

VFW Wants New Medal Ranking Lowered

VFW believes Distinguished Warfare Medal should not outrank the Bronze Star, Purple Heart

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America's largest combat veterans' organization is in total disagreement with the Pentagon's decision to have its new Distinguished Warfare Medal outrank the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

"It is very important to properly recognize all who faithfully serve and excel, but this new medal — no matter how well intended — could quickly deteriorate into a morale issue," said John E. Hamilton, national commander of the 2 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries.

In announcing the medal, the Pentagon said yesterday that modern technology enables service members with special training and capabilities to more directly and precisely impact military operations at times far from the battlefield. The Distinguished Warfare Medal was created to recognize such extraordinary achievement, regardless of the distance from the battlefield.

"The VFW fully concurs that those far from the fight are having an immediate impact on the battlefield in real-time," said Hamilton, a combat-wounded Marine Corps rifleman in Vietnam, "but medals that can only be earned in direct combat must mean more than medals awarded in the rear. The VFW urges the Department of Defense to reconsider the new medal's placement in the military order of precedence."

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