

18mm, bearing the colors, in a similar fashion to Soviet style ribbons, of the Palestinian flag of green, white, and black with a red triangle uppermost.

Suspension: By a loop through a hole punched through the upper part of the medal.

Manufacturer: Unknown, but the pentangular style 'ribbon' indicates possibly Eastern European.

Further to the aforementioned groups, which fall within the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which was founded in 1964, other affiliated P.L.O. groups include the Arab Liberation Front, the Palestine Communist Party initially founded in 1922, revived in 1967 and more recently renamed the Palestine People's Party. Finally the Popular Struggle Front and also *Saiqa* (Arabic for Thunderbolt) – the latter founded in 1967, being the military wing of the Syrian sponsored Vanguard of the Popular War of Liberation and who along with the P.F.L.P.-G.C. and D.F.L.P. rejected the 1993 Accord. Currently, I have no evidence whether any of these other groups have issued awards, but should any reader know differently, please let me know.

### **Medal of Bethlehem, 2000**

Finally there appears to be one other Palestinian state award. As with the initial award of this article, information is scarce and the title is varied. The earliest reference to this award is made in the *Malta Independent* of Sunday of December 26, 1999, which recorded Maltese President Guido de Marco's visit to Bethlehem. During this visit Yasser Arafat awarded President Guido with "The Bethlehem 2000 Special Honour" in recognition of Malta's support of "the Palestinians quest for freedom." During this period many other dignitaries visited Yasser Arafat combining visits with the celebrations of Christmas 1999. One of these visitors in early 2000 was Cypriot Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides, who prior to his discussions with Yasser Arafat was awarded "The Medal of the Order of Bethlehem 2000." With the celebration of the Orthodox Christmas in Jerusalem and Bethlehem some seven presidents and 14 leaders of Orthodox Churches took part in these celebrations. In honor of the occasion Yasser Arafat, as President of the Palestinian Authority, conferred upon them all the Medal of the Star of Bethlehem 2000. The presidents were as follows:

Emil Constantinescu, President of Rumania.  
Robert Kocharian, President of Armenia.  
Leonid Kuchman, President of Ukraine.

Petru Lucinschi, President of Moldova.  
Alexandru Lukasenko, President of Belarus.  
Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Georgia.  
Constantinos Stephanopoulos, President of Greece.  
Boris Yeltsin, Former President of the Russian Federation.

Later, on January 18th, pilgrims gathered for the celebration of the Armenian Christmas. The chief of the Armenian dignitaries were Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, Archbishop Torgom Manoogian, Patriarch of Jerusalem and Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan, Patriarch of Constantinople. All three were received by Yasser Arafat, "who conferred on the three Patriarchs the Palestinian State Medal of the Second Millennium." Religious visitors to the region continued and in March, Pope John Paul II visited Bethlehem where Yasser Arafat "hung a medal around the Pope's neck and thanked him for the Vatican's supportive stance of the Palestinian Cause." It is not clear from the article which Palestinian award this medal represented. The next leader to visit the Palestinian Authority was Chinese President Jiang Zemin who visited Yasser Arafat's Presidential Office in Bethlehem on April 15, and after inspecting the Palestinian Honor Guard was awarded "The Medal of Bethlehem 2000." In May, visiting Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, in recognition of Poland's merit in building an independent Palestine was decorated with "The Medal Bethlehem 2000." Again in June, an award was made to the United Nations' Secretary-General Kofi Annan during his meeting with Yasser Arafat on June 18. The article states Yasser Arafat "presented the Secretary-General with a medal, the Bethlehem 2000 Award, normally given to visiting Heads of State." A further award dates from November 2000 when Yasser Arafat awarded Saudi Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud "the Bethlehem 2000 Medal for his continued role in the rebuilding of Palestine

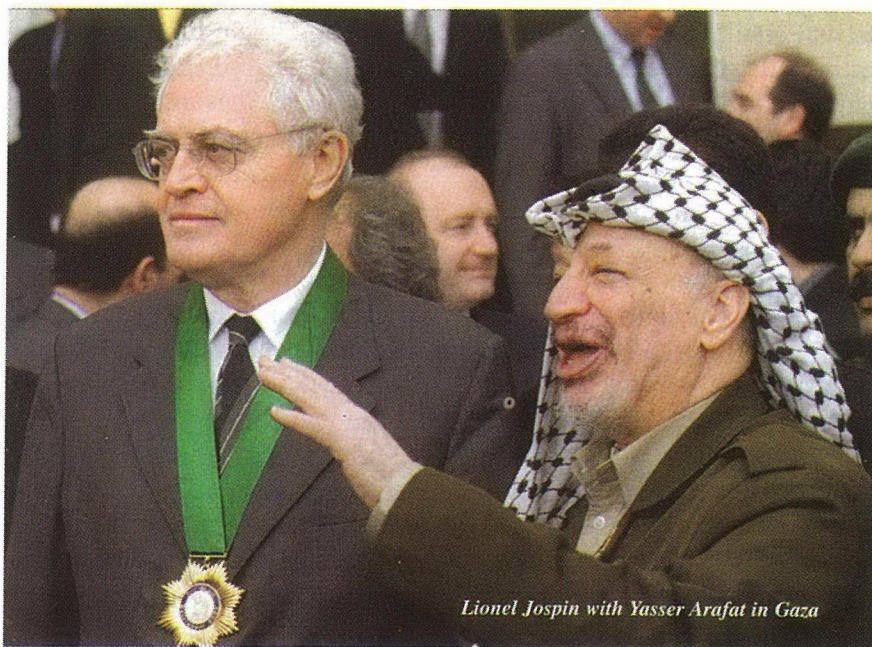
As with the first Palestinian award, I have had little success in obtaining actual details of the award. However I had the good fortune to come across an April 2000 copy of the magazine *Arabies Trends* which had a photograph of the French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin with Yasser Arafat (Figure 22). Around Jospin's neck was the Medal of Bethlehem 2000, which he had just been awarded. The award consists of a large eight-pointed, gilded, multi-rayed star suspended from a green ribbon. In the center of the award appears to be a representation of the Church of Nativity at Bethlehem on a white background and surrounded by a blue circle bearing the inscription, in English and Arabic, **BETHLEHEM 2000**. Also in April, 2000, the *Arab News* published a picture of Chinese

Premier Jiang Zemin wearing his award after its presentation by Arafat. Similarly, on June 20, 2003 *Al Jazeera* published a photo of Arafat awarding European Envoy Moratinos the Bethlehem Medal "for his peaceful efforts in Ramallah."

More recently two presentations of the Bethlehem 2000 Medal have been made. On March 16, 2003, Rachel Corrie, from Olympia,

Washington and a volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer. The ISM is a Palestinian led group of multinational members who advocate and use non-violent means to challenge the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian land. Corrie suffered fatal injuries as she was buried and crushed under sand as she and her colleagues were trying to prevent the demolition and levelling of a Palestinian home. The IDF described the incident as "a regretful incident" and that the bulldozer driver could not see Corrie "because the vehicle's windows were very small." The US State Department called on the IDF to conduct "an immediate and full investigation." In recognition of Corrie's death Arafat recognised her as "a martyr of solidarity action" and posthumously awarded her the Bethlehem 2000 Medal "in appreciation to her work and sacrifice and defending the Palestinian holy lands."

A further posthumous award of the Bethlehem 2000 Medal was made in May 2003 to James Miller, a British national, who was a cameraman working on a documentary about the impact of terrorist actions on children for the HBO network. He died on May 2nd, after being shot in the neck by the IDF while filming in the southern Gaza Strip town of Rafah. Miller was part of a crew waving a white flag while filming IDF house demolitions when he was shot. The IDF insisted that they had fired in self-defense. In awarding the Bethlehem 2000 Medal, Arafat declared Miller "a martyr" and said that the award was "in recognition of his journalistic efforts and attitudes in the service of humanity."



**Figure 22: French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin wearing the Medal of Bethlehem 2000 that was presented by Yasser Arafat.**

In concluding I would note that this article is but an introduction to Palestinian awards and is compiled almost entirely from articles from the local press and on the World Wide Web. I am though, particularly grateful to Peter Groch of Berlin who has most generously provided illustrations of the majority of the awards noted in this article.

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## Corporal Larry Dale Palmer, U. S. Army

John L. Liffiton

This article is written principally to honor Corporal Larry Dale Palmer, but it is also a challenge to all collectors to get to know the story of the man behind the medals, as he is far more important than the decorations, medals and insignia. By using the internet, writing to the government, contacting friends and relatives, and if possible, obtaining a picture of the recipient, your appreciation and knowledge of military history will be enhanced, but more importantly, the person in question will be remembered.

In this case, while going through a shop in Phoenix, I happened to see a framed group of medals (Figure 1) partially sticking out from behind the bric-a-brac and *kitsch* that is commonly found in antique shops. I asked the owner if I could see the group and saw that it was a Vietnam group consisting of a Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one star, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and the Vietnamese Campaign Medal with 1960- device. There was also a sharpshooter badge and marksman badge with "Machine Gun" and "Auto Rifle" bars respectively attached to them and last, but not least, a Combat Infantry Badge. Everything had been neatly attached to a piece of dark blue velvet and taped securely in a frame. I wondered if by chance the medals were named, and was given permission to open the back of the frame in order to check the reverses of the medals. The Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals were both officially named to Larry D. Palmer (Figure 2). I had been told that medals issued to the next-of-kin of casualties were the ones usually found named. I knew that if Larry Palmer was indeed a casualty then it would be easy to identify him via the internet. At the time, I had no idea how this interest would turn into a quest to find out the background of an individual who gave the ultimate for his country.

After booting up my computer, I did a search by typing in "The Wall and Vietnam Memorial." There were literally thousands of hits. I chose one (<http://thewall-usa.com>) that seemed the best for verifying whether Larry Palmer's name would be one of the 58,183 names engraved in the polished black granite in Washington D.C. The search results revealed the following information:

Larry Dale Palmer  
SP 4 – Army – Selective Service  
196th Light Infantry Brigade  
20 year old , Single, Caucasian, Male  
Born on November 13, 1949  
From Greensburg, Pennsylvania  
Tour of duty began September 10, 1969  
Casualty was on February 20, 1970  
Hostile, Ground Casualty  
Multiple Fragmentation Wounds  
Body was recovered  
Religion – Protestant  
Panel 13 W - - Line 37



Figure 1: Medals and badges awarded to Corporal Larry Dale Palmer.