

VOICES ★ OF ★ VALOR

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS



The Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) may be awarded to any US Armed Forces servicemember who distinguishes himself or herself by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight. A qualifying act of heroism must be evidenced by voluntary action “above and beyond the call of duty.” Similarly, a qualifying achievement must be so exceptional and outstanding that the action clearly sets the individual apart from his or her comrades or from others in similar circumstances.

The DFC was established by Congress in the Air Corps Act of 1926 and was also awarded retroactively to any qualified Air Corps of the Army, Navy, Marines, National Guard, or Reserve airman who served since 1917. The Air Force was added to the list of eligible armed forces when it was established in 1947.

Some of the first DFC medals awarded went to aviation pioneers such as Captain Charles A. Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart. An executive order in March 1927 ruled that the DFC should not be conferred on civilians, with the later exception being the airplane’s inventors, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who received the DFC through a special act of Congress.