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S.O.P. #: PERSONNEL 15

SUBJECT: COMMENDATION AWARDS

DIVISION: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

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Objective: To provide guidelines for the awarding of Fire Department Commendations to career, volunteer, and non-uniform personnel, members of other uniform services, and citizens.

Section 1: The awarding of decorations is a powerful stimulus to pride of service and to the encouragement of heroism or achievement.

A. To obtain the greatest benefit, the process of awarding commendations must be carefully administered.

1. Awards must be made only to those who have truly earned them.
2. Unmerited awards are cheapening and destructive to the purpose for which the award is authorized.
3. Failure to recognize true merit promptly defeats the purpose of the award.

B. A Commendation Board shall be appointed by the Fire Chief.

1. The Board shall consist of sixteen (16) members, consisting of:
  - One (1) Division/Battalion Chief (chairperson)
  - One (1) Member – Vice Chairperson
  - Four (4) Members from Local 1311
  - Four (4) Members from the Baltimore County Volunteer Firemen's Association.
  - Five (5) Members at large
  - One (1) Member from Retired Firefighters' Association
2. The Chairperson shall appoint from the Board a Vice Chairperson.
3. The Chairperson shall appoint a member of the Board to serve as Secretary. It will be the Secretary's responsibility to record the Minutes of the meetings.
4. The Board shall conduct a minimum of four (4) meetings per year, on a quarterly basis, for review of commendation requests. These meetings will be scheduled at the discretion of the Chairperson. Meetings shall be scheduled in such a manner that each board member has the opportunity to attend 75% of the assemblies.
5. The Board is authorized to call before it and to examine witnesses regarding the matter to be heard. It shall conduct any other investigations deemed necessary and shall have access to complete files on all cases referred to or considered.

C. The Board will act upon cases submitted for consideration based on meritorious conduct.

1. A quorum of seven (7) members is required for the transaction of any business.
2. All cases submitted shall be considered and voted on separately. A majority of those present and voting shall be sufficient for the passing of motions and the awarding of commendations. In the event an incident is presented and is of a time sensitive situation, (incident submitted within short time frame

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prior to the Commendation Ceremony), an email vote may be called for by the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson. The-Chairperson will vote only in cases where a tie has occurred.

3. All person recommended for acts performed shall be listed on a Form 180. All information required on the Form 180 shall be complete. Incomplete Form 180's will be returned to the individual(s) who submitted it for completion.
4. A member of the Board personally involved, either directly or indirectly, in any case before the Board may participate in the proceedings at the Hearing and be a witness, but shall not be permitted to vote on the matter under consideration.
5. Immediately following the meetings of the Commendation Board, and after approval by the Fire Chief, a summary of their findings will be published and distributed to all career and volunteer stations, senior officers, divisions and offices.
6. The Commendation Board may, at any regular or special meeting, hear appeals of their decisions. All appeals must be submitted, in writing, to the Board within thirty (30) days of the Board's decision.

Section 2: Procedures for Recommending Commendations

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- A. All recommendations are to be submitted within one hundred and twenty days (120) of the incident. The Committee may waive this requirement, if there are extenuating circumstances. All reports (Form 180) will be accompanied by a detailed narrative describing what transpired and each person's involvement in incident. All narratives will be completed in 12 point font. Commendation Recommendation Forms shall be filled out in duplicate and forwarded to the Commanding Officer. The Commanding Officer will check all requests for correctness and authenticity. After checking the report, the officer will sign it and:
    1. Have the Battalion/Division Chief review submitted information, and have his/her signature to verify accuracy for submission.
    2. Forward the original with above signatures, to the Commendation Board, c/o Field Operations Office. An electronic copy shall be sent to DL-Fire Commendations.
    3. The duplicate is to be printed out and kept by the Commanding Officer.
  - B. It is the duty of all supervisory officers to complete Commendation Forms for their subordinates who have acted meritoriously. However, any member of the department may, on their own initiative, execute the Form 180 for this purpose and forward it to their Commanding Officer or if from the volunteer service, their senior station commander.

Section 3: Persons Eligible for Fire Service Commendations

- A. Career, Volunteer, and Non-Uniform Members- All career, volunteer, and non-uniform members of the Baltimore County Fire Service are eligible for consideration for any of the Baltimore County Fire Service Commendations.
- B. Members of Other Uniformed Services- Members of the Baltimore County Police Department, Fire and Police Departments of other jurisdictions, emergency 911/Dispatch personnel, and the Armed Forces of the United States of America shall be considered for the same commendations as members of the Baltimore County Fire Service.
- C. Civilians- Civilians are eligible only for those awards designated for civilians.

Section 4: Baltimore County Fire Service Commendations

A. Departmental Medal of Honor

1. Awarded to members who, in the course of emergency services, intelligently perform acts of extraordinary heroism or bravery in the saving, or attempted saving, of the lives of others. The action shall be above and beyond the call of duty, at the grave risk of personally being killed or seriously injured. The actions shall also be with knowledge of the risk undertaken. Recipients shall be presented with a medal, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate for the appropriate award.

B. Departmental Silver Star

1. Awarded to members who perform acts of unusual vigilance, alertness or bravery while in the course of emergency services while saving, or attempting to save the lives of others, with extreme risk to the member.
2. Recipients shall be presented with a bar, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate.

C. Departmental Bronze Star

1. Awarded to members who, in the course of direct firefighting or rescue operations, perform acts of exceptional intelligence and bravery, while saving, or attempting to save, the lives of others, with serious risk to themselves.
2. Recipients shall be presented with a bar, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate.

D. Departmental Commendation

1. Awarded to members who, in the course of company operations, perform acts of extraordinary intelligence, alertness, or vigilance while saving, or attempting to save, the lives of others with moderate risk to themselves.
2. Recipients shall be presented with a bar, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate.

E. Departmental Purple Heart

1. Awarded to members who, in the course of company operations, receives a grievous or life threatening injury, through no fault of their own.
2. Recipients shall be presented with a bar, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate.
3. This award may be presented in conjunction with other commendations awarded for the same act.

F. Departmental Distinguished Service Award

1. Awarded to an individual member who renders service of unusual intelligence, alertness or skill, which results in the solution of a Fire Suppression, Prevention, EMS or Administrative problem.
2. Also, awarded to an individual member for outstanding service or contribution to the Fire Department and/or community, over an extended period of time, which sets them clearly above and apart from their peers.
3. Recipients shall be presented with a bar, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate.

G. Departmental Unit Citation

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1. Awarded to members of a Division, Battalion, Company or Fire/EMS unit(s) for exceptional, meritorious service, or exceptional outstanding achievement, whereby the designated unit is clearly set above and apart from other units.
2. Recipient Units and/or stations shall receive a certificate describing the act and listing the names of participating members.
3. Participating members shall receive a bar, as shown in Appendix "A".
4. Recipients will also receive a Unit Citation Decal for display on apparatus cited, as shown in Appendix "A".

H. Departmental Meritorious Service Award

1. Awarded to members or units for acts of extraordinary intelligence that reflects high credit upon the Fire Service; or for displaying unusual perseverance and devotion to duty, which results in the solution of any minimal risk emergency situation or non-emergency (administrative) problem.
2. Also, awarded to members for outstanding contributions to the Fire Department and/or community, which set them clearly above and apart from their peers.
3. Recipients shall be presented with a bar, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate.

I. Citizen's Medal of Honor

1. Awarded to persons who, though they do not meet the qualifications of Section 3: A or B, render service to the citizens of Baltimore County by saving, or attempting to save, persons from death or serious injury by fire or accident, at the risk of serious injury to themselves.
2. Recipients shall be presented with a medal, as shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate describing the act for which the award is made.

J. Citizen's Commendation Award

1. Awarded to persons who, though they do not meet the qualifications of Section 3: A or B, render service to the citizens of Baltimore County by saving or attempting to save, person(s) from death or serious injury, from fire or accident, with some moderate or minimal risks to themselves.
2. Recipients shall be presented with a pin. As shown in Appendix "A", and a certificate describing the act for which the award is made.

K. Citizen's Certificate of Merit

1. Awarded to persons who, though they do not meet the qualifications of Section 3: A or B, render service to the citizens of Baltimore County through the protection of lives or property from fire or serious injury, but not at the risk of death or serious injury.
2. May also be awarded for meritorious service rendered to either the Baltimore County Fire Service and/or Baltimore County citizens.

L. Citizen's CPR Award

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1. Awarded to persons who, though they do not meet the qualifications of Section 3: A or B, render service to the citizens of Baltimore County by administering Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, whether or not the victim recovers.
2. Recipients shall be presented with a suitable inscribed certificate bearing their name and the date of the incident.

M. Multiple Commendations Bars

1. In instances where members are awarded Distinguished Service, Unit Citations or Meritorious Service for other acts, they will be presented with bars bearing stars indicating the number of times the commendation has been awarded.
2. The bars, as shown in Appendix "A", will have one star for having been awarded the commendations for the second time. Two stars for the third awarding, three for the fourth, and four for the fifth.

N. Honorary Fire Chief

1. The Fire Chief may bestow an Honorary Fire Chiefs award to an individual that is deserving of recognition for outstanding support of the fire, rescue or emergency medical services in Baltimore County.
2. The individual will receive a letter of recognition and will be added to the plaque recognizing Honorary Fire Chiefs that is displayed at Fire Department Headquarters.
3. The recognition does not confer any official functions of a Fire Department officer or member.

Section 5: Each year, the Commendation Board strives to gain greater recognition for each of the recipients of our highest awards by submitting their names to various local and national award programs. A description of each program, along with the requirements for nomination are listed below. All nominations are submitted at the discretion of the Board.

A. Senatorial Proclamation

1. A resolution read before the Maryland State Senate commending the heroic actions of the recipient.
2. The recipient will receive a copy of the Resolution from the sponsoring Senator.
3. All Citizen Medal of Honor recipients are eligible.

B. Carnegie Hero Fund Commission Award

1. National Award Program funded by the Andrew Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The program recognizes acts of heroism in which the nominee's life was in extreme danger. Awards are often given posthumously.
2. This is a monetary award.
3. Nominations are limited to select Citizen's Medal of Honor recipients.

C. Firehouse Heroism and Community Service Awards

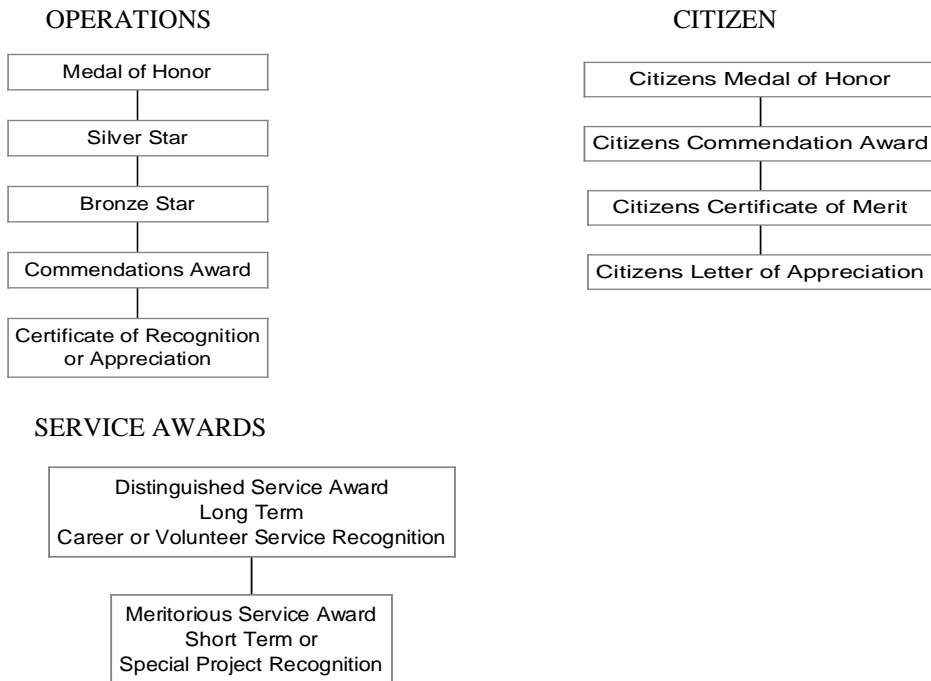
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1. National Award Program for career and volunteer firefighters sponsored by Firehouse Magazine. The program is broken down into two (2) categories: Heroism and Community Service.
  2. Recipients will receive a monetary award, a certificate, and have their photograph published in Firehouse Magazine.
  3. Requirements for Nominations:
    - a. Heroism Award - the Board's policy for nomination is limited to recipients of the Silver Star and above.
      - 1) This criteria can be waived by action of the Board.
    - b. Community Service - The Distinguished Service Ribbon is the minimum requirement for nomination in this category.

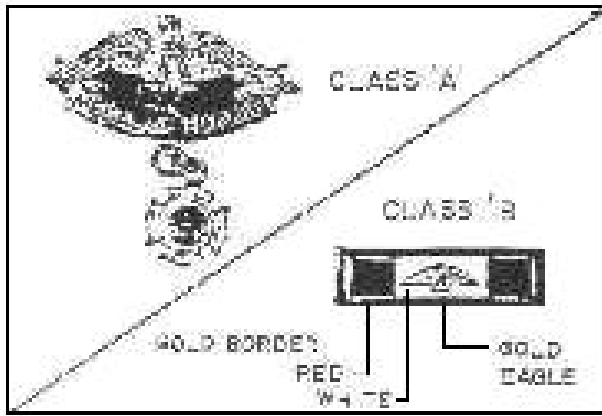
D. Equitable Society Award

Recipients will receive a monetary award. This program is sponsored by the Baltimore Equitable Life Awards Committee.

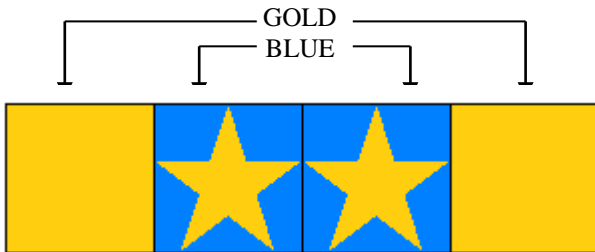
Section 6:  
Hierarchy of awards:



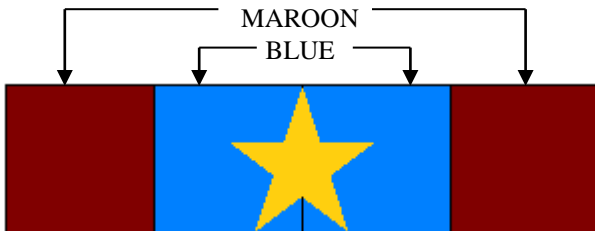
APPENDIX A



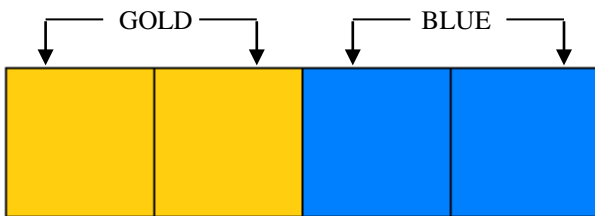
DEPARTMENTAL MEDAL OF HONOR



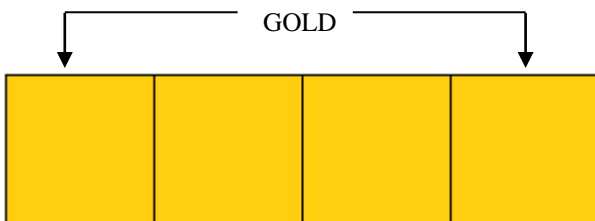
DEPARTMENTAL SILVER STAR



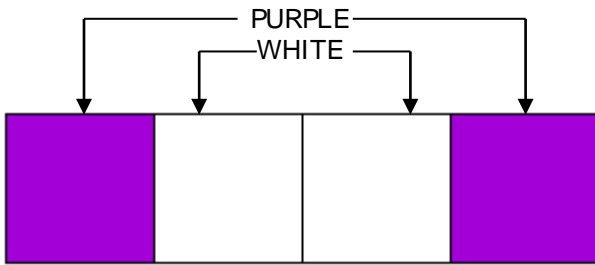
DEPARTMENTAL BRONZE STAR



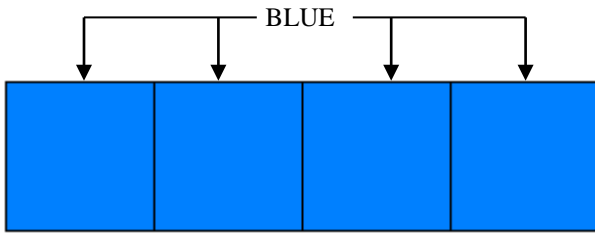
DEPARTMENTAL COMMENDATION



DEPARTMENTAL DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

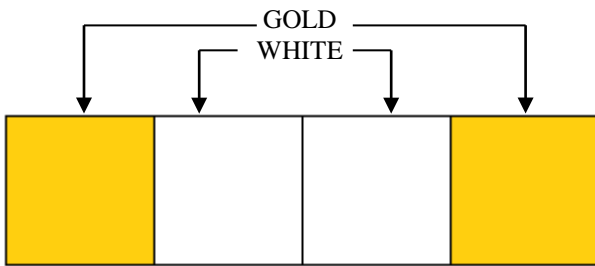


DEPARTMENTAL PURPLE HEART

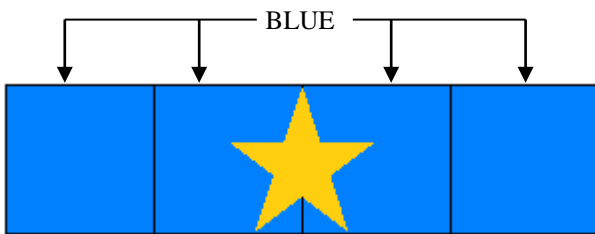


DEPARTMENTAL UNIT CITATION

When this award is presented to units, they shall also receive a scotch lite copy of the unit citation. 1 ½" x 5", to be placed on the apparatus. See section B of this appendix for apparatus placement.



DEPARTMENTAL MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD



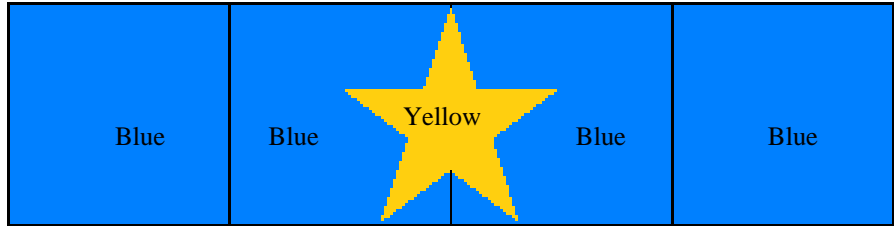
MULTIPLE COMMENDATION AWARD

To include Meritorious Service, Unit Citation and Distinguished Service.

(Note - once the 5<sup>th</sup> award has been received, the member will receive the initial award and continue receiving stars as awarded.)



Unit Citation  
Sticker For  
Apparatus



Unit Citation Apparatus Stickers For Multi Awards

Section A: Policy

1. Shall be awarded for placement on units receiving the Unit Citation.
2. Shall be given for cases, past, present and future, with the appropriate number of Stars affixed which indicate the number of times this award has been given to the unit.
3. Records will be kept on file in reference to the number of times and/all units have received this award.

2<sup>nd</sup> Time  
Awarded



3<sup>rd</sup> Time  
Awarded



4<sup>th</sup> Time  
Awarded



Section B: Placement on Apparatus

1. The Unit Citation sticker shall be placed on the side window behind the driver in such a way as not to obstruct the view of the driver or any other personnel riding the vehicle.
2. The Unit Citation sticker can NOT be placed on any painted surface on any apparatus.

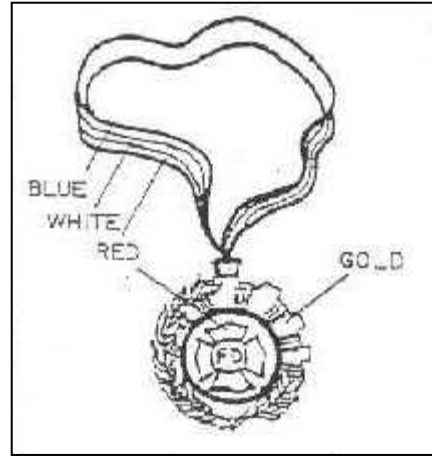
5<sup>th</sup> Time  
Awarded



6<sup>th</sup> Time  
Awarded



CITIZEN'S  
MEDAL OF HONOR



CITIZEN'S  
COMMENDATION AWARD

APPENDIX B

A. Departmental Awards

1. Listed below in their order of importance are the awards authorized for wear on the Class A blouse coat. They may also be worn on the Class B fatigue jacket or uniform shirt, but are optional.

Medal of Honor  
Silver Star  
Bronze Star  
Commendation  
Purple Heart  
Distinguished Service Award  
Special Awards (ex: Fire Chief's Citation)  
Unit Citation  
Meritorious Service Award

B. Manner of Wearing

1. Medals are worn on the Class A blouse coat, the Class B fatigue, and the Class B uniform shirt only. They shall be worn up to three in a single row. When more than three medals have been received, they shall be worn in horizontal rows of three each. If medals are not in multiples of three, the top row will contain the lesser number and will be centered over the lower one. Medals will be worn without spaces between medals or rows of medals.
2. On Class A blouse coats, medals will be worn with the lower edge of the bottom row centered 1/4 inch above the name tag which is worn as per S.O.P. Personnel-01.
3. On Class B fatigue jackets, medals will be worn with the lower edge of the bottom row centered 1/4 inch above the name tag which is worn as per S.O.P. Personnel-01.
4. On Class B uniform shirts, medals will be worn with the lower edge of the bottom row centered 1/4 inch above the name tag which is worn as per S.O.P. Personnel-01.
5. To prevent coat lapels from covering medals, they should be aligned with the center of the medal row centered on the name tag. Rows of medals where more than 50% of the medal is covered by the coat lapel may contain two medals each.

C. Arrangement

1. Arrange ribbons in order of importance, in rows from the top down, from the button line to the right sleeve within rows. Wear either the three highest ribbons or all ribbons, if you have earned three or more.

CLASS "A" UNIFORM

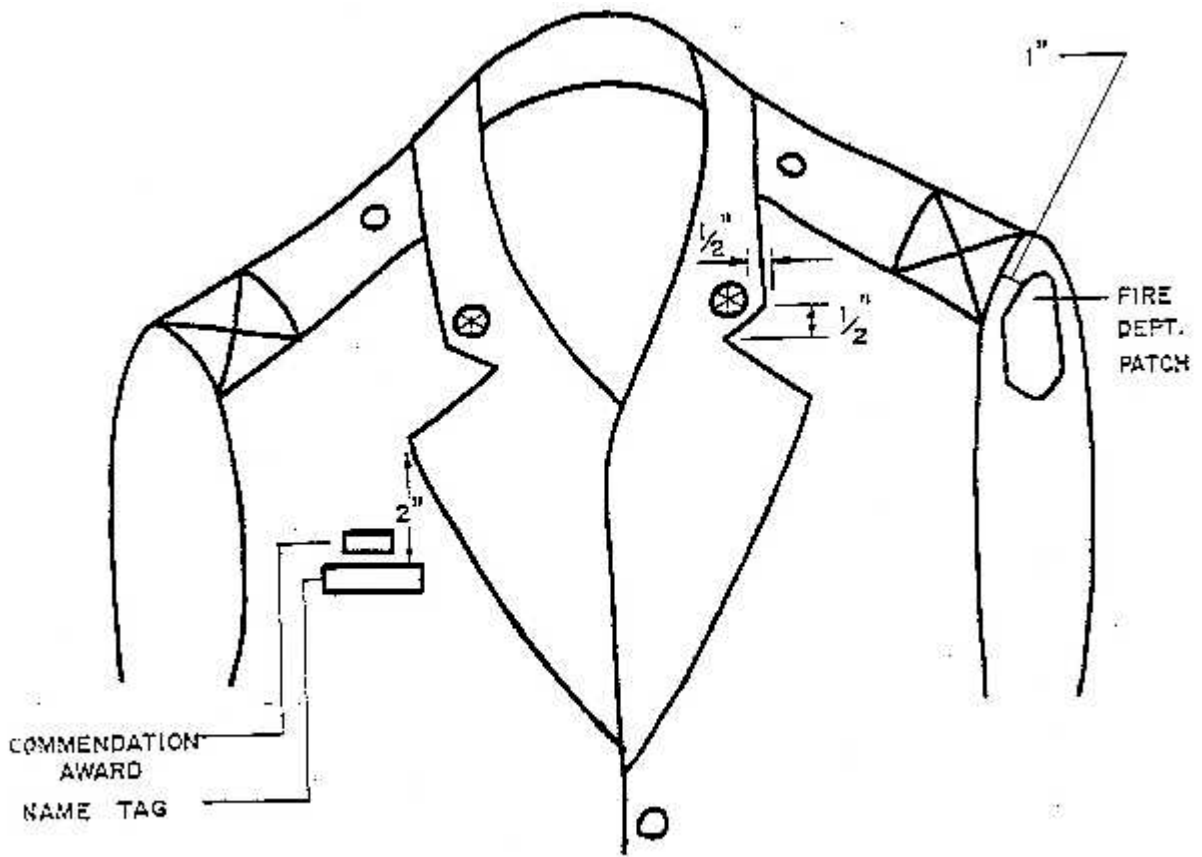


FIGURE 1