character saves wounded comrade under fire.	10
Character destroys enemy armour or fortification alone.	8
Character rallies retreating comrades under fire.	6
Character engaged in hand to hand combat.	3
Character covers the withdrawal of soldiers / unit under fire.	3

Situation	Points
Character was wounded at the time	6
Character was seen performing act by an officer*	4
Character was seen performing the act by an NCO*	2
Character was killed while performing the act	7
Character was wounded due to action	+ wound level**
Was the action necessary for a positive outcome to the battle?	3
Was the soldier out numbered?	+ the ratio***
Did the action involve fire from enemy MGs?	3
Did the action involve an enemy heavy weapon?	6
Did open ground have to be crossed to perform the action whilst under fire?	6
Did obstacles have to be negotiated while under fire?	6

* Only one of these options can be used at any one time.

** Light wound is worth 1 point, Serious wound is worth 3 points.

*** + 2:1 is worth 2 points, 3:1 is worth 3 points etc.

These points are totaled and compare with the value of the various medals. As the German medal system is different to other nations the way these medals are awarded differs from other nations. As such, any prerequisites must be met to get the medals (see the descriptive text above and the table below).

Medal	Points Value
Iron Cross 2 nd Class	16
Iron Cross 1 st Class (must have Iron Cross 2 nd class)	18
Honor Clasp	20 [Jan 1, 1944]
German Cross (must have Iron Cross 1 st class + 6 – 12 additional acts of bravery)	22 [Sep 28, 1941]
Knights Cross (must have Iron Cross 1 st class + 5 – 7 additional acts of bravery)	24
Oak Leaves to the Knights Cross (must have Knights Cross)	26 [Jun 3, 1940]
Swords to the Knights Cross (must have Oak Leaves)	28 [Jul 15, 1941]
Diamonds to the Knights Cross (must have Swords)	30 [Sep 28, 1941]

To get a medal, the players totals a characters points, and rolls 2d6, adding 1 to the roll for each point the character has above the required amount. The medal is awarded if the result is equal to or higher than the number required to be awarded the medal. If the character fails to get this medal, then no medal is awarded.

Example: Sergeant Stein has come back from a hard mission. During the mission, he rescued a wounded soldier while coming under enemy fire (10 points). Having rescued the soldier, Stein then ran forward and destroyed an enemy bunker with hand grenades (8 points). When the order is given for withdrawal, Sgt. Stein provides covering fire, so his boys can get out safely (3 points). All of this was seen by his platoon commander (4 points).

Totaling the points up we have 25 points - Stein could get the Honor Clasp for his actions, but as the campaign date is before 1944, it is unavailable. As Sgt. Stein doesn't have the Iron Cross 2nd Class, he cant win the Iron Cross 1st Class. This leaves only the Iron Cross 2nd Class he can win.

I roll 2d6 - if I get 7 or more, Stein will get his medal (dice roll + extra points: must be 16 or more). I roll a 10 - Stein is the proud owner of the Iron Cross 2nd Class. If I had rolled 6 or less on the dice, Stein would have missed the Iron Cross 2nd Class.

For medals that require additional acts of bravery then the soldier must earn the points needed for a medal for that medal in separate engagements. Each single engagement the soldier fights in counts as a separate engagement. Once each battle is over add any points together and make a note of this on a piece of paper, or better still, keep a campaign log book to act as a record of history for your unit.

To be classed as having completed an additional act of bravery, a soldier must have enough points to earn a medal for that battle even if the soldier can't win a medal due to the award procedure.

Points earned for a battle may not be added to other points, and any points falling short of a score needed to win a medal are lost.

Having been awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class, Sgt. Stein continues to partake in all the battles in my campaign. Over a number of following battles, Sgt. Stein performs three more heroic acts. This allows for him to receive the Iron Cross 1st Class. As soon as three acts are reached I can begin rolling for him to receive the medal. If he fails to get it, I make additional rolls for each time he fights a battle and performs heroic acts that would give him enough points to earn a medal.

POINTS FOR LEADERSHIP MEDALS

Action / Event	Points
Each Objective met	4
Each Enemy killed/Captured	+ as per enemy ratio *
Each Enemy AFV destroyed	1
Each Objective not met	-4
Each Soldier on own side killed/Captured	- as per friendly ratio **
Each AFV on own side destroyed	-2

* x the second number of the friendly to enemy ratio i.e. 1:4 would see 4 points per enemy kill

** x the first number of the friendly to enemy ratio i.e. 1:4 would see 1 point per friendly kill

The medals awarded for leadership are the same as those for individual acts of bravery. Use the same table and points needed to determine a leadership medal as for individual medals.

To get a medal, the player totals a character's points, and rolls 2d6, adding 1 to the roll for each point the character has above the required amount. The medal is awarded if the result is higher than the number required to get the medal. If the character fails to get this medal, perform the procedure again for the next lowest medal, until he gains a medal or there are no awards left for him to get.

I have tried to include all the medals available and to cover as many ways in which they can be won. If I have made any mistakes or if you have any suggestions/questions, please send an email to me at: ij_downunder@hotmail.com