

Updated December 16, 2014.

Beginning with Veterans Day 2006, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) encourages all military veterans to wear their medals and decorations during Veterans Day (November 11th) and other patriotic holidays (such as Independence Day - July 4th, and [Memorial Day](#) - May 30th). According to the VA, veterans don't need to wear their medals only if they're in a parade. "Wear them when you go play golf. Wear them when you go to the store.

Let America know that you took that oath and served."

Obtaining Decorations

First, you should double-check to make sure that you're only wearing the decorations that you're entitled to (decorations you've earned). You can do this by requesting a [copy of your DD Form 214](#) from the [National Military Personnel Records Center](#) in St. Louis. Remember, the [Stolen Valor Act of 2005](#) makes it a federal crime to wear a medal or decoration that you're not entitled to.

If you've lost your decorations or never received them, veterans may be entitled to a one-time [free replacement](#) of medals and decorations. [Active duty personnel](#), reserve, and [military retirees](#) can purchase replacement decorations on base, at the Exchange Clothing Sales Stores.

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For other veterans, pawn shops and military surplus stores often carry decoration replacements.

In many cases, you can even order medals and ribbons [online](#).

Wearing Decorations

There is no federal law which describes the method of wearing military medals and decorations with civilian clothes. However, each of the military services have uniform regulations which cover this:

Army. [Army Regulation 670-1](#), paragraph 30-6, says that former members of the Army (including [active duty](#), reserves, or [Army National Guard](#)), may wear medals on "appropriate" civilian clothing on Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, and [Armed Forces Day](#), as well as at "formal occasions of ceremony and social functions of a military nature." "Appropriate" [civilian clothes](#) includes clothes designed for veteran and patriotic organizations, such as VFW or [American Legion](#) uniforms.

You can wear either the full-size or miniture-size medals. You should place the medals and decorations in approximately the same location and in the same manner as for the Army uniform, so they look similar to medals worn on the Army uniform.

It is permissible for veterans and retirees to wear military awards on civilian clothes for gatherings of a military theme. On significant holidays, veterans and retirees are encouraged to wear their awards and medals. The choice of either full-size medal or miniature is an individual one.

Retired personnel and former members of the military may wear all categories of medals on appropriate civilian clothing. This includes clothes designed for veteran and patriotic organizations. The medals may be worn on:

- Veteran's Day
- Memorial Day
- Armed Forces Day
- formal occasions of ceremony

- social functions of a military nature.

Personnel may wear either full-sized or miniature medals. Personnel who wear medals on civilian clothes should place the medals on the clothing in approximately the same location and in the same manner as for the uniform, so they look similar to medals worn on the uniform.

Report Source - Department of Defense