

THE
DECORATIONS
OF
SOCIALIST ALBANIA

An introductory guide

2nd Edition

Revised and expanded

Eric R. Schena

The
Decorations
Of
Socialist Albania

An Introductory Guide

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The Decorations of Socialist Albania

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A Brief History of Albania

Albania (*Shqipëria* – said to mean “Land of the Eagles”) has a long and often difficult history and only beginning in the early 20th century did it become firmly established as a sovereign nation. After Macedonian rule ended in the 2nd century BC, Albania was successively occupied variously by the Romans and later the Byzantines. As Byzantine power in the Balkan Peninsula waned, the Ottomans began to assert control over the region. However, in 1443, Gjergj Kastrioti (best known as Skanderbeg after his honorific title *Iskander Bey Arnauti*) broke from his masters and held off the Ottomans for the next twenty five years. Eventually, Albania came under Ottoman rule ten years after Skanderbeg’s death in 1478 and would remain a province until 1912. Skanderbeg remains to this day the paramount Albanian national hero.

Albania was declared a principality on December 21, 1913 after the Balkan Wars gave Albania its independence from the Ottoman Empire. On February 6, 1914, Prince Wilhelm of Wied (a nephew of the Romanian royal family) was declared Albania’s first monarch by a coalition of Western powers led by the U.S., Great Britain, France, and Italy. Plagued with internal turmoil between rival families from the start, Wilhelm tried to maintain stability, however the outbreak of WW I prevented him from obtaining the necessary funding that was promised by his western European backers and was obliged to flee Albania on September 5, 1914. Wilhelm never abdicated his claim to the throne and continued to hand out awards in the capacity of a monarch in exile for a short time thereafter.



Medal for the Accession of Wilhelm, March 7, 1914

From 1914 to 1917, Serbia, Austria, Greece, and Italy vied for control over Albania. Kosovo was occupied by Serbia while Greece attempted to annex southern Albania (which Greece called “Southern Epirus”). On June 3, 1917, Italy declared Albania a protectorate. On January 20, 1920, Albania once again secured independence when the major allied powers returned Albania to self rule in the aftermath from World War I. Despite Wilhelm’s attempts to convince the allied powers to restore him to power, an electoral government instead was created. Soon after independence, Albania entered a period of civil unrest when the liberal *Vatra* party led by Bishop Fan Noli waged a civil war against the conservative movement headed by Ahmet Bej Zogu. Zogu became prime minister in 1922 but was forced to flee to Serbia in 1924 when supporters of Noli staged a successful coup, installing Shefqet Verlaci as president and Noli as prime minister. Noli’s policies proved to be unpopular and Zogu’s supporters overthrew the liberal government on December 24, 1924 and installed Zogu as president. Zogu then consolidated his power, culminating in September 1928, when he proclaimed himself King Zog I. While some measure of

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stability was restored to the nation, an ever-increasing reliance on military and monetary support from Fascist Italy brought about enough concern for Zog to attempt to wrest control in 1934 when he expelled all of his Italian advisors. Italy responded by sending the Italian fleet to the harbor at Durrës as a show of force, after which Zog backed down. While Zog was permitted to continue to rule as king, Italian influence became even more pervasive than before: monopolistic economic concessions were granted almost exclusively to Italian companies, the Albanian currency, the franga, was pegged directly to the Italian lira, and schools were compelled to teach Italian. Throughout his political career, Zog made many enemies through blood feuds and political disputes and was the target of many assassination plots, including one remarkable attempt in 1931 on the steps of an opera house in Vienna, Austria, where Zog fended off his attackers in a running gunfight. On April 7, 1939, Mussolini sent an invasion force to put an end to the protectorate and annex Albania. Zog fled Tiranë with his family the next day on April 8, 1939. The Albanian crown was formally passed to Vittorio Emanuele III and a puppet government under the nominal leadership of Shefqet Verlaci was created but acted largely under the direction of Italy's foreign minister and Mussolini's son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano. Zog and his family then traveled between numerous nations, including Egypt and even Long Island, NY, before finally settling in France, where he died in 1961.



*Zog (left) with Ciano, 1937
(Illustrated London News)*

Italy used Albania as a springboard for its invasion of Greece in October of 1940. Greek resistance proved fiercer than anticipated and the Italian forces were beaten back well into Albania, leaving most of southern Albania occupied by Greece. With assistance from Germany, Italy was able to finally push the Greek forces out of Albania and maintain the southern border until Greece was ultimately defeated by Axis forces in April of 1941.



Badge awarded by the Albanian government to participants in the Greek and Yugoslav Campaigns of 1940-1941

World War II and the Resistance Movement

Throughout the Italian occupation, numerous small communist and nationalist revolutionary cells sprang up, but most were easily suppressed by the Italian government and thus operated in the background. In 1936 a former French teacher from Gjirokastër, Enver Hoxha, returned to Albania from Belgium and joined the Korçë Group, one of the several communist cells operating in secret. Hoxha rose quickly through the ranks and eventually moved to Tiranë where he used his tobacco shop as a front for hosting secret meetings in the back. Under Hoxha's leadership, the Korçë Group quickly rose to prominence in the revolutionary movement. In late 1941, working under the direction of the COMINTERN, agents under Yugoslav resistance leader Josip Broz Tito were sent to help coalesce the various communist cells into a unified party strong enough to mount a strong enough resistance against both Italy and Germany. In addition, assistance was also provided to the Hoxha's partisans by agents of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) who also provided support to Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia. In November 1941, the Albanian Communist Party (*Partia Komuniste e Shqipërisë* or *PKS*) was formally established under the leadership of Hoxha. In September 1942, the PKS united with other communist and nationalist organizations and created the National Resistance Movement.

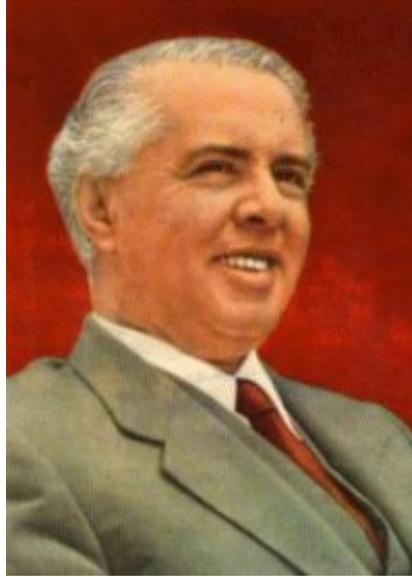


Hoxha in uniform, ca. 1944

Throughout the early years of the resistance movement, recruits were difficult to find. The partisans' morale was bolstered by Italy's surrender to the Allies in 1943 and the subsequent defeat of Italy's remaining forces and recruitments rose. Encouraged by this success, many new members joined the National Resistance Army (*Ushtrisë Nacionalçlirimtare*). In September of 1943, German paratroopers occupied Tiranë and established a puppet government headed by several members of the anti-communist National Front (*Balli Kombëtar*). Throughout World War II, the Albanian partisan army reached a peak operational strength of three army corps with six divisions with a total of 70,000 partisans in 1944, but sustained a staggering 28,000 casualties. Meanwhile, the various nationalist resistance groups began to fight for total control of the nation. The communists operating under the title of the National Liberation Front controlled much of the south and moved quickly against Balli Kombëtar and the pro-Zogist group, Legality (*Legaliteti*). Once the Germans left Tiranë in November 1944, the NLF easily wrested control over the capital city from Balli Kombëtar and created a provisional communist government with the backing and support from Tito and sponsorship from the allied forces formally establishing the Peoples Republic of Albania (*Republika Popullore e Shqipërisë* or *RPSH*).

Socialist Albania under Hoxha

After the creation of the RPSH, Hoxha quickly solidified his control over the country by eliminating his rivals. After the war, Tito exerted substantial influence over the nascent communist party in Albania. In 1948, however, Tito's increasingly reformist policies combined with Yugoslavia's aim to absorb Albania came to a head and Hoxha permanently cut off all relations with Yugoslavia and banned contact with the nation. He also ordered the purge of "Titoists" from all aspects of the Albanian government. As a result, the PKS reorganized and changed its name to the Labor Party of Albania (*Partia Punës e Shqipërisë* or *PPSH*). Hoxha thus allied himself directly with Moscow and Stalin. After the split with Yugoslavia, Albania then joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (better known as COMECON) in February 1949.



Hoxha, c. 1970

After Stalin's death in 1953, relations between the USSR and Albania were cautious at best. In 1955, it joined the Warsaw Treaty Organization as a founding member. However, as Nikita Khrushchev showed greater acceptance of Tito's "separate road to socialism" as well as his policies of de-Stalinization, Hoxha became more concerned over resumed Yugoslav domination of the region. Beginning around 1958, Albania thus began to court China as an ally. Throughout the early 1960s, the split between the USSR and China became fractious at best and increasingly hostile. Throughout this period of Sino-Soviet discord, Albania allied itself with China, to which the Soviet Union retaliated by cutting off much of its economic support to Albania and eventually, in December 1961, Moscow broke all relations with Tiranë. Despite the separation from COMECON, Albania continued some foreign trade with Eastern Bloc nations. In response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Albania formally left the Warsaw Pact, even though it had no active involvement in the organization since the early 1960s.

When China began its Cultural Revolution in 1966, Albania quickly followed suit, even modeling the Albanian military on the Chinese example by abolishing all ranks and insignia. This alliance was not permanent, as warming relations between the West and China in the mid 1970s provoked Albania to once again break with a communist ally in 1976, after which Albania sought no further alliances in the communist world. Soon after, Albania ratified a new constitution and changed the nation's name to the Peoples Socialist Republic of Albania (*Republika Popullore Socialiste e Shqipërisë* or *RPSSH*).

During Hoxha's forty one years of rule, Albania became one of the most insular and repressive regimes in Europe spearheaded through its feared secret police, the Directorate of State Security (*Drejtorija e Sigurimit të Shtetit*), better known as the *Sigurimi*. Hoxha himself became the center of a cult of personality and took ever more grandiose titles such as "Sole Force" and "Supreme Comrade" and even had his name carved on the side of a mountain. Always fearful of invasion by Yugoslavia, the US, and even the USSR, Hoxha had thousands upon thousands of concrete pillboxes and bunkers constructed throughout Albania, where they still dot the land today.

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In 1981, Hoxha handed over the day to day administration of the government to his handpicked successor, Ramiz Alia, living in semi-retirement until his death on April 11, 1985. Under Alia, Albania began to seek limited international alliances. As communism weakened throughout Eastern Europe toward the end of the 1980s, Alia tried to reverse some of the decades of economic decay under Hoxha's hard line policies as well as maintain a hold on communist power with a series of very limited reforms. When Bulgaria's Todor Zhivkov lost power in November of 1989, followed shortly thereafter in December 1989 by the ouster and summary execution of Romanian strongman Nicolae Ceaușescu, while publicly deriding his neighbors as "weak-willed", nevertheless Alia was compelled to open up elections to opposition parties in order to help prevent a similar fate falling upon his rule. At first, the PPSH won the elections of 1991, however, in the following year, the newly created Democratic Party won nationwide elections, thus ending decades of communist rule.

The Albanian Honors System

Albanian orders and medals from the socialist period are very poorly understood and seldom collected, even more than a decade since the regime's collapse in 1992. While the awards of many other communist states flooded the market in the mid 1990s (most notably those of the USSR, Bulgaria, and East Germany), Albanian medals continue to remain elusive for most. However, by piecing together what is known, a basic typology and chronology may be assembled to help gain insight into these seldom encountered decorations. The manufacture of Albanian awards has undergone several phases and seems to fall in line with Albania's shifting alliances during Enver Hoxha's regime.

The first decorations established by the new communist government were created on July 9, 1945: the Title of "Hero of the People", the Order of the Flag, the Medal of Remembrance, the Order "Partisan Star", and the Order and Medal of Bravery. The first awards established were for service in the anti-Fascist and partisan campaigns of World War II against both the Italians and Germans and carried a great deal of prestige.

Soon after, on October 13, 1945, three more orders and two additional medals were added: the Order of Freedom, the Order of Skanderbeg, the Order and Medal of Labor, and the Medal of Liberation.

Between the end of 1945 and 1964, several other decorations were established, most notably the titles of Hero of Socialist Labor and Mother Heroine, as well as a series of honorary titles for the arts and sciences.

On January 18, 1965, the entire honors system was completely revised. In addition to establishing many new orders and medals, some pre-existing decorations were modified as well:

- The Order "Red Star" was expanded from one to three classes and a new medal was added.
- The Order for Military Service was converted from a breast star to a ribboned badge and expanded from one to three classes.
- The Order "For Patriotic Achievements" was added in three classes to the pre-existing medal.
- The Order "For the Defense of the State Frontiers of the PRA/PSRA" was added to the pre-existing medal.
- The Order "For Maintenance of Public Security" was added to the pre-existing medal.
- The Order "For Civil Bravery" was added to the pre-existing medal, which was renamed from the Medal "For Bravery in Labor".

While not conclusive, it is also likely that this is when the switchover to the smaller size ribbon suspension took place. This may also be when production of screw back awards also ceased, as no orders created on or after 1965 have been seen using this method of attachment.

The 1965 awards structure remained largely intact with several minor additions and modifications up through to the collapse of the communist government. Law No. 6133, passed on February 2, 1980 codified many of the regulations and changes that were enacted since the 1965 restructuring. The 1980 law continued in effect until it was finally revoked by President Sali Berisha when he signed Law No. 8113 on March 28, 1996, which completely swept away the communist era honors system.

Makers

IKOM – Yugoslavia (1945 – 1948)

The earliest Albanian decorations were made shortly after the end of World War II in neighboring Yugoslavia by the state mint & metal works, IKOM (*Industrija i Kovnica Obojenih Metala* – “Industry & Forging of Non-ferrous Metals”), located in Zagreb. After the war, most economic assistance provided to Albania came from Yugoslavia. Generally, the quality of IKOM-produced decorations is high. There are several styles of IKOM screwplate. Most frequently seen are a small 18 mm screwplate and a later larger 21 mm version that was used into the 1960’s and 1970’s. The larger screwplates could be replacements for lost small size screwplates. Because screwplates are easily replaced or switched, distinct screwplate varieties are not explicitly identified in the listings.



Early IKOM screwplate with incuse lettering



a.

b.

c.

IKOM screwplates

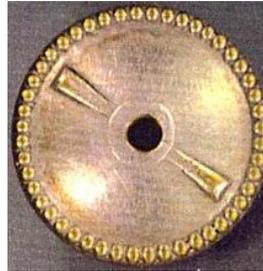
- a. *Small screwplate (plated brass) – 18 mm*
- b. *Small screwplate (nickel silver) – 18 mm*
- c. *Large screwplate – 21 mm*

MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA – Poland (c. 1952 – 1955)

Soon after Albania's entry to COMECON, trade agreements were reached between Albania and Poland, where some early screwback decorations were made by Mennica Państwowa – the State Mint of Poland in Warsaw. Mennica Państwowa began manufacturing orders and decorations sometime after 1952 and continues to manufacture orders and decorations for the post communist Polish government. Orders made by Mennica Państwowa were well made and quite hard to find. So far, there are two types of screwplates known: a maker marked 22 mm screw plate and an unmarked 27 mm screwplate particular to Polish made badges. The unmarked screwplate could be a replacement for a lost marked screwplate. Because screwplates are easily replaced or switched, distinct screwplate varieties are not explicitly identified in the listings.



a.



b.

Mennica Państwowa screwplates

- a. *Marked screwplate – 22 mm*
- b. *Unmarked screwplate – 27 mm*

USSR (c. 1945 – 1960)

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, relations between the USSR and Albania warmed as relations between Stalin and Tito soured. Military advisors were traded between the two nations – some Soviet academy badges may be seen in Albanian military groups from this period, particularly from Odessa where many Albanian officers were sent in the late 1940s.

GOZNAK did make some of the earliest decorations for Albania. A NARKOMFIN (Народный Коммисариат Финансов – People's Commissariat of Finance) document from July 1945 indicates that GOZNAK made approximately 1,050 decorations in gold, 7,600 decorations in silver, and 6,800 decorations in base metals for the Albanian government, using approximately 25 kilograms of gold and 125 kilograms in silver in the process. While the actual decorations produced were not specified, some examples of the Order "Partisan Star" – in particular the 1st class made in real gold – are known with a Soviet screwplate and are likely GOZNAK products.

Several early badges have been seen with the screwplate for the "Pobeda" ("Victory") Factory in Moscow (З-Д ПОБЕДА МОСКВА), including 15th Anniversary of the Albanian Army badge awarded in 1958 and the Excellent Driver badge. So far, no orders have been seen bearing this screwplate, however, they may exist.

PRÄWEMA MARKNEUKIRCHEN – East Germany (c. 1950 – c. 1968/1976)

Many Albanian orders may be found with the screwplate bearing the mark of PRÄWEMA MARKNEUKIRCHEN, Prägewerkzeugmaschinen in Markneukirchen. Prävema took over the wartime factory of well known jeweler Gustav Brehmer at the end of World War II and began making orders and medals for the DDR in 1949. Once East Germany joined COMECON in 1950, they, too, began making badges and insignia for other participating nations. Prävema became the principle manufacture of Albanian decorations throughout the mid to late 1950's and 1960's. Precisely when they ceased production of Albanian decorations is subject to much conjecture. It is possible that the production ended when Albania ceased all involvement in COMECON and the Warsaw Pact in 1968; however, it is known that several European nations continued to trade with Albania after 1968. Another possible date is 1976 when Hoxha declared that Albania would follow its own path to socialism without any external influence. It should be noted that Prävema made versions of the orders established after 1965 have not been observed presently.

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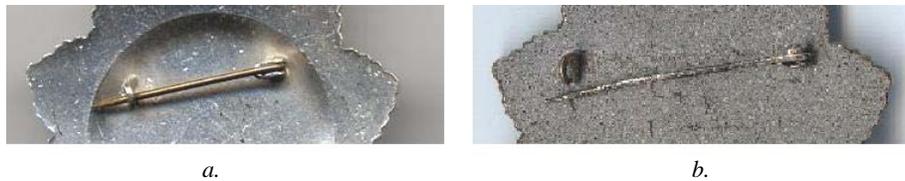
The screwplates used came in a variety of styles: a large 22 mm diameter maker marked screwplate, a smaller 18 mm diameter screwplate similarly marked. The Order of the Partisan Star had a unique Soviet style 32 mm diameter screwplate that has a screw pitch very close to other Prävema made decorations, thus it is likely to be of their manufacture, however, assignment of this style of screwplate to Prävema remains conjecture at present. Because screwplates are easily replaced or switched, distinct screwplate varieties are not explicitly identified in the listings.



Prävema screwplates

- a. Large marked screwplate – 22 mm*
- b. Small marked screwplate – 18 mm*
- c. Small marked screwplate with mirror reverse – 18 mm*
- d. Large unmarked screwplate – 32 mm*

Prävema also made pin back decorations. There are two observed varieties of the horizontal pin back assembly: one with a scooped out/dished reverse and another that is flat. The dished version is of comparable quality as the screwback Prävema examples. The flat reverse pin back is of lower quality but it shares the same die characteristics as Prävema made decorations. The center medallion on both the dish reverse and flat pin back examples of the Order of Skanderbeg are the same as on Prävema made screwback examples. So far, these pin assemblies have only been seen on the Order of Skanderbeg, but it may also have been used on other orders. Several examples of the Order of Skanderbeg have also been seen with a pin assembly very similar to that used on the ribbon assemblies for East German medals. It is not known when this assembly was used.



Prävema pin back assemblies

- a. Dished reverse – pin 23 mm long*
- b. Flat reverse – pin 31 mm long*

UNMARKED – Albania (c. 1965 – 1992)

Sometime beginning in the 1960s or 1970s, the production of awards was transferred to a local factory in Tiranë. Unfortunately, the overall quality is markedly inferior compared to their non-Albanian made brethren. The nadir of quality was around the 1980s when most of the components appear to have been cast rather than struck. Four decades of hard-line Stalinist rule and forced industrialization taxed the nation's industrial capacity to its limits and this had a negative impact on overall quality. The factory still makes decorations for the current government in Albania. While unmarked, the pinback decorations are easily distinguishable from Prävema made pinback examples by the use of a safety type pin secured to the back of the decoration either horizontally or vertically by means of a hollow tube. The horizontal pin style was the first type used, then was replaced sometime in the mid 1980s with the less practical vertical style.



a.



b.

Albanian-made pin back assemblies

- a. *Horizontal pin – 23 mm*
- b. *Vertical pin – 20 mm*

Ribbon Suspensions

Albanian orders and medals may be found on one of two types of ribbon suspension: a large narrow five-sided suspension approximately 50 mm tall and a smaller five-sided suspension approximately 42 mm tall. The earliest large suspension frames were made of a nickel alloy with a separate zinc plate, while later examples were made of two brass plates. Prävema made suspensions were of a distinct type. Made entirely of brass, these German made examples have the pin assembly mounted on the back plate by means of a small circular disk instead of the usually seen two loops on the back plate.

Sometime in the mid 1960s a smaller ribbon suspension made from all brass or copper parts were employed and were used up to the end of the communist period. The date of the exact change over from the larger to the smaller suspension is not known for certain, though most orders created after the 1965 restructuring appear on the small suspension. There are inconsistencies with the usage of the large as versus the small suspensions. Examples of all three classes of the Order “Red Star” after being divided into three classes in 1965 so far only appear on the large style suspensions, however, the Medal “Red Star”, established by the same law as with the division of the order into three classes, only appears on small suspensions. The Medal “For Defense of the State Frontiers of the PSRA” has also been seen on the large style suspension even in its post 1976 “PPSSH” form, but has also been found on the small style suspension. There are two distinct varieties of the small suspension, one with a horizontal pin and the other with a vertical pin. The vertical pin was used in the mid to late 1980s up to the fall of the communist regime.

The ribbon width on both the large and small suspensions is 20 mm.



Suspension assemblies

- a. *Large suspension (nickel/zinc) – 38 mm x 50 mm*
- b. *Large suspension (brass) – 38 mm x 50 mm*
- c. *Small suspension with horizontal pin – 34 mm x 42 mm*
- d. *Small suspension with vertical pin – 34 mm x 42 mm*



Pin assembly on a Prävema made suspension

Cases and Packets

Orders and decorations made by IKOM came in cardboard boxes with the name of the order on the lid. Later orders and medals were awarded in rather substantial wood cases covered with red or blue faux leather and lined with white satin. The red cases are quite substantial and well made and fitted to the decoration, while the blue cases appear to have been made as a generic case for all medals, rather than custom fitted. The blue cases come in two types, a long rectangular case that opens to the right for ribboned awards and a smaller square case for the screwback awards. The Albanian made decorations from the 1970s and 1980s appear to have been awarded in an unmarked burgundy cardboard box or even a plain cellophane wrapper. The exception is the Order “40th Anniversary of the PPSH”, which was awarded in a red satin covered cardboard box with a white satin lined cardboard interior tray.



Titled case for an IKOM-made Order of Freedom 3rd class

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An early Medal of Labor in red case



A Prëwema Order of the Red Star in blue case



*Order "40th Anniversary of the PPSH"
in case with lapel pin*



*Unissued Medal "For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture"
in original cellophane wrapper*

Medals in Wear

Unlike many communist nations, medals and decorations were seldom worn in public in Albania, especially after the 1960s. Finding communist period photographs of Albanian medals in wear is almost as difficult as it is finding the decorations themselves. Even public rallies do not contain images of military officers festooned in decorations as is so often the case with other Eastern Bloc nations. The regulations on wearing decorations explain this break from other communist nations. According to a 1960s French translation of the 1956 regulations, with the exception of Hero of the People, Hero of Socialist Labor, and Mother Heroine, decorations may only to be worn on specific dates:

- January 11: Anniversary of the proclamation of the Peoples Republic
- May 1: International Workers Day (“May Day”)
- July 10: Anniversary of the creation of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army
- November 7: Anniversary of the Russian October Revolution
- November 29: Anniversary of Albania’s liberation

While the wearing of decorations on the specified days was mandatory for military personnel, civilians wore them at their own discretion. Ribbon bars could be worn at any time and were mandatory for military personnel while in uniform.

In 1966-1967, Albania followed the Chinese model in reorganizing the entire military structure by eliminating all forms of rank or insignia because they were considered to be bourgeois displays of elitism incompatible with socialism. However, decorations and ribbon bars continued to be worn.

Order of Precedence

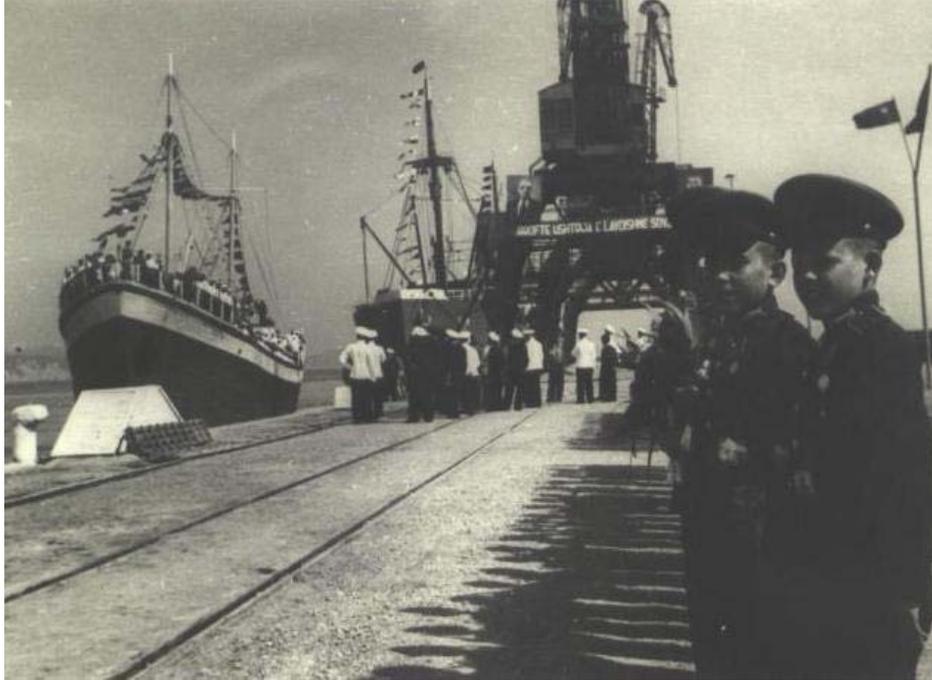
The order of precedence that follows is according to the 1982 handbook on orders and decorations. Particularly useful is that most of the discontinued and obsolete orders are included in this list. Decorations not on this list are the Order “40th Anniversary of the Labor Party of Albania” which was established after this book was published, and the mysterious Order “For Labor Merit”, about which almost nothing is known. Decorations marked with an asterisk (*) indicate those decorations which were obsolete or no longer awarded by 1980 but still permitted to be worn.

1. Title “Hero of the People”
2. Title “Hero of Socialist Labor”
3. Order of Freedom 1st class
4. Order of the Flag
5. Medal of Remembrance*
6. Order “Partisan Star” 1st class
7. Order of Skanderbeg 1st class
8. Order “For Patriotic Achievements” 1st class
9. Order “For Defense of the Socialist Homeland” 1st class
10. Order “Red Banner of Labor” 1st class
11. Order of Freedom 2nd class
12. Order “Partisan Star” 2nd class
13. Order of Skanderbeg 2nd class
14. Order “For Patriotic Achievements” 2nd class
15. Order “For Defense of the Socialist Homeland” 2nd class
16. Title “Mother Heroine”
17. Title “Teacher of the People”
18. Title “Artist of the People”
19. Title “Painter of the People”
20. Title “Sculptor of the People”
21. Title “Distinguished Laborer in Science & Technology”
22. Order of Freedom 3rd class
23. Order “Red Banner of Labor” 2nd class
24. Order “Partisan Star” 3rd class
25. Order of Skanderbeg 3rd class
26. Order “For Patriotic Achievements” 3rd class
27. Order “For Defense of the Socialist Homeland” 3rd class
28. Order of Bravery*
29. Title “Meritorious Teacher”
30. Title “Meritorious Artist”
31. Title “Meritorious Painter”
32. Title “Meritorious Sculptor”
33. Order of Labor 1st class
34. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Mining & Geology” 1st class
35. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture” 1st class
36. Order “For Distinguished Defense Service” 1st class
37. Order “For Distinguished State & Community Service” 1st class
38. Order “Naim Frasheri” 1st class
39. Order of Military Service 1st class
40. Title “Distinguished Master of Profession”
41. Title “Exemplary Oil-Worker and Exemplary Miner”*
42. Order “Red Star” 1st class
43. Order “For Brave Deeds”
44. Title “Good Oil Worker and Good Miner”*
45. Order “Motherhood Glory” 1st class
46. Order of Labor 2nd class
47. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Mining & Geology” 2nd class

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48. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture” 2nd class
49. Order “For Distinguished Defense Service” 2nd class
50. Order “For Distinguished State & Community Service” 2nd class
51. Order “Naim Frasher” 2nd class
52. Order “For the Defense of the State Frontiers of the PRA/PSRA”
53. Order “For Maintenance of Public Security”
54. Order “For Civil Bravery”
55. Order of Military Service 2nd class
56. Order “Red Star” 2nd class
57. Order “Motherhood Glory” 2nd class
58. Order “For Meritorious Service to the People”
59. Order of Labor 3rd class
60. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Mining & Geology” 3rd class
61. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture” 3rd class
62. Order “For Distinguished Defense Service” 3rd class
63. Order “For Distinguished State & Community Service” 3rd class
64. Order “Naim Frasher” 3rd class
65. Order of Military Service 3rd class
66. Order “Red Star” 3rd class
67. Order “Motherhood Glory” 3rd class
68. Medal of Bravery*
69. Medal of Liberation*
70. Medal “For Patriotic Achievements”
71. Title “Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner”*
72. Medal of Labor
73. Medal “For Distinguished Labor in Mining & Geology”
74. Medal “For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture”
75. Medal “For Distinguished Defense Service”
76. Medal “For Distinguished State & Community Service”
77. Medal “Naim Frasher”
78. Medal “For Brave Deeds”
79. Medal of Military Service
80. Medal “For Long Service in the Armed Forces”
81. Medal “For the Defense of the State Frontiers of the PRA/PSRA”
82. Medal “For Maintenance of Public Security”
83. Medal “For Civil Bravery”
84. Medal “Red Star”
85. Medal “For Meritorious Service to the People”
86. Gold Medal
87. Motherhood Medal - silver*
88. Motherhood Medal – bronze*
89. Medal for the 10th Anniversary of the Army*

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Soviet naval visit to Albania, June 1954

This and the following three photos were taken by a Soviet naval officer on board a vessel of the Black Sea Fleet. Although the location was not indicated, this is most likely the principal Albanian port city of Durrës.

(Andrew Scoulas collection)



Albanian and Soviet naval officers, June 1954

The Albanian officer to the left is wearing a Komsomol membership badge (left) and a badge for "300 Years of the Unification of Ukraine with Russia" badge (right) which were removed from a sailor's uniform by the ship's captain and given to him earlier that day.

(Andrew Scoulas collection)

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*Soviet sailors parading in Albania, June 1954
(Andrew Scoulas collection)*

Reference Materials

Comprehensive references on Albanian decorations are often times harder to find than the decorations themselves. For many years, the two principle English language references to Albanian decorations prior to the collapse of communism were the following two books:

Hieronymussen, Paul, *Orders, Medals and Decorations of Europe in Colour*, 1967.

Werlich, Robert, *Orders and Decorations of All Nations: Ancient and Modern, Civil and Military*, 1971.

These two books provided fragmentary information based on pre-1965 regulations regarding decorations. Even though access to information is substantially easier in the post communist era, original primary source material from Albania still remains very difficult to locate. Documents relating to the awards system were not published for public use but were instead produced in limited numbers for the exclusive use of governmental agencies. There are three known editions of the Albanian handbook: 1956, 1968 and 1982. The documents and handbooks that serve as primary source materials herein are:

Réglement sur les Titres, Ordres et Médailles de la République Populaire D'Albanie, Paris, no date (c. 1962 – 1964). This document is a typed French translation of the 1956 Albanian government handbook as well as supplemental laws and decrees up to 1962 and was used by the French Chancery of the Legion of Honor (*La Grand Chancellerie de la Légion d'honneur*).

Titujt, urdhërat dhe medaljet e Republikës Popullore të Shqipërisë, Tiranë, 1968. The institution dates for most of the decorations listed herein are from an expurgated version of this book.

Titujt nderit dhe dekoratat e Republikës Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë (Ligji dhe Vendimi), Tiranë, 1982. It is from this book that most of the detailed information on order of precedence, award criteria, and ribbon colors used herein were derived.

Several of the communist era decrees and laws from the late 1960s onwards are available in Albanian at the State Archives website (<http://www.qpz.gov.al>). Some of the decrees available at the site and used herein include:

Decree No. 4400, dated June 7, 1968: *Mbi një ndryshim në dekretin nr.715, datë 9.7.1949 mbi krijimin e urdhërit dhe medaljes së “shërbimit ushtarak” dhe në dekretin nr.3955, datë 18.1.1965 mbi ndarjen e urdhërit “Ylli i Kuq” në tre klasa dhe mbi krijimin e medaljes “Ylli i Kuq”.*

Decree No. 4783, dated December 24, 1970: *Mbi disa ndryshime në dekretet nr.1943 e 1944 datë 25.10.1954.*

Decision No. 214, dated February 15, 1973: *Mbi dekoratat e Luftës Nacionalçlirimtare dhe të urdhrit e medaljes “Për veprimtari patriotike”.*

Law No. 6133, dated February 2, 1980: *Për titujt nderit dhe dekoratat e Republikës Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë.*

The State Mint of Poland, Mennica Polska (Mennica Państwowa), has a brief history of its operations on the web:

<http://www.mennica.com.pl/english/index.html>

About the Second Edition

In no way should this guide be considered complete or comprehensive, but rather as a “living” document and a foundation upon which further research in these oft-overlooked awards may be built. It is a collection of snippets of information gleaned from various sources (books, the internet, and personal correspondences), some of which may be inaccurate, but is included here in the absence of proof to the contrary. In addition, the chronology of manufacturing varieties should be considered conjectural at this point. Varieties are listed that may not exist but are included based on evidence from similar examples. The first edition included numbers of decorations issued; however, since no original source documentation or other proof could be located to confirm these numbers, they have been removed from this edition. The decorations are listed in the order of precedence as set forth in the 1982 handbook. Decorations not mentioned in the handbook are included at the end.

Since posting the first edition at Gentleman’s Military Interest Club (<http://gmic.co.uk>), I have received many excellent suggestions and new information that has helped me to eliminate many of the uncertainties, guesses and mysteries surrounding these enigmatic decorations. Three people in particular provided invaluable information and assistance and to them I owe an unpayable debt of gratitude: Peter Groch for providing information and reference material to which I had no previous access as well as photographs of numerous decorations without which much of the mysteries and inconsistencies listed in the first edition would have remained uncorrected; Olivier Comault for sending me a copy of the early 1960s French translation of an early Albanian set of regulations; and to Besian Bocka for all of his generous assistance in locating many of the medals illustrated below as well as his kind sharing of knowledge of his family’s awards. I would also like to thank Ed Haynes and Andrew Scoulas for providing detailed critiques of this modest work. In addition, I am also grateful to Angel Garbatchkov from www.ShopBulgaria.com and to Anatoly Gasretov for providing photos of many orders and medals. Thanks also go to Gerd Becker, Rusty Smolov, Jeff Floyd, Rick Lundström, Jan Van de Vel, and Jeff Campbell for their valuable input and contributions to this rudimentary guide.

Corrections and additions are most welcome – in such a comparatively little studied and understood field, the more sharing of information, the better. The author may be contacted at eschena@hotmail.com.

**The
Titles, Orders and Medals
of
Albania**

1. Title “Hero of the People” Titulli “Hero i Popullit”

Founded on July 9, 1945, the Title “Hero of the People” is the highest honor in Albania. The title was awarded by the Presidium of the Peoples Assembly acting on a recommendation from the government to citizens, soldiers, officers, warrant officers, and generals in both the armed forces and in the Ministry of the Interior:

1. For heroic acts in the accomplishment of duties while defending the territory of Albania;
2. For personal or collective heroic accomplishments in time of war; and
3. For courage and resolve in directing military units to victory against the enemy under difficult combat conditions thus rendering great service to the state and to the people.

Recipients of the title receive a certificate of the title as well as the badge. The families of those recipients of the title who die or are declared missing are entitled to a monthly pension of 3,000 leks independent of any other pension or source of revenue. The recipient or the family of a recipient who was either killed or died has priority right in the acquisition of travel vouchers. They are also entitled to priority in admission to all schools or courses of special instruction. Upon the death of the recipient, the medal itself was returnable to the Presidium of the Peoples Assembly, while the certificate could be retained by the family as a memento.

There are two versions of this decoration. The first version was modeled loosely on the Yugoslav Order of the National Hero and was worn as a neck badge. An example of this extraordinarily rare decoration is in the Museum of Military History in Budapest, Hungary. The design from the Yugoslav style neck badge to the Soviet style small star appears to have been made with Decree No. 1943 dated October 24, 1954, at the same time the title of “Hero of Socialist Labor” was instituted. The first hero stars had a statute fineness of 18 karats and weighed 21.5 grams. In 1970, the fineness of the decoration was set at 20 karats and weight at 18.5 grams.

First Design Badge (1945-1954): Large gilt bronze medallion approximately 50 mm in diameter with an idealized helmeted bust of Skanderbeg facing left surrounded by an oak leaf wreath. Reverse design is believed to be the same as the obverse. Entire badge is suspended from a neck ribbon.

Type 1: Gilt bronze neck badge, unmarked (most likely made by IKOM)

Second Design Badge (after 1954): Large plain gold star approximately 28 to 30 mm across suspended from a ribbon assembly similar to that of the Soviet Gold Star Medal/“Hero of the Soviet Union”. The reverse has the inscription, **HERO I POPULLIT**.

Type 2: Small pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: 18 karat gold star weighing 21.5 grams approximately 30 mm across, unmarked (1954-1970)

Var. 2: 20 karat gold star weighing 18.5 grams approximately 28 mm across, unmarked (after 1970)

Var. 3: Gilt bronze star approximately 30 mm across, unmarked (unconfirmed)

Ribbon:



Type 1 ribbon



Type 2 ribbon

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Type 1

This example is located at the Museum of Military History, Budapest.

(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Type 2

(Illustration from 1982 handbook)

2. Title “Hero of Socialist Labor” Titulli “Hero i Punës Socialiste”

Founded in October 25, 1954, the title of “Hero of Socialist Labor” was the highest labor award in Albania. It was awarded to people, collectives, and factories that performed outstanding achievements in production, agriculture, science, and inventions. It was also conferred on those who obtained exceptional and permanent achievements, which made discoveries of great importance for the entire nation in industry, mining, construction, transportation, the arts, commerce, sciences, economics, and agriculture. The title was also conferred to leaders of the Party and the State which were characterized by their exceptional merits.

As with the title of “Hero of the People”, recipients of the title of “Hero of Socialist Labor” received a certificate of the title as well as the badge. The families of those recipients of the title who die or are declared missing were entitled to a monthly pension of 3,000 leks independent of any other pension or source of revenue. The recipient or the family of a recipient who was either killed or died has priority right in the acquisition of travel vouchers. They are also entitled to priority in admission to all schools or courses of special instruction. Upon the death of the recipient, the medal itself was returnable to the Presidium of the Peoples Assembly, while the certificate could be retained by the family as a memento.

The first version of the medal had a statute fineness of 18 karats and weighed 21.5 grams. In 1970, the fineness of the decoration was set at 20 karats and weight at 18.5 grams. At some point, a gilt bronze version was also issued, though it is not known when these decorations began to be manufactured.

Badge: Large plain gold star with a hammer and sickle suspended from a ribbon assembly similar to that of the Soviet Hammer & Sickle Medal / “Hero of Socialist Labor”. The reverse is plain except for the inscription in three lines, **HERO / I PUNES / SOCIALISTE**.

Type 1: Small pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: 18 karat gold star weighing 21.5 grams approximately 30 mm across, unmarked (1954-1970)

Var. 2: 20 karat gold star weighing 18.5 grams approximately 28 mm across, unmarked (after 1970)

Var. 3: Gilt bronze star approximately 30 mm across, unmarked

Ribbon:



The Decorations of Socialist Albania



Type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Type 1 var. 3
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

3. Order of Freedom Urdhëri i Lirisë

The Order of Freedom was established on October 13, 1945 in three classes as a reward for those who have distinguished themselves through great acts of patriotism and extraordinary merit for the strengthening of socialism.

The first class of the order was the highest order in Albania and ranked below the Hero titles and was awarded to citizens, collectives, governmental organizations, and social organizations that performed acts of great patriotic merit towards the security of liberty and the territory of the nation as well as to those who have performed great services for the Party, nation and the people towards the reinforcement of socialism.

The second class was awarded to citizens, collectives, governmental organizations, and social organizations for proven fidelity and great contribution towards the liberty and independence for the people. It was also awarded for excellent organization and direction in governmental and social sectors and for excellent labor contributions towards productivity in numerous economic sectors as well as scientific research.

The third class was awarded to citizens, collectives, governmental organizations, and social organizations for fidelity and valuable contributions to the people towards freedom and independence. It was also awarded for excellent organization and direction in public and social sectors and for excellent labor contributions towards successful productivity in numerous economic sectors.

All three classes were made of gilt nickel silver, gilt bronze, gilt brass or plain nickel silver or white metal.

First Class: Gilt pentagonal plaque 44 mm across upon which is a red enameled star, at the center, a separately attached white silver medallion with a figure of Liberty breaking chain surrounded by a stylized gold wreath.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA (unreported)

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported)

Var. 2: Made in Albania (unreported)

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the wreath is gilt and the pentagonal plaque is white silver.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA (unreported)

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported)

Var. 2: Made in Albania (unreported)

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Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the entire badge is white silver. The central medallion is greyed silver.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA (unreported)

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported)

Var. 2: Made in Albania (unreported)

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class

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1st Class: type 1 var. 3



2nd Class: type 1 var. 3
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)



3rd Class: type 1 var. 1

4. Order of the Flag **Urdhëri i Flamurit**

The Order of the Flag was established on July 9, 1945, in one class only and was awarded for merit towards the building of socialism. The order was awarded to citizens, collectives, public institutions, and social organizations for activities that assured great quantitative and qualitative success in industry, mining, agriculture, commerce, transportation, and storage; for successful organization of farms and agricultural collectives; for brilliant activities in experimentation and development; for creating better techniques and inventions towards the benefit of the national economy; and for merit in the sciences, art, and culture.

Badge: Multisided ovoid gilt bronze or brass badge 35 x 40 mm (to top of star) with allegorical female figure holding Albanian flag, in background are mountains and below are troops in formation, below which is an open wreath. At the top is a red enameled star. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported)

Ribbon:





Type 1
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)

5. Medal of Remembrance Medalja e Kujtimit

The Medal of Remembrance was instituted on July 9, 1945 and is also occasionally referred to as the “Commemorative Partisan Star”. The medal was awarded to people and groups that participated in uninterrupted service beginning from July 10, 1943 (the date of the creation of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army) up until the liberation of Albania on November 29, 1944, either in combat or in political activities. According to the 1980 law, recipients also received the Medal of Bravery.

There are two distinct types of this decoration: the usually encountered large 48 mm version made by IKOM and a rarer 39 mm version by an as-yet unidentified maker. The 48 mm version is the first version of this decoration until later modified to the smaller version sometime later as outlined in the 1962 French translation of the regulations. Unfortunately, the one observed example of the 39 mm type lacks a screwplate, thus positive identification of the maker is uncertain.

When the decoration was first established, it ranked after the Order of Skanderbeg 3rd class and before the Order “Red Star”. Later – most likely with the 1965 restructuring – the decoration was upgraded and became the fifth highest decoration in the order of precedence. In 1982, the decoration was listed as no longer awarded.

An example of an IKOM produced piece converted by the recipient for wear on a ribbon bar is known.

Badge: White metal or silvered bronze five-rayed plaque with a red enameled flag, mounted upon which is a gilt soldier holding rifle and raising arm towards red enameled star to the left, behind is a sunburst, all surrounded by a wreath.

Type 1: Large (48 mm) screw back badge, two piece construction

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA

Type 2: Small (39-40 mm) badge, one piece construction, unidentified maker

Ribbon:



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Type 1 var. 1



Type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



Type 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

6. Order “Partisan Star” Urdhëri “Ylli Partizan”

The Order “Partisan Star” was instituted on July 9, 1945 and was awarded to officers in the Peoples Army or of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for singular merit, heroic and successful leadership of units in time of war. Military units could also receive the award for distinguished service in battle.

According to the 1962 French document, the first and second classes were made of gold and silver, however, later decorations may be made of gilt or silvered base metals. The order uses a unique 32 mm screwplate that does not bear the name of the maker. Comparing the screw pitch with other decorations, the 32 mm screwplate may have been made by Prävema, but this is conjecture. Some of the early examples, in particular the 1st class and 2nd class badges made in precious metals are likely to have been manufactured in the USSR by GOZNAK.

First Class: Large red-enameled gold star 42 mm across with gold leaf on either side.

Type 1: Screw back, unmarked

Var. 1: 22 karat gold badge

Var. 2: Gilt bronze badge

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the badge is silver.

Type 1: Screw back, unmarked

Var. 1: .800 fine silver badge

Var. 2: Silver plated bronze or base metal badge

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the badge is copper/bronze.

Type 1: Screw back, unmarked

Var. 1: Patinated copper or bronze badge

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class

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1st Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)



1st Class: type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)

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2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)



3rd Class: type 1 var. 1

7. Order of Skanderbeg Urdhëri i Skënderbeut

Named after 15th century Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastrioti, better known by his Ottoman name of Skanderbeg, the Order of Skanderbeg was established on October 13, 1945.

The order was awarded to officers of the Peoples Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a reward for services to the country and the people for organization, modernization and reinforcement of the armed forces. The order is also conferred on citizens for labor that contributed to the reinforcement and modernization of the armed forces. The order was awarded for distinguished activities and direction that resulted in the successful elevation of the combat readiness and preparedness of the army or military units; for excellent results in attaining military and political preparation; for excellent organization and leadership in the course of military instruction with troops or other officers; for accomplishments in particular duties that lead to the reinforcement of the power of the nation and combat preparedness of the army; for distinguished activity and just leadership that resulted in the elevation of the combat capacity and promptness of specialized units; and for accomplishments that lead to the reinforcement of the defense of the frontier and maintaining social order.

The order could also be awarded to officers and generals of the armed forces and Ministry of Internal Affairs for long and exemplary service:

1. The first class was given for 25 years service;
2. The second class was given for 20 years service; and
3. The third class was given for 15 years service.

The Order of Skanderbeg ceased to be awarded for long service by 1980.

The order was made out of silver, nickel silver or other white metal alloys. Some early IKOM made examples were made of silver. Some of the Prävema made examples of the first class were made out of an anodized alloy to impart the gold color.

First Class: Gilt or anodized alloy ten pointed star 48 mm across upon which is a red enameled star, at the center, a separately attached white metal medallion on a wreath with the helmeted idealized bust of Skanderbeg.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAÑSTWOWA (unreported)

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA, dished reverse

Var. 2: Made by PRÄWEMA, flat reverse

Var. 3: Made in Albania (unreported)

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the badge is nickel silver or white metal with a gilt wreath.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAÑSTWOWA (unreported)

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA, dished reverse

Var. 2: Made by PRÄWEMA, flat reverse

Var. 3: Made in Albania (unreported)

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the entire badge is silver or white metal and not enameled.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM – numbered, badge stamped on reverse with silver mark

Var. 2: Made by IKOM – unnumbered, no silver mark

Var. 3: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA (unreported)

Var. 4: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA, dished reverse

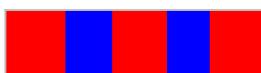
Var. 2: Made by PRÄWEMA, flat reverse

Var. 3: Made in Albania (unreported)

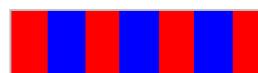
Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class

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1st Class: type 1 var. 3



1st Class: type 2 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

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2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)



2nd Class: type 2 var. 1



2nd Class: type 2 var. 2

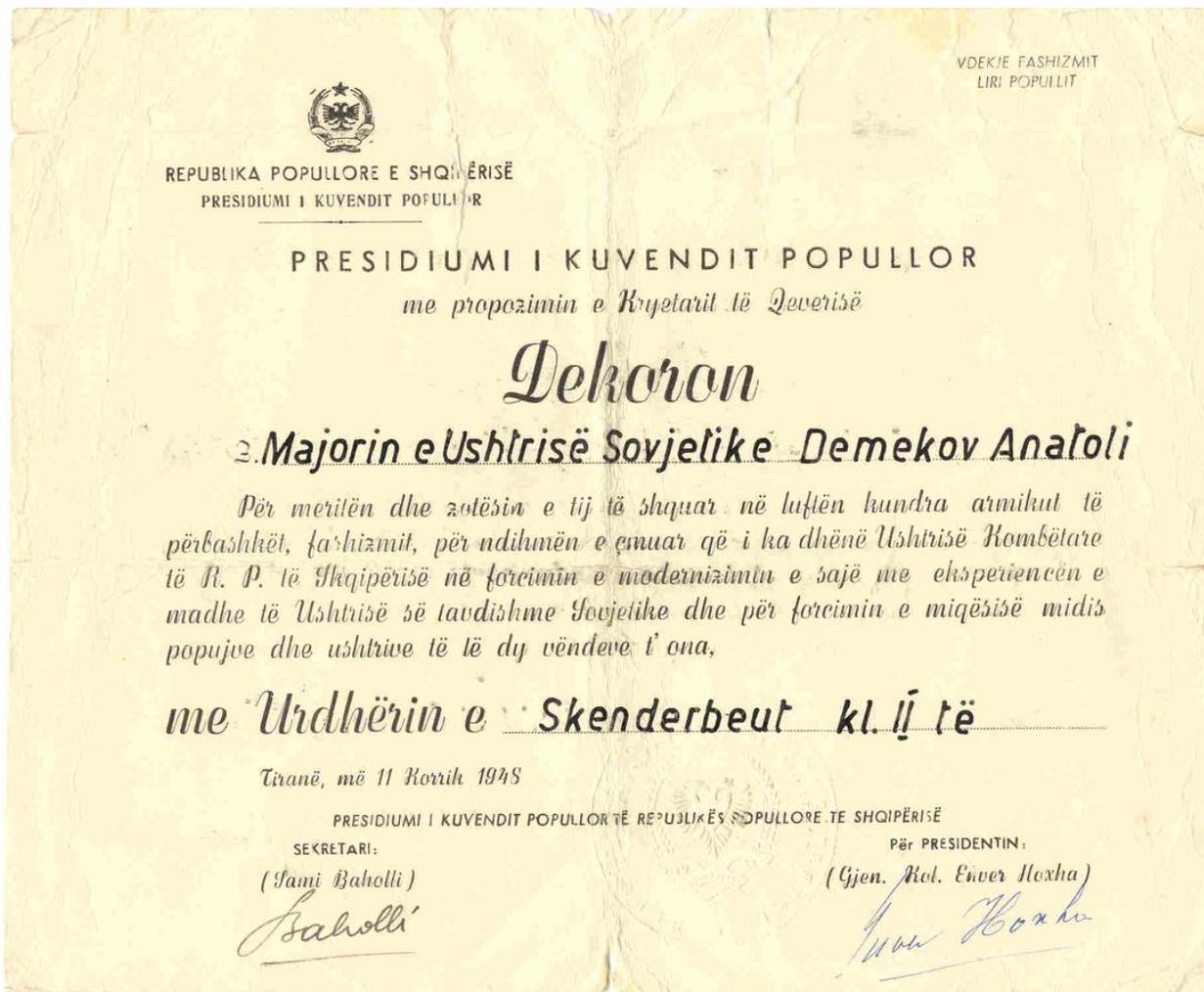
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3rd Class: type 1 var. 4



3rd Class: type 2 var. 1



Award document to a Soviet Army Major, July 11, 1948

This document awarding the Order of Skanderbeg 2nd class for service in training and helping to modernize the Albanian Army was personally signed by Enver Hoxha.

(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)

**8. Order “For Patriotic Achievements”
Urdhëri “Për veprimtari patriotike”**

**9. Medal “For Patriotic Achievements”
Medalja “Për veprimtari patriotike”**

The Order and Medal “For Patriotic Achievements” were instituted on November 26, 1962. The order was awarded to those who possess patriotic merit and are known for their support and contributions to the people in the battle for national independence, liberty and progress. The medal was awarded to those who wrote works in support for the battle for the rights and liberty of the people.

After the 1992 elections that swept away the communist monopoly of power, the order continued to be awarded. The version of the order produced after the collapse of the communist regime lacks the points extending past the medal as well as the star on the Albanian flag.

First Class: Round anodized alloy/gilt base metal medallion 40 mm in diameter with representation of the Albanian flag, below which are three mountains, behind is a sunburst. Extending from the edge of the medal are five sets of five narrow rays. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension (unreported)

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the medal is silvered base metal. Extending from the edge of the medal are five sets of three narrow rays.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension (unreported)

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the medal is dull brass or copper. Extending from the edge of the medal are five sets of one narrow ray.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension (unreported)

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Medal: Large oval copper medal 45 mm tall and 37 mm across with man in traditional costume holding a sword standing on a rock, large quill pen and scroll to the right.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension (unreported)

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

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Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class



Medal

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1st Class

2nd Class
(Illustrations from 1982 handbook)

3rd Class



1st Class
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Medal: type 2 var. 1

10. Order “For the Defense of the Socialist Homeland” Urdhëri “Për mbrojtjen e Atdheut Socialist”

The Order “For the Defense of the Socialist Homeland” was instituted on January 18, 1965. The order was awarded to officers, warrant officers, and active duty soldiers, as well as reservists, police, military units & detachments of the Peoples Army, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Peoples Self Defense Volunteer Forces, and all citizens who during occasions of aggression and provocation towards the nation displayed distinguished leadership ability, skillful and exemplary duty, special service responsibilities, skillful utilization of combat equipment, and for daring feats of bravery to repel enemy forces.

First Class: Octagonal rayed plaque in gold with crossed rifles in silver and separately attached six sided red enameled shield with black Albanian eagle. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the base is silver and rifles are gold.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the base is copper and rifles and shield are silver.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class

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1st Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



3rd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

11. Order “Red Banner of Labor” Urdhëri “Flamuri Kuq i Punës”

The Order “Red Banner of Labor” was instituted on January 18, 1965. The order was awarded to citizens, collectives, public institutions, labor groups, and social organizations for distinguished and particular actions in the struggle to build up socialism, for strengthening the defense of the nation, for great qualitative and quantitative accomplishments towards the economy in transportation, mining, agriculture, construction, trade, science, education, art, culture, and other activities.

First Class: Round rayed gold badge with hammer, sickle, laurel branch and red enameled flag.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the badge is silver.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



1st Class: type 1 var. 1



2nd Class: type 1 var. 1

12. Title “Mother Heroine” Titulli “Nënë Heroinë”

Founded on October 2, 1955, the title of “Mother Heroine” was established to encourage the birth and education of the family. When first established, the title was granted to mothers who gave birth to, raised, and educated more than ten children when the youngest is at least one year old. Children who died or were killed during World War II on active duty or died in the performance of duties in the public interest are also included. In 1980, the requirement was downgraded to a minimum of eight children.

The medal itself was worn much like the Hero of the People and Hero of Socialist Labor. Should the recipient of the title of Mother Heroine have also received either the titles of Hero of the People or Hero of Socialist Labor, then the badge is worn approximately 10 mm to the right.

The title is granted by the Presidium of the People’s Assembly acting on recommendations from the executive committees of People’s Councils in administrative districts or in the city of Tiranë.

Badge: Large gilt bronze or gilt alloy star set on multi-rayed nickel silver or white metal pentagonal base 42 mm across in size, all of which suspended from red enameled bar 38 mm x 13 mm in size with the legend **NENE HEROINE**. The decoration closely resembles the USSR Order of Mother Heroine, except substantially larger and more massive. The reverse is plain except for the hollow rivet.

Type 1: Small pin back enameled suspension

Var. 1: Separately attached ring, made by PRÄWEMA

Var. 2: Ring part of badge, made in Albania

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Type 1 var. 2

13. Title “Teacher of the People” Titulli “Mësues i Popullit”

Founded on June 16, 1950, the title of “Teacher of the People” was created in conjunction with the title of “Meritorious Teacher” to encourage development and achievements in all forms of education and to reward untiring labor in educating the youth in communism. The title was awarded for a minimum of 15 years of service in preschool, primary school, secondary school, and other higher institutions of learning and for remarkable achievements in progress in teaching that benefits communism, culture, and the building of society through education. In addition to receiving the decoration, recipients also received a monthly pension of 1,000 leks.

Badge: Round silver 31 mm medal with sky blue enameled center upon which is an open book and red enameled star, surrounded by the inscription **MESONJES I POPULLIT**, below which is a wreath. The medal is suspended by an enameled bar 27 x 7 mm with the top half red and the bottom half black. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small pin back enameled suspension

Var. 1: .800 fine silver badge, unmarked, made by PRÄWEMA

Var. 2: White metal, unmarked, made in Albania, horizontal pin

Var. 3: White metal, unmarked, made in Albania, vertical pin

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

14. Title “Artist of the People” Titulli “Artist i Popullit”

Founded on October 26, 1960, the honorary title of “Artist of the People” was bestowed upon singers, composers, orchestra directors, musicians, stage managers, ballet dancers, and actors in theater, cinema, and opera whose works displayed great artistic value towards the development of the performing arts in Albania.

When first established, the recipient of the title only received a certificate from the Presidium of the People’s Assembly. Sometime in the mid to late 1960s, a badge was created as an outward symbol of the title.

Badge: Round gilt or brass medal 27 mm in diameter with white enameled base with thin rays, upon which is a ruby red enamel band with inscription **ARTIST I POPULLIT**, at the center a black enameled Albanian double headed eagle on a bright red circle, surmounted by ruby red star. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Unmarked, made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin (unreported)

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



An unfinished badge
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

15. Title “Painter of the People”
Titulli “Piktor i Popullit”

Founded on October 26, 1960, the title of “Painter of the People” was bestowed upon painters, engravers, graphic artists, caricaturists, and poster artists whose works displayed great artistic value towards the development of the figural arts in Albania.

When first established, the recipient of the title only received a certificate from the Presidium of the People’s Assembly. Neither the 1968 guide nor the 1982 handbook have pictures of the badge for this award nor is one described. It is possible that the decoration received was the same as for the title “Artist of the People” or simply continued to just receive the certificate.

Badge: Presently unknown.

Ribbon:



16. Title “Sculptor of the People”
Titulli “Skulptor i Popullit”

Founded on October 26, 1960, the title of “Sculptor of the People” was bestowed upon sculptors whose works displayed great artistic value towards the development of the figural arts in Albania.

When first established, the recipient of the title only received a certificate from the Presidium of the People’s Assembly. Neither the 1968 guide nor the 1982 handbook have pictures of the badge for this award nor is one described. It is possible that the decoration received was the same as for the title “Artist of the People” or simply continued to just receive the certificate.

Badge: Presently unknown.

Ribbon:



17. Title “Distinguished Laborer in Science & Technology”
Titulli “Punonjës i shquar i shkencës dhe i teknikës”

Founded on January 18, 1965, the title of “Distinguished Laborer in Science & Technology” was awarded to workers in physics, mathematics, natural sciences, engineering, geology, agronomy, zoology, economics, medicine, and military sciences by whose special and distinctive contributions have greatly boosted the scientific and technical capabilities of the nation and added to the development of socialism.

Badge: Round gilt brass medal with wreath, compass, book, and other scientific apparatus. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Unmarked, made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin (unreported)

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

18. Order of Bravery
Urdhëri i Trimërisë

19. Medal of Bravery
Medalja e Trimërisë

The Order of Bravery and the Medal of Bravery were established on July 9, 1945.

The Order of Bravery was awarded to generals and officers of the Peoples Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs for intrepid command of military units on the field of battle for the defense of the borders of Albania from invaders as well as fighting against spies and other enemies of Albania. The order could also be awarded to citizens for courageous leadership in battle against spies and enemies of Albania in defense of the frontier and maintaining social order.

The Medal of Bravery was awarded to officers, warrant officers and soldiers of the Peoples Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs for display of valor in battle against the enemies of Albania in military operations or in defense of the frontiers or against spies and other enemies of the nation.

Recipients of the Medal of Remembrance also received the Medal of Bravery. Both the order and medal were listed as obsolete in the 1982 handbook.

Order: German silver or white metal five-rayed plaque 44 mm across with upon which is a gold wreath. At the center is a separately attached silver medallion of a soldier holding a rifle advancing to the right, mounted on a large red-enameled gold star.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA (unreported)

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported – possibly not produced)

Var. 2: Made in Albania (unreported – possibly not produced)

Medal: Round gilt brass medal 32 mm in diameter depicting two soldiers advancing to the left in front of a series of mountains, all surrounded by a wreath. The reverse bears the inscription: **PER TRIMËRI**.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Ribbons:



Order



Medal

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



Order: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)



Order: type 1 var. 3
Note the misaligned center medallion as compared to the base.



Medal: type 1

20. Title “Meritorious Teacher” Titulli “Mësues i merituar”

Founded on June 16, 1950, the title of “Meritorious Teacher” was created in conjunction with the title of “Teacher of the People” to encourage development and achievements in all forms of education and to reward untiring labor in educating the youth in communism. The title was awarded for a minimum of 10 years of service in preschool, primary school, secondary school, and other higher institutions of learning and for distinguished service as an educator in taking part in the elevation of social and cultural development. In addition to receiving the decoration, recipients also received a monthly pension of 500 leks.

Badge: Round 31 mm bronze or brass medal with sky blue enameled center upon which is an open book and red enameled star, surrounded by the inscription **MESONJES I MERITUAR**. The medal is suspended by an enameled bar 27 x 7 mm with the top half red and the bottom half black. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small pin back enameled suspension

Var. 1: Unmarked, made by PRÄWEMA

Var. 2: Unmarked, made in Albania, horizontal pin

Var. 3: Unmarked, made in Albania, vertical pin

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

21. Title “Meritorious Artist” Titulli “Artist i merituar”

Founded on October 26, 1960, the title of “Meritorious Artist” was bestowed upon singers, composers, orchestra directors, musicians, stage managers, ballet dancers, and actors in theater, cinema, and opera who created works of great artistic quality that contributed towards the development of the performing arts in Albania.

When first established, the recipient of the title only received a certificate from the Presidium of the People’s Assembly. Sometime in the mid to late 1960s, a badge was created as an outward symbol of the title.

Badge: Round silvered bronze or white metal badge 27 mm in diameter upon which is an artists’ conch, pen, painter’s brush and lyre with a sky blue enamel background surrounded by laurel wreath topped with a small red enameled star, all suspended from a small rectangular pin back ribbon suspension. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Unmarked, made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

22. Title “Meritorious Painter” Titulli “Piktor i merituar”

Founded on October 26, 1960, the title of “Meritorious Painter” was bestowed upon painters, engravers, graphic artists, caricaturists, and poster artists who created works of great artistic quality that contributed towards the development of the performing arts in Albania.

When first established, the recipient of the title only received a certificate from the Presidium of the People’s Assembly. Neither the 1968 guide nor the 1982 handbook have pictures of the badge for this award nor is one described. It is possible that the decoration received was the same as for the title “Meritorious Artist”.

Badge: Presently unknown.

Ribbon:



23. Title “Meritorious Sculptor” Titulli “Skulptor i merituar”

Founded on October 26, 1960, the title of “Meritorious Sculptor” was bestowed upon sculptors who created works of great artistic quality that contributed towards the development of the performing arts in Albania.

When first established, the recipient of the title only received a certificate from the Presidium of the People’s Assembly. Neither the 1968 guide nor the 1982 handbook have pictures of the badge for this award nor is one described. It is possible that the decoration received was the same as for the title “Meritorious Artist”.

Badge: Presently unknown.

Ribbon:



24. Order of Labor
Urdhëri i Punës

25. Medal of Labor
Medalja e Punës

The Order and Medal of Labor were established on October 13, 1945 as a reward for substantial contributions to economic growth and they could be awarded to individuals, factories and collectives.

The first class was awarded to citizens, collectives, public institutions, and social organizations for excellent work towards the building of socialism; for employing and improving techniques to boost labor output; for subsequent developments in science, engineering, the arts, education, and culture; and for particular merit in organizational leadership.

The second class was awarded to citizens, collectives, public institutions, and social organizations for remarkable work towards the building of socialism; for labor that resulted in superior output in production; for creation of inventions and techniques of great economic importance; for use of equipment to achieve maximal levels of conservation of resources; and for successful engineering and scientific advances thus aiding in success in the arts, education, and culture.

The third class was awarded to citizens, collectives, public institutions, and social organizations for assiduous work towards the building of socialism; for remarkable achievements in invention and engineering; for improving techniques in various sectors of labor; for excellent results in the arts, education, and culture; for exceeding labor quotas for an uninterrupted period of one year; for good usage of equipment and preservation of resources in labor; and for good organization and leadership in various sectors of labor.

The Medal of Labor was awarded to citizens, collectives, public institutions, and social organizations for meeting and exceeding plans and exceeding labor quotas for an uninterrupted period of six months; for demonstrating improved conservation of resources in production; for successful modifying supplied equipment; for the capacity for leadership in various labor sectors; and for good work in the arts, education, and culture.

There is some debate as to which end is up on the order. Many official publications show the top of the flag pole pointing to the top of the decoration (at 12 o'clock), and this is supported by the pin alignment on the reverse of the later decorations. However, the award documents show the top of the flag pole pointing to the 10 o'clock position.

First Class: Large ten-rayed gold plaque 45 mm across upon which is a separately applied smaller gold plaque with a laurel branch and flag, upon which is separately applied silver medallion in the shape of a gear with a pickax, shovel, hammer, and sickle.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAÑSTWOWA

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported)

Var. 2: Made in Albania, horizontal pin

Var. 3: Made in Albania, vertical pin

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the base is silver.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported)

Var. 2: Made in Albania, horizontal pin

Var. 3: Made in Albania, vertical pin

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the entire badge is silver.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by IKOM

Var. 2: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA

Var. 3: Made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Pin back

Var. 1: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported)

Var. 2: Made in Albania, horizontal pin

Var. 3: Made in Albania, vertical pin

Medal: Oval gilt brass medallion 35 mm x 40 mm in diameter depicting a laborer holding a large mallet over his shoulder, behind is a mountain range and below in front of him is a small tractor. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Var. 1: Flat reverse

Var. 2: Stippled reverse

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension, ring part of medal

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class



Medal

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1st Class: type 1 var. 3
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)



2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Rusty Smolov/Jan Van der Vel)



2nd Class: type 2 var. 3

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



3rd Class: type 1 var. 3



3rd Class: type 2 var. 2
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



Medal: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

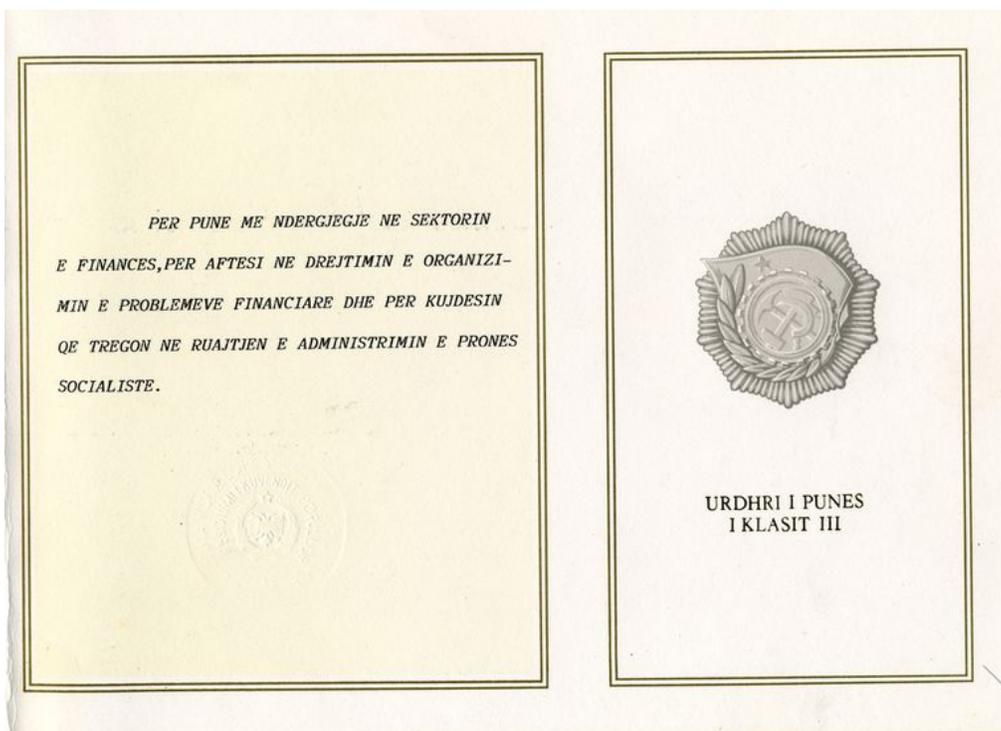
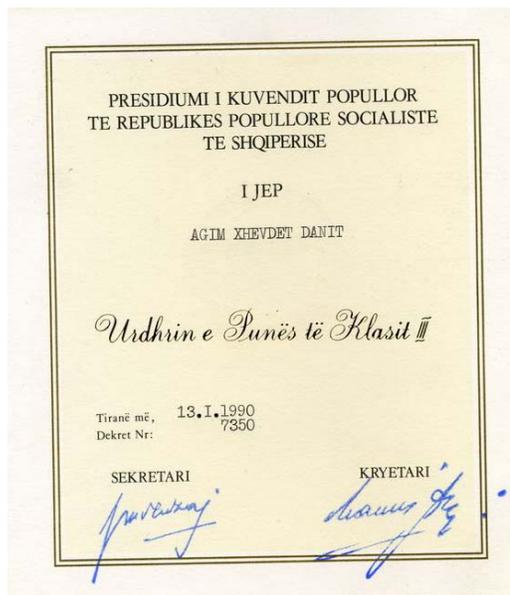
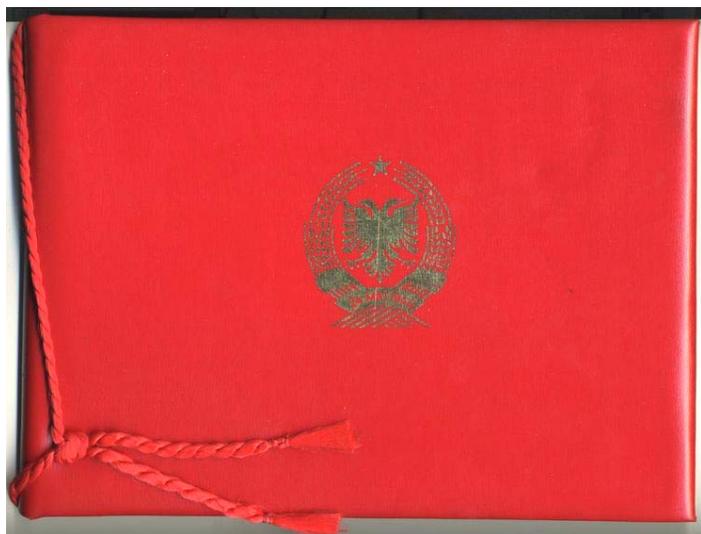


Medal: type 1 var. 2



Medal: type 2 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



Award document for the Order of Labor 3rd class, January 13, 1990

(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)

26. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Mining and Geology”
Urdhëri “Për punë të shquar në miniera dhe në gjeologji”

27. Medal “For Distinguished Labor in Mining and Geology”
Medalja “Për punë të shquar në miniera dhe në gjeologji”

The Order and Medal “For Distinguished Labor in Mining and Geology” were instituted on January 18, 1965. The order and medal were awarded to workers of the Ministry of Industry and Mining in the fields of mining, oil industry, metallurgy, and geology, as well as enterprises, factories, plants, research institutions, labor groups, and research expeditions whose efforts and contributions have significantly and substantively increased production and research in geology. The decoration was also awarded for merit in organizations and directorates for stimulating revolutionary developments in sciences and engineering, for exploiting machinery fully, and for maintenance of socialist lands.

The order may have replaced the titles of “Exemplary Oil Worker and Exemplary Miner”, “Good Oil Worker and Good Miner”, and “Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner”.

First Class: Small gilt or gold colored alloy pentagonal badge 36 mm across, at the center is a medallion with a mountain scene, at the center is a tower and two crossed mallets at the bottom.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the badge is white metal.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the badge is copper.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Medal: Round brass medal 32 mm in diameter with bust of worker wearing hardhat and mining lamp facing right towards a tower. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class



Medal

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



1st Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



3rd Class: type 1 var. 1



Medal: type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

28. Order “For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture”

Urdhëri “Për punë të shquar në ekonominë bujqësore”

29. Medal “For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture”

Medalja “Për punë të shquar në ekonominë bujqësore”

The Order and Medal “For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture” were instituted on January 18, 1965. The order and medal were awarded to workers and institutions of the Ministry of Agriculture, production and stockpiling institutions in the agricultural sectors, cooperatives, and other agricultural and labor groups for accomplishments in securing large crop yields by various means; for merit in additional directorates and organizations; for production in sowing choice quality crops; for improvements in breeding livestock; for furthering development of fruit farming; for fully exploiting agricultural equipment; for labor towards land and water reclamation; for preserving woodlands; and for development of revolutionary technical/scientific techniques in agriculture.

First Class: Small gold pentagonal badge 38 mm across with a superimposed star, at the center is a medallion with agricultural scenes, including a large wheat grain to the left, a grazing sheep, and mountains in the background.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the medal is silver.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the medal is copper.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Medal: Round copper medal 32 mm in diameter with agricultural scenes, including a large wheat grain to the left, a grazing sheep, and mountains in the background. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class



Medal

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1st Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



2nd Class: type 1 var. 1

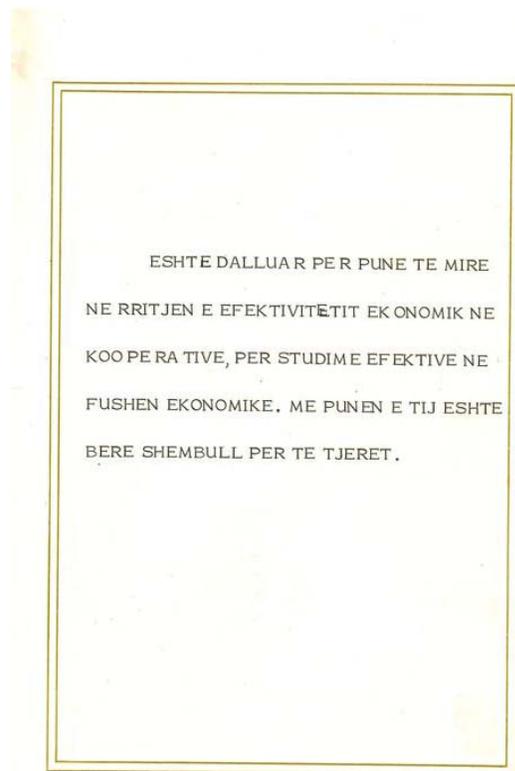
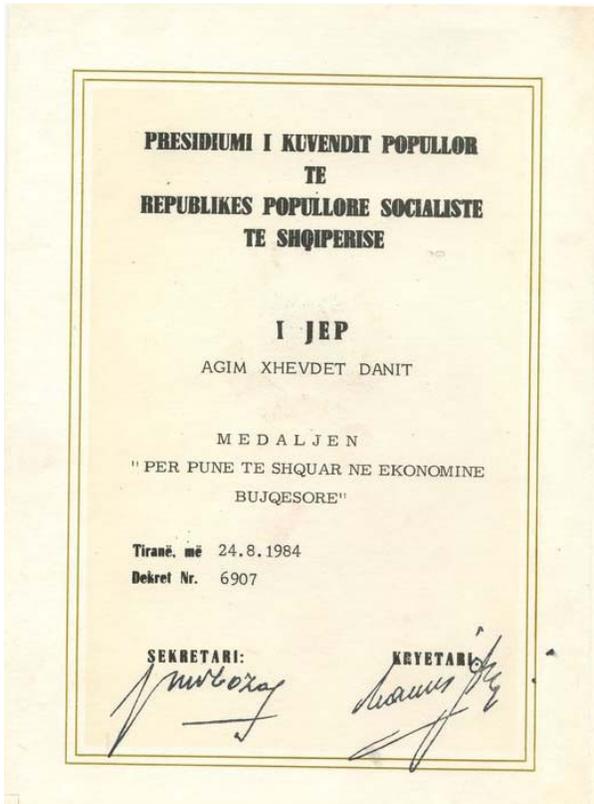
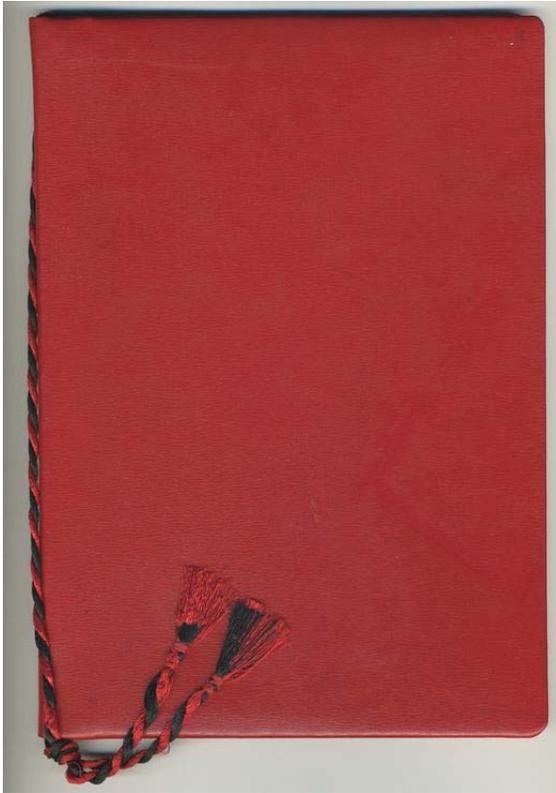


3rd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



Medal: type 1 var. 2

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



Award document for the Medal "For Distinguished Labor in Agriculture", August 24, 1990

(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)

30. Order “For Distinguished Defense Service”
Urdhëri “Për shërbime të shquara në fushën e mbrojtjes”

31. Medal “For Distinguished Defense Service”
Medalja “Për shërbime të shquara në fushën e mbrojtjes”

The Order and Medal “For Distinguished Defense Service” were instituted sometime after 1968. The order and medal were awarded to officers, warrant officers, and active duty soldiers, students in military school, as well as reservists, police, military units & detachments of the Peoples Army, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Peoples Self Defense Volunteer Forces for distinctive merit and distinguished capability in training various organizations, military units, directorates, and institutions for great progress in service to the military and to the Party in combat and political logistics; for distinguished labor towards the successful execution of the military arts, elevating and strengthening combat preparedness and the reinforcement of the defense of the nation; for distinctive and diligent work towards progress supplementing the quality and quantity of manufacture of defensive fortifications; and for able administration of valuable material and money for in units, departments and institutions under their direction.

First Class: Five-rayed gold medallion with large red enameled star and rifle/bayonet to the left and anvil-shaped object at base. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the medal is silver.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the medal is dull brass.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Medal: Round gilt brass medal 30 mm in diameter with a large red enameled star superimposed on a flag and bayonet, behind which is a multi-rayed sunburst. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class



Medal

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



1st Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



3rd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



Medal: type 1 var. 1

32. Order “For Distinguished State and Community Service”

Urdhëri “Per shërbime të shquar shtetërore dhe shoqërore”

33. Medal “For Distinguished State and Community Service”

Medalja “Per shërbime të shquar shtetërore dhe shoqërore”

The Order and Medal “For Distinguished State and Community Service” were instituted on January 18, 1965. The order and medal were awarded to workers in Party organs, state organs, and social organizations, members of people's councils and activists who have distinguished themselves in a particular way in state and community sectors for great services to the Party, nation, and people for singular merit in the development of democratization and people's power, for great services in socialist legality; for excellent organization and direction in community organizations and for completion of duties to which they were responsible.

First Class: Large red enameled star surrounded by cut out gold wreath 38 mm across. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the decoration is silver.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Third Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the decoration is copper.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Medal: Round silvered brass medal 32 mm in diameter with large red enameled flag and red enameled star above, laurel spray below.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class



Medal

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



1st Class: Type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

2nd Class: Type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



3rd Class: type 1 var. 1

Medal: type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

**34. Order “Naim Frashëri”
Urdhëri “Naim Frashëri”**

**35. Medal “Naim Frashëri”
Medalja “Naim Frashëri”**

The Order and Medal “Naim Frashëri” were instituted on January 18, 1965. Naim Frashëri (1846-1900) is regarded as the Albanian national poet and was also a prominent member of the independence movement from Ottoman rule. The order and medal were awarded to instructors at preschool, grade school, middle school, high school, and other institutions of learning, instructors and workers in art, cultural and science institutions, workers in culture, writers, critics, journalists, composers, conductors, instrumentalists, directors in theater, opera and ballet, cinematographers, ballet masters, singers, dancers, actors and artists in all genres, workers in branches of the Ministry of Education & Culture, the League of Writers & Artists of Albania, and the Union of Journalists of Albania for work and accomplishments in the field of education in training, refinement and execution of pedagogical methodologies, development and dissemination of knowledge, for training in communist cultural-artistic deeds, for ideological and artistic development of the arts, for acts of great value in educational endeavors, culture, science, letters, art, and journalism; for excellent creativity; and for particular merit in organizational direction.

First Class: Round sixteen-point rayed gold plaque 37 mm in diameter with separately applied silver medallion with a bust of Naim Frasherri facing left and a laurel branch behind and the legend **NAIM FRASHERI**.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the base is silver and the medallion is gold.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the base is copper and the medallion is silver.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Medal: Round gilt or brass medal 32 mm in diameter with a bust of Naim Frashëri facing left and a laurel branch behind and the legend **NAIM FRASHERI**. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class



Medal

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



1st Class: type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



3rd Class: type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



Medal: type 1 var. 2

36. Order of Military Service
Urdhëri i Shërbimit Ushtarak

37. Medal of Military Service
Medalja e Shërbimit Ushtarak

The Order of Military Service was created in July 9, 1949 in one class for substantial contributions to military service. On January 18, 1965, the order was expanded to three classes all suspended from a ribbon. When originally instituted, the order was awarded to generals and officers of the Peoples Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs for excellent results in preparing all military units and subdivisions towards military, political, and special preparation; for excellent organization and direction, for exemplary accomplishments for particular tasks that concerning combat reinforcement and preparation; and for excellent organization and direction in military instruction.

The medal was awarded to officers and warrant officers of the Peoples Army and Ministry of Internal Affairs for excellent results and conscientious work towards military, political, and special preparation; for rigorous accomplishments and exemplary shaping of tasks that concern combat reinforcement and preparation; and for perfect organization and direction that obtained excellent results in the course of duty.

Breast Badge in One Class Only (1949 to 1965): Large red enameled star on a multi-rayed gold plaque approximately 48 mm across with crossed rifles, upon which is a separately attached wreathed medallion with an open book.

Type 1: Screw back

Var. 1: Made by MENNICA PAŃSTWOWA

Var. 2: Made by PRÄWEMA (unreported)

First Class (after 1965): Similar to the first type above but smaller (40 mm) and suspended from a ribbon.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Second Class (after 1965): Similar to the 1st class, however plaque and book are silver, rifles are gold.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Third Class (after 1965): Similar to the 2nd class, however plaque and book are copper, rifles are silver.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

The Decorations of Socialist Albania

Medal: Round brass medal 32 mm in diameter depicting various types of military equipment (including a tank, howitzer, mortar, etc.), in the center is an open book, all surrounded by a wreath. The reverse bears the inscription **MEDALJE SHERBIMI USHTARAK.**

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension, ring part of medal, old ribbon (c. 1965 to c. 1985)

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

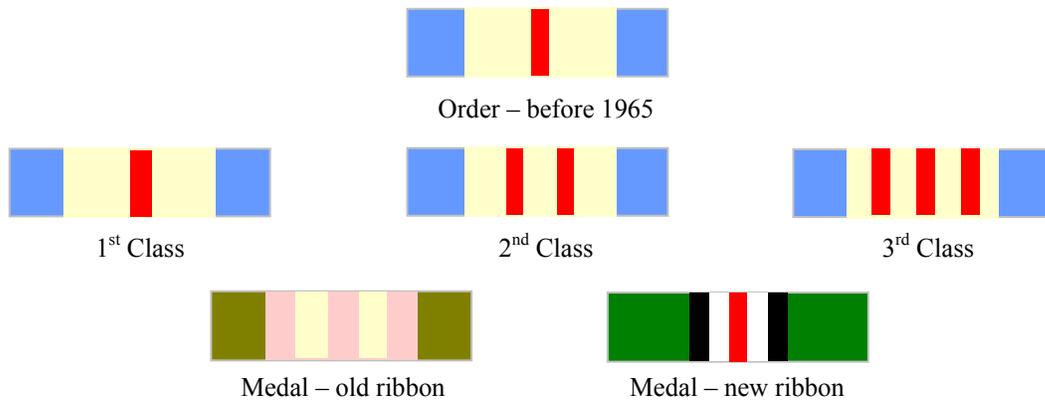
Var. 2: Vertical pin

Type 3: Small ribbon suspension, ring part of medal, new ribbon (after c. 1985)

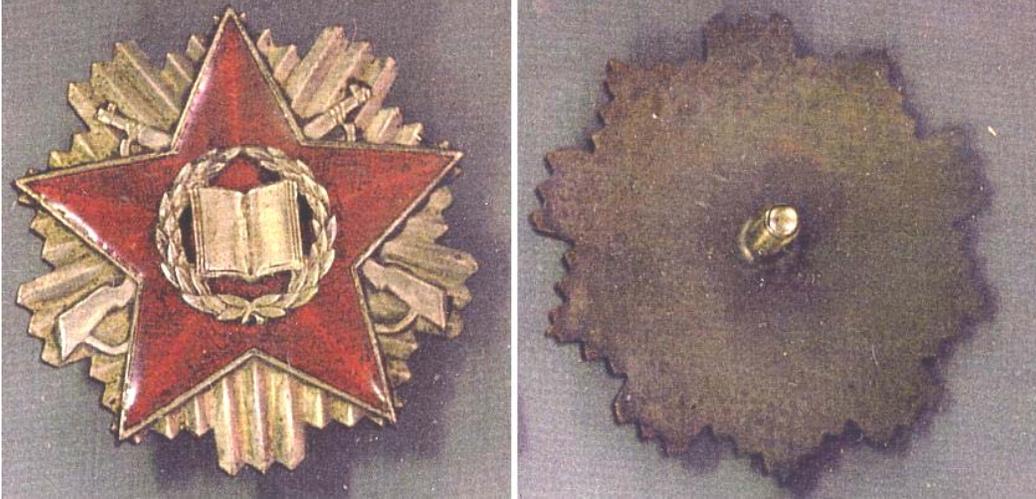
Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



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*One class (1949-1965): type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)*



*1st Class: type 1 var. 1 2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Images courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)*

3rd Class: type 1 var. 1

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Medal: type 1



*Medal: type 2 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)*

*Medal: type 3 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)*

38. Title “For Distinguished Master in Profession”
Titulli “Per mjeshtër shquar ne profesion”

The Title “For Distinguished Master of Profession” was instituted on January 18, 1965. The title was given to workers who by the quality of their specific branch of work received certification as a master in their profession and have reached a high degree of certification in their relevant trade. In addition, workers receive this title for mastery of their profession in a refined manner, by their work also produced high quality and quantity yield at low cost, fulfilled the state plan in an entirely demonstrative manner, served as an example to others by their work in their discipline, and educated others in their profession.

Badge: Round gilt brass medal 31 mm in diameter with honeycomb pattern at center surmounted by a compass and plumb bob, surrounding which is a raised border with the legend, **MJESHTER SHQUAR NE PROFESION**. The bottom of the medal is notched like a gear. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 1

39. **Title “Exemplary Oil Worker and Exemplary Miner”**
Titulli “Naftëtar i zgjedhur dhe minitor i zgjedhor”
40. **Title “Good Oil Worker and Good Miner”**
Titulli “Naftëtar i mirë dhe minitor i mirë”
41. **Title “Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner”**
Titulli “Naftëtar i dalluar dhe minitor i dalluar”

The titles of “Exemplary Oil Worker and Exemplary Miner”, “Good Oil Worker and Good Miner”, and “Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner” were founded on March 5, 1953. The titles were awarded to miners, engineers, technicians, and other worker in the mining and oil industries for periods of uninterrupted excellent service:

1. The Title “Exemplary Oil Worker and Exemplary Miner” was awarded for 10 years service;
2. The Title “Good Oil Worker and Good Miner” was awarded for 7 years service; and
3. The Title “Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner” was awarded for 4 years service.

The decorations were awarded on May 1 (International Workers Day) of each year by the Presidium of the Peoples Assembly to those miners and oil workers who qualified and were recommended for the titles by the Ministry of Mines and Geology. While noted in the 1968 book of decorations, the titles were listed as obsolete in 1980 and may have been replaced as early as in 1965 by the Order “For Distinguished Labor in Mining and Geology”.

Title “Exemplary Oil Worker and Exemplary Miner”: Round copper/bronze medal 31 mm in diameter with a large silver painted star and crossed mallets at the center, all surrounded by a wreath. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Title “Good Oil Worker and Good Miner”: Round copper/bronze medal 31 mm in diameter with a pair of crossed mallets painted silver surmounted by a silver painted star, all surrounded by a wreath. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Title “Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner”: Round copper/bronze medal 31 mm in diameter with a pair of crossed mallets at the center surmounted by a star. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Ribbons:



Title “Exemplary Oil Worker and Exemplary Miner”



Title “Good Oil Worker and Good Miner”



Title “Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner”

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Title "Exemplary Oil Worker and Exemplary Miner": type 1



*Title "Good Oil Worker and Good Miner": type 1
(Illustration from 1956 handbook)*



*Title "Distinguished Oil Worker and Distinguished Miner": type 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)*

**42. Order “Red Star”
Urdhëri “Ylli i Kuq”**

**43. Medal “Red Star”
Medalja “Ylli i Kuq”**

The Order “Red Star” was created on November 20, 1952 in one class only. On January 18, 1965, the order was divided into three classes and the Medal “Red Star” was also created. The order was awarded to members of the armed forces and of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, citizens, organizations, and collectives that substantially aided and increased the defensive capabilities and the territorial integrity of the nation in peace or in war. It could also be awarded for tireless activities and leadership of troops against the enemy that resulted in victory; to have directed troops with success against enemies and spies in times of peace while defending the peace; and for particular acts of valor in times of war in combat against the enemies of the nation; and for tireless work towards combat preparedness. The order could also be awarded to generals, officers, and warrant officers of the military and the Ministry of Internal Affairs for no less than ten years long and distinguished service.

The illustrations in the 1982 handbook show the order as having an inscription of R.P.S.SH., though no specimens so marked have yet to be located. One example is known with red paint on the star’s arms instead of enamel. It is not known if this was an officially produced variation or a repair.

Order in One Class (1952 to 1965): Large white or gray base metal and red enamel red star 44 mm across with center medallion of a soldier holding a submachine gun, surrounded by a wreath inscribed **R.P.SH.** at the bottom.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension

First Class (after 1965): Large gilt and red enamel red star 44 mm across with center medallion of a soldier holding a submachine gun, surrounded by a wreath inscribed **R.P.SH.** or **R.P.S.SH.** at the bottom.

Type 1: **R.P.SH.** in inscription

Var. 1: Large ribbon suspension

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Type 2: **R.P.S.SH.** in inscription (unreported – possibly not produced)

Second Class (after 1965): Similar to the 1st class, however badge is silvered bronze/brass or white/base metal.

Type 1: **R.P.SH.** in inscription

Var. 1: Large ribbon suspension

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Type 2: **R.P.S.SH.** in inscription (unreported – possibly not produced)

Third Class (after 1965): Similar to the 2nd class, however badge is copper or brass.

Type 1: **R.P.SH.** in inscription

Var. 1: Large ribbon suspension

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Type 2: **R.P.S.SH.** in inscription (unreported – possibly not produced)

Medal: Round brass medal 32 mm in diameter with a large red-enameled star at the center. The reverse is plain.

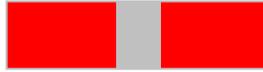
Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

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Ribbons:



Order – before 1965



1st Class (after 1965)



2nd Class (after 1965)



3rd Class (after 1965)



Medal

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One class (1952-1965): type 1

1st Class: type 1 var. 1



*2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)*

*3rd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)*



Medal: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

44. Order “For Brave Deeds”
Urdhëri “Për vepra trimërie”

45. Medal “For Brave Deeds”
Medalja “Për vepra trimërie”

The Order and Medal “For Brave Deeds” were instituted on January 18, 1965. The order and medal were awarded to active duty and reserve officers, warrant officers, soldiers of the armed forces, members of the police, and citizens for brave deeds, for heroic leadership and singular heroic skills leading military units in combat, in defense of the state frontiers, or in defense of the public security against enemies, spies and other adversaries. The order and medal may have replaced the Order and Medal of Bravery.

Order: Ten-point rayed silver plaque with separately applied smaller ten-point gold plaque with the Albanian flag and laurel spray.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back (unreported)

Medal: Round gilt brass medal with the Albanian flag and a laurel spray. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



Order



Medal

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Order: type 1 var. 1



Medal: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

46. Order “Motherhood Glory” Urdhëri “Lavdi Nënës”

The Order “Motherhood Glory” was established on October 10, 1950 to encourage the birth and education of the family.

The first class was awarded to mothers who gave birth to, raised, and educated nine children when the youngest is at least one year old. In the 1970s, the requirement was downgraded to seven children.

The second class was awarded to mothers who gave birth to, raised, and educated eight children when the youngest is at least one year old. In the 1970s, the requirement was downgraded to six children, replacing the Silver Motherhood Medal.

The third class was awarded to mothers who gave birth to, raised, and educated seven children when the youngest is at least one year old. In the 1970s, the requirement was downgraded to four to five children, replacing the Bronze Motherhood Medal.

For all three classes, children who died or were killed during World War II on active duty or died in the performance of duties in the public interest are also included.

First Class: Large gold badge 41 mm across and 45 mm tall with figure of a standing mother holding child and large Albanian flag, behind is an open book, below is the state seal, all surrounded by oak wreath. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Horizontal pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Separately attached ring, made by PRÄWEMA

Var. 2: Ring part of badge, made in Albania

Second Class: Similar to the 1st class, however, the badge is silver. The earliest examples have a gilt flag and state seal.

Type 1: Gilt flag and state seal, horizontal pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Separately attached ring, made by PRÄWEMA

Type 2: Badge all silver, horizontal pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Ring part of badge, made in Albania

Third Class: Similar to the 2nd class, however, the badge is copper.

Type 1: Horizontal pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Separately attached ring, made by PRÄWEMA

Var. 2: Ring part of badge, made in Albania

Ribbons:



1st Class



2nd Class



3rd Class

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1st Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)



2nd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



2nd Class: type 2 var. 1



3rd Class: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

**47. Order “For the Defense of the State Frontiers of the PRA/PSRA”
Urdhëri “Per mbrojtjen e kufirit shtetërore të RPSH/RPSSH”**

**48. Medal “For the Defense of the State Frontiers of the PRA/PSRA”
Medalje “Per mbrojtjen e kufirit shtetërore të RPSH/RPSSH”**

The Medal “For the Defense of the State Frontiers of the PRA/PSRA” was established on February 6, 1956. The order was added on January 18, 1965. The order and medal were awarded to personnel of the Frontier Guards Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who have performed valuable service in defending the border. The order and medal could also be awarded to citizens for performing acts which directly aided in the defense of the border.

Order: Round brass badge with laurel sprays on either side, at center a large border marker with the state seal towards the top and either **RPSH** or **RPSSH** below.

Type 1: RPSH in inscription, pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back (unreported – possibly not produced)

Type 2: RPSSH in inscription, pin back made in Albania (after 1976)

Var. 1: Horizontal pin back

Var. 2: Vertical pin back

Medal: Brass medal 32 mm in diameter with uniformed border guard facing right holding weapon near border marker, mountains behind, surrounded by wreath. Reverse inscription reads: **PER MBROJTJEN E KUFIRIT SHTETEROR TE R.P.SH. or R P S SH.**

Type 1: R.P.SH. in inscription (before 1976)

Var. 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Type 2: R P S SH in inscription (after 1976)

Var. 1: Large ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension, horizontal pin

Var. 3: Small ribbon suspension, vertical pin

Ribbons:



Order



Medal

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Order: type 2 var. 2
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)



Medal: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

Medal: type 2 var. 1
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

49. Order “For the Maintenance of Public Security”

Urdhëri “Për ruajtjen e rendit shoqëror”

50. Medal “For the Maintenance of Public Security”

Medalja “Për ruajtjen e rendit shoqëror”

The Medal “For the Maintenance of Public Security” was established on February 6, 1956. The order was added on January 18, 1965. The order and medal were awarded to personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its three principle branches, police, border guards, and Directorate of State Security (*Sigurimi*), who have performed indefatigable service to the preservation of public order. The order and medal could also be awarded to citizens for performing acts which directly aided in the preservation of public order.

Order: Round multi-rayed point rayed silver plaque with five larger rays and separately applied gold medallion with a depiction of a power plant, above which is a red enameled star.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Medal: Brass medal 32 mm in diameter with uniformed border guard standing facing at attention in front of industrial complex and large mountain, all surrounded by wreath. Reverse inscription reads: **PER RUAJTJEN E RENDIT SHOQEROR.**

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Type 2: Small ribbon suspension, ring part of medal

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbons:



Order



Medal

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Order: type 1 var. 1



Medal: type 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Medal: type 2 var. 2
(Image courtesy Angel Garbatchkov)

51. Order “For Civil Bravery”
Urdhëri “Per trimëri civile”

52. Medal “For Civil Bravery” / Medal “For Bravery in Labor”
Medalja “Per trimëri civile” / Medalja “Për trimëri në punë”

The Medal “For Bravery in Labor” was established on April 30, 1956. On January 18, 1965, the order was added and the medal was renamed to the Medal “For Civil Bravery”. The order and medal were awarded for courage in hostile working environments, fires, and floods to save life and property; for saving the life of others while risking great personal danger or death; and for preventing the eminent destruction of important machinery and equipment.

Order: Five-point rayed gilt white metal or other gold colored alloy plaque with separately applied white metal medallion with a laurel wreath and five narrow rays. At the bottom is the inscription **PER TRIMERI CIVILE**.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Medal: Round gilt brass medal 32 mm in diameter with a man standing in front of a factory and woodland with the legend **PER TRIMERI NE PUNE** or **PER TRIMERI CIVILE** above. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Legend **PER TRIMERI NE PUNE** (before 1965), large ribbon suspension

Type 2: Legend **PER TRIMERI CIVILE** (after 1965)

Var. 1: Large ribbon suspension (unreported – possibly not produced)

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension, horizontal pin

Var. 3: Small ribbon suspension, vertical pin

Ribbons:



Order

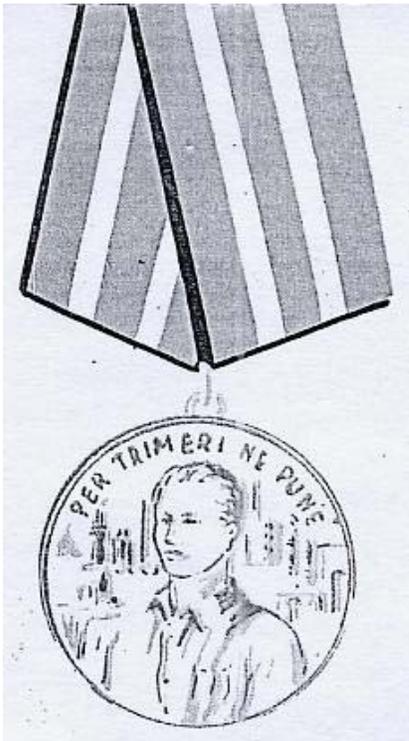


Medal

The Decorations of Socialist Albania



Order: type 1 var. 1



Medal: type 1
(Illustration from 1956 handbook)



Medal: type 2 var. 3
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

53. Order “For Meritorious Service to the People”
Urdhëri “Per shërbim të mire popullit”

54. Medal “For Meritorious Service to the People”
Medalja “Per shërbim të mire popullit”

The Order and Medal “For Meritorious Service to the People” were instituted on January 18, 1965. The order and medal were awarded to collective workers and workers in trade, public health, communal enterprises, transportation, postal/telegraph, banking, economy, and other labor sectors, who have performed speedy and responsible service towards the people; for excellent organization in the labor sector in which they work; for excellent execution of tasks in a refined and hygienic/sanitary manner in their place of work; for great care guarding and maintenance of socialist property; and for exceeding the state plan production quotas in all aspects of technico-economic commerce.

Order: Eight-sided multi-rayed brass badge 36 mm across with central medallion with large red enameled triangle pointing down with laurel sprays on either side. The reverse has an inscription reading: **PER SHERBIM TE MIRE POPULLIT**.

Type 1: Pin back made in Albania

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Medal: Round brass medal 32 mm in diameter with large red enameled triangle pointing down with laurel sprays on either side. There are two reverse types: the first has an inscription reading: **PER SHERBIM TE MIRE POPULLIT**, the second has a plain reverse.

Type 1: Reverse legend **PER SHERBIM TE MIRE POPULLIT**

Var. 1: Small ribbon suspension, horizontal pin

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension, vertical pin

Type 2: Plain reverse

Var. 1: Small ribbon suspension, horizontal pin

Var. 2: Small ribbon suspension, vertical pin

Ribbons:



Order



Medal

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Order: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Order: type 1 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Medal: type 1 var. 1



Medal: type 2 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

55. Medal of Liberation Medalja e çlirimit

Created on October 13, 1945, the Medal of Liberation was the principal campaign decoration for those who participated in World War II. The medal was awarded to all military and civilian personnel who actively took part in combat operations in World War II. The medal was also awarded posthumously.

Badge: Round gilt brass medal 32 mm in diameter depicting an Albanian soldier wearing bandolier holding flag. Below is a ribbon with the inscription: **PER CLIRIMIN E ATDHEUT**. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension, separately attached ring

Ribbon:





Type 1

56. Medal “For Long Service in the Armed Forces”
Medalja “Për shërbim shumëvjeçar në forcat e armatosura”

The Medal “For Long Service in the Armed Forces” was created sometime after 1965, however the exact date is not presently known. The medal was awarded to active duty officers and warrant officers of the armed forces for fulfilling 25 years or more distinguished labor and execution of responsible duties for conscientious and indefatigable work towards the strengthening and modernization of the armed forces.

Badge: Round brass medal 40 mm in diameter with jugate busts two helmeted soldiers facing right.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbon:





Type I var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

57. Gold Medal Medalja e Artë

The Gold Medal was created on January 18, 1965 and was awarded to students in institutions of higher learning (to include high schools and universities) who completed their education with excellent demeanor and to those who have distinguished themselves in youth organizations and in other social work.

Badge: Round gilt or plain brass medal 32 mm in diameter with a book and laurel spray surmounted by a large five pointed star from which rays are emitting. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Small ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Horizontal pin

Var. 2: Vertical pin

Ribbon:





Type 1 var. 1

58. Motherhood Medal (Silver/Bronze) Medalja e Nënës (Argjëndi/Bronxi)

The gold and silver Motherhood Medals were instituted on October 10, 1950 to encourage the birth and education of the family. When the requirements for the title of “Mother Heroine” and Order “Motherhood Glory” were downgraded in the 1970s, both the silver and bronze medals were rendered obsolete. Interestingly, the Motherhood Medals are the only decorations that completely spelled out the name of the country.

The Silver medal was awarded to mothers who gave birth to, raised, and educated six children when the youngest is at least one year old. The Order “Motherhood Glory” 2nd class replaced this decoration in the 1970s.

The Bronze medal was awarded to mothers who gave birth to, raised, and educated five children when the youngest is at least one year old. The Order “Motherhood Glory” 3rd class replaced this decoration in the 1970s.

For both medals, children who died or were killed during World War II on active duty or died in the performance of duties in the public interest are also included.

Unlike other Albanian decorations, the “ribbon” is actually an enameled metal pin representing a bowknot.

Silver medal: Large silver 39 mm in diameter with a representation of a mother holding a nude infant, with legend **REPUBLIKA POPULLORE E SHQIPERISE**. The entire medal is surrounded by a stylized oak wreath and an open book below. The reverse is plain.

Type 1: Horizontal pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Separately attached ring, made by PRÄWEMA

Var. 2: Ring part of badge, made in Albania

Bronze medal: Similar to the silver medal, however, the badge is bronze.

Type 1: Horizontal pin back ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Separately attached ring, made by PRÄWEMA

Var. 2: Ring part of badge, made in Albania



Silver Medal: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)



Bronze Medal: type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

59. Medal for the 10th Anniversary of the Army Medalja e 10-vjetorit të Ushtricë

The Medal for the 10th Anniversary of the Army was established on May 30, 1953 and was awarded to all active duty members of the Albanian military in 1953 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the creation of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army (NLA) which unified many of the communist partisan factions fighting against the Italian and German occupations. The medal was conferred on all generals, officers, warrant officers, soldiers and marines who were on active duty in the Peoples Army or in the Ministry of Internal Affairs on July 10, 1953.

Badge: Round brass medal 33 mm in diameter with two crossed rifles with a star above, and legend **10 VJET** below, all surrounded by a wreath. The reverse has the inscription: **10 VJETORI USHTRICE POPULLORE TE SHQIPERISE 10.7.1943 10.7.1953.**

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension

Var. 1: Separately attached ring

Var. 2: Ring part of medal

Ribbon:



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Type 1 var. 1
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

Type 2 var. 2
(Image courtesy Peter Groch)

**60. Order “40th Anniversary of the Labor Party of Albania”
Urdhëri “40 Vjëtori i Partia Punës e Shqipërisë”**

The Order “40th Anniversary of the Labor Party of Albania” was created in 1981 and awarded to those active members of the party who have rendered valuable service to the party in defending and promoting the Marxist-Leninist cause. The decoration’s placement in the order of precedence has not yet been determined but may have been ranked fairly high. Official movies of Enver Hoxha’s funeral in 1985 show prominent officials wearing this decoration and, interestingly enough, no other decorations.

The order was awarded in a cardboard case covered in a red satin-like material with a small aluminum lapel miniature. The decoration’s ribbon is made from the same satin-like material that covers the award case. It came in one class and only the one type has been observed.

Badge: Gilt brass five pointed star 45 mm across with large red enameled flag inscribed **PPSH**, hammer and sickle below, surrounded by silvered wreath and plaque inscribed **40 VJETORI**. The badge is suspended from a pin back ribbon covered suspension 16 mm tall and 28 mm across. Reverse is plain.

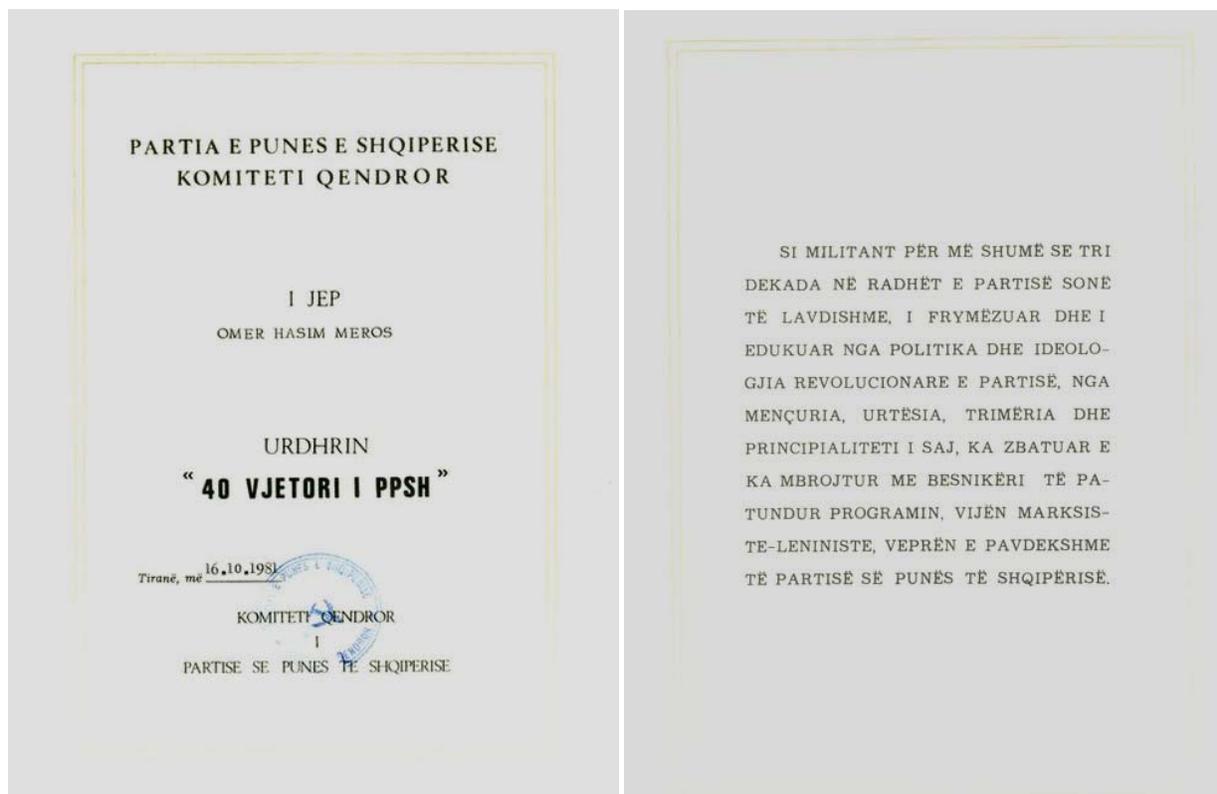
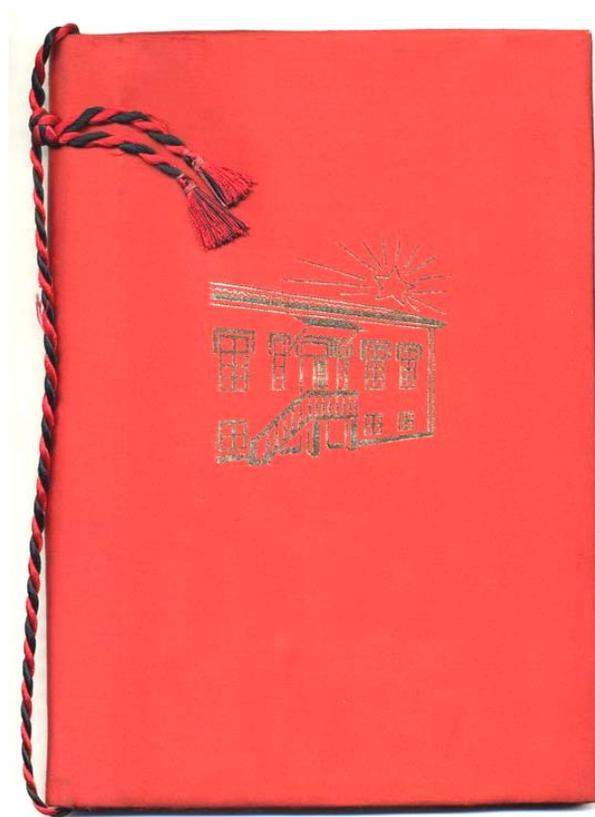
Type 1: Small pin back ribbon suspension

Ribbon:





Type 1 and lapel miniature



Award document for the Order “40th Anniversary of the Labor Party of Albania”, October 16, 1981

(Image courtesy Anatoly Gasretov)

61. Order “For Labor Merit” Urdhëri “Per merite punë”

Almost nothing is known of this decoration, presently known from one specimen. It does not appear in the 1956, 1968, nor the 1982 handbook’s order of precedence or list of obsolete decorations. The style and quality of manufacture suggest it was issued in the late 1940s by IKOM.

Badge: Large silver (or German silver) multirayed oval badge approximately 41 x 50 mm in size with a central medallion depicting a woman (left) holding a sickle aloft marching with a man (right) holding a hammer aloft, behind whom is a rising sun behind fields and hills. Below is a wreath and above is the inscription: **PER MERITE PUNE**. Reverse is plain.

Type 1: Large ribbon suspension

Ribbon:



The Decorations of Socialist Albania

