



The Army authorized the new Combat Action Badge May 2 to recognize soldiers who engage the enemy but are not eligible for the Combat Infantryman's Badge or Combat Medical Badge. The award is VFW's latest membership qualifier.

Combat Action Badge Now Official

New Army Award Recognizes Non-Traditional Combatants

VFW HAS A new membership qualifier: the Combat Action Badge (CAB). The Army created the CAB on May 2, 2005, to recognize soldiers who engage in firefights, but are not eligible for the Combat Infantryman's Badge or Combat Medical Badge.

It is an acknowledgement of the non-traditional nature of warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, where there is no such thing as a "front line." In fact, the first soldiers to receive the CAB on June 29 were from the 15th Personnel Services Battalion, an administrative/human resources unit attached to the 1st Cav Division.

On Sept. 28, 2003, they were traveling in a convoy from Kuwait to Al Taqqadum, Iraq, about 50 miles west of Baghdad. They stopped for mechanical repairs and received incoming fire from nearby buildings. Several soldiers in the convoy returned fire. No GIs were hurt and no enemy fighters were confirmed killed.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Mark Trepanier, commander of eight soldiers in the convoy from the 15th PS Bn., told *Army Times* that he never fired another shot during the

year he was in Iraq. Nonetheless, creation of the CAB acknowledges that all GIs in Iraq and Afghanistan, regardless of the military occupation specialty (MOS), must be ready to engage the enemy anywhere at any time.

"They [the enemy] don't know what our MOS is when they attack," said Sgt. 1st Class Rose Prosper, a truck commander in one of the convoy's Humvees, who received her CAB Sept. 22 along with four others at Ft. Riley, Kan. "I was proud knowing my team had the right training. They did what they had to do."

'Honorable Action' a Must

The CAB is retroactive to Sept. 18, 2001. It can be awarded to soldiers of any MOS serving in areas where hostile-fire or imminent-danger pay is authorized.

Qualifying combat actions include mortar, rocket, rocket-propelled-grenade, improvised explosive device or suicide-bomb attacks. Recipients must demonstrate honorable action while engaging or being engaged by the enemy.