



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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New Army Combat Badges Ready Soon

WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR. June 5, 2005

A new Combat Action Badge will soon be available to all Army soldiers who engage the enemy in battle.

Any Army soldier who has seen active combat while in Iraq or Afghanistan may now receive the Combat Action Badge, making tens of thousands of soldiers -- including women -- who are not in the infantry ranks and not officially in combat roles eligible for a combat award for the first time.

Army officials said the badge was designed to honor soldiers such as military police, truck drivers and fuel specialists who face perilous situations while doing their jobs in the ongoing wars.

The Army has not designed or chosen colors for the badge, which would be worn above the left pocket of a soldier's dress uniform.

The badge is the first non-medical combat distinction to honor women who are caught in battle during U.S. wars, largely because women are not assigned to frontline combat duties.

The war in Iraq has demonstrated that any soldier -- from a cook to a driver to an infantryman -- can be exposed to insurgent attacks, and the Army is seeking to honor

anyone who "is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy."

The award is retroactive to Sept. 18, 2001, the date President Bush authorized the wars against terrorism, and applies to all soldiers around the world who are assigned to an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized.