

Distinguished Service Award Gold-Plated Sierra Cup Information and History

Sierra Cup 2021

It seems every 10 years so it is time to replenish our supply of Sierra cups. I looked last August and found Campmor was out of stock and a number of other places had variations on the classic cup design (folding handles, insulated cup, half cup size). Eventually I purchased 14 Jumbo Stainless Steel Sierra Cups from Next Adventure of Portland, OR (nextadventure.net), a camping supply store, for \$3.95 each including shipping. The classic Sierra Cup measures 5 1/4 inch rim-to-rim, 2 1/8 inch high, 2 1/4 inch bottom diameter, and has a 13 oz. capacity when filled to rim.

This March I returned to Reliable Electro Plating in Chartley, MA for gold plating the Sierra cups. Dale Broadbent is still running the business. He remembered Bob Vogel's 2013 order for plating cups. The price then was \$14.75 each. At the current price of gold we paid \$43 each, with two weeks turn around. Turns out one of the 14 cups had a manufacturing defect so only 13 were plated.

Len Ulbricht, April 1, 2021

Pre- 2021 history of Sierra Cups

Purchasing -- When the DSA award was first established in 2001, Bob Bentley obtained 10 model 80780 Sierra cups from Camp-Mor for \$4.99 each; and Wayne Taylor had them plated at Reliable Electro Plating in Chartley Mass for \$94.90. As we 'seemed' to be out of cups, I investigated obtaining and having more cups plated. (After the new cups were obtained and plated, 2 of the original cups turned up. It remains unclear to me just which recipients have received gold cups, and which did not. I know that I received one, and that Bob Bentley received one.) I inquired at AOTCO, an electro- plater that my company does business with, hoping to obtain a 'better price'. I was quoted \$40 each. I then contacted Reliable Electro Plating. I forwarded a copy of the 2001 receipt, and said we needed more cups and would like a quote. After a series of calls and emails eventually Dale Broadbent replied "To gold plate the stainless Sierra Cups at today's gold market would cost \$14.75 ea. The last time we plated them for you, the gold market was \$268 / oz. Today, the market is \$1280 / oz. Need I say more?" Given the quote from AOTCO and the increase in gold cost (which I confirmed with a web search) the \$14.75 seemed fair, and 10 cups were obtained from Camp-Mor (at \$5.99 each) and plated.
(continued...)

Engraving -- When Bob Bentley started the DSA award he was the one having the cups engraved. He was having it done by Ron Delano at Carver Jewelers in Carver, MA. (I had also dealt with Ron in 2004 when the award was given to Bob Bentley, but Bob was told Dexter was going to receive it. I had to call Ron and tell him to ignore Bob's request and engrave it for "Bob Bentley", not "Dexter Robinson". We also had to delay delivery of the cup until during the meeting, so Bob couldn't open the box to verify the cup was properly engraved. Dexter knew what was going on, so he wouldn't hear through the grapevine he'd won, then not get the award. He did, deservedly, receive it 2 years later.) Because of the delay's, mostly in obtaining a reasonable quote for plating the cup, time was short to get the engraving done. Then it turned out that Carver Jewelers doesn't, because of the complexity of engraving on the conical cup, actually do the engraving. They send it to an engraver in downtown Boston. They wouldn't let me hand deliver it to Boston, insisting on shipping it themselves. Fortunately we got the cup back the Friday before the Annual Meeting. In the future we should plan to provide the cup to the engraver several weeks before the meeting. (And might be able to reduce the cost if we found a qualified engraver we could deal with directly.)

Bob Vogel, ~2013 (documented ~2018)
