

CIVIC DECORATION ~ BELGIUM

The Civic Decoration (French: Décoration Civique, Dutch: Burgerlijke Ereteken) is a civilian decoration of the Kingdom of Belgium. It was first established by royal decree on the 21st July 1867 to reward exceptional acts of bravery, devotion or humanity. A further royal decree of the 15th January 1885 extended the award to state civil servants for long service by a mere change of ribbon. The award statue was once again amended by royal decree in 1902 to include long service in the Civic Guard and firefighters, each with its distinctive ribbon. Two wartime variants were created to reward civilians who distinguished themselves during World Wars.



Civic Decoration ~ Belgium

The Civic Decorations 1914-1915 (later dated 1918) was created on the 18th May 1915 to reward civilians and non-combatants who served their country with distinction during the First World War.

A similar Decoration was also established for the Second World War on the 21st July 1944 by the Belgian government in exile. The Civic Decoration, previously solely awarded by Royal Decree, has been awarded directly by regions and communities since the 1993 federalisation of Belgium.

Classes

The Civic Decoration is awarded in two categories:

- a) The Civic Cross (further subdivided into a First and a Second Class)
- b) The Civic Medal (further subdivided into a First, Second and Third Class)

These classes are common to all types of the Civic Decoration.

Award Criteria

The Civic Decoration for long and distinguished service in the administration and firefighters is awarded:

- a) Civic Cross: for 35 years of meritorious service, with the First Class going to employees of higher rank;
- b) Civic Medal: for 25 years of meritorious, with the First Class going to employees of higher rank;

The Civic Medal Third Class (bronze) which was principally intended for award to indigenous personnel in the colonies, is no longer awarded. The Decoration for exceptional acts of bravery, devotion or humanity is awarded on a case-by-case basis. The Civic Cross First Class for exceptional acts of bravery, devotion or humanity is only awarded posthumously.

Award Description

The badge of the Civic Cross is a white enameled Maltese cross with the central medallion bearing the monogram of King Leopold I or of King Albert I (for the 1914-1918 Cross) on the obverse and reverse. Between the arms of the Cross are:

- a) Crossed Swords for the Civic Cross 1914-1918;
- b) Crossed Flaming Torches for the Civic Cross 1940-1945;
- c) A Burgundy Cross for the Civic Cross for administrative services and for services as a firefighter;

The cross First Class is gilt, the Second Class is silver.

The Medal is vaguely octagonal and looks like a closed Florian cross, it bears the relief image of the Civic Cross. The medal for 1914-1918 is topped with crossed swords; the medal for 1940-1945 is topped with crossed flaming torches. The medal first class is gold, the second class is silver and the third class is bronze.

The ribbons of the Civic Decoration and Medal differ with the type of award:

- a) The ribbon is red with three vertical black stripes when the award is for long and distinguished service in the administration;
- b) The ribbon is red with two vertical black stripes bordered on each side by a yellow line when the award is for exceptional acts of bravery, devotion or humanity;
- c) The ribbon is green with two vertical white stripes when the award is for long and distinguished service as a firefighter;
- d) The ribbon is pale green with vertical black, yellow and red stripes on each edge (black towards the centre) and a central vertical gold stripe for the 1914-1918 award;
- e) The ribbon is saffron with vertical black, yellow and red stripes on each edge (red towards the centre) and a central vertical stripe for the 1940-1945 award;

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Sources

Wikipedia Web-Site ~ Belgian Military Decorations & Medals; Belgian Civic Decorations & Medals – www.wikipedia.com.uk

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