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# MILITARY AWARDS GUIDANCE FOR THE 2021 PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION SEASON

Date Signed: 2/19/2021 | MARADMINS Number: 080/21

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MSGID/GENADMIN/CMC WASHINGTON DC MRA MM//

SUBJ/MILITARY AWARDS GUIDANCE FOR THE 2021 PERMANENT CHANGE OF  
STATION SEASON//

REF/A/DOC/SECNAV/29MAY2019//

REF/B/DOC/SECNAV/16AUG2019//

REF/C/DOC/CMC/15OCT2012//

NARR/REFERENCE A IS SECNAVINST 1650.1J DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
MILITARY AWARDS POLICY, REFERENCE B IS SECNAV M-1650.1 NAVY AND  
MARINE CORPS AWARDS MANUAL, REFERENCE C IS MCO 1650.19J W/ CH1  
ADMINISTRATIVE AND ISSUE PROCEDURES FOR DECORATIONS, MEDALS, AND  
AWARDS.//

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GENTEXT/REMARKS/1. Per the references, Headquarters U.S. Marine  
Corps (HQMC) Manpower Management Military Awards Branch (MMMA) sends  
the following guidance on Department of the Navy (DON) Personal  
Military Decorations (PMDs) in anticipation of the 2021 Permanent  
Change of Station (PCS) Season.

2. Identifying award nominees. Prior to the start of the PCS  
season, unit award administrators (UAAs) should identify the  
outbound population for the command by downloading a unit outbound  
roster from the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS). UAAs  
should publish this information to the command leadership. Award  
originators are to identify those highly-performing individuals

deserving of DON PMDs and submit the appropriate recommendation per this MARADMIN. Nominations shall be submitted in a timely manner per paragraph 4 below to ensure the award is complete by the anticipated presentation date. A common best practice is to identify those recommended for awards on a tracking spreadsheet and brief the status of the pending PMDs to the unit commander on a regular basis until the end of PCS season or completion of all pending PMDs.

### 3. DON PMD Format and Processing

3.a. Improved Awards Processing System (IAPS). All DON PMDs for Marine Corps Commands must be originated in IAPS.

3.b. Summary of Action (SOA). Reference (b) limits the SOA for PMDs to two pages. Because the IAPS SOA field has no lines or character limit, award originators must check content length by using the "print PDF" button in IAPS, to verify that the SOA does not exceed two pages.

3.c. Citations and Certificates. Originators should pay close attention to the opening and closing sentences. Each DON PMD has a unique opening sentence and there are only two authorized formats for the closing sentence. The Navy and Marine Corps Awards Manual changed the format for citations; however, IAPS is still pending updates to the new format. Until the IAPS updates are complete, the character limit for IAPS citations for the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and below is 1250, in all-capital letters. The character limit for the Meritorious Service Medal and above is 1650 and the citation is written in standard sentence format; the IAPS update for this change is in progress. When identifying the unit of assignment for the nominee in the opening sentence, the originator should name the unit only to the point at which the unit is clearly identified. For example, "the Battalion Intelligence Officer of 3d Battalion" is inadequate identification as there are many 3d Battalions, but "the Battalion Intelligence Officer of 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment" is sufficient as there is only one 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. Lastly, unit award administrators must ensure that the signed certificates and/or citations match the level of PMD approved in IAPS. Awarding authorities are responsible for ensuring that the award produced and presented matches that which was approved in IAPS. The certificate and/or citation must be attached to the "certificate" section of the IAPS case to enable MMMA to upload the award into the nominee's Official Military

Personnel File (OMPF).

4. Timeline for submission. Reference (b) states PMD nominations should be submitted to arrive at the final awarding authority for adjudication at least 60 days prior to the desired presentation date. Failure to do so may result in the PMD not being adjudicated in time for the desired presentation. The intent is for approved PMDs to be presented to the recipient prior to detachment or separation from the command in which the action took place. It is recommended that award originators plan the timeline for submission based on the 60 day requirement. UAAs can assist in this effort by pulling a unit timeliness report from IAPS to calculate the average time for award approval at their command. The UAAs can then advise award originators on an appropriate submission timeline.

4.a. For awards approved by CMC (Ex. LM ICO transfer), the nominations must reach CMC (MMMA) in IAPS NLT 60 days prior to the planned presentation date.

4.b. For awards approved by the SECNAV (Ex. DM or higher), the nominations must reach CMC (MMMA) in IAPS NLT 90 days prior to the planned presentation date.

5. Requests to expedite PMDs pending decision by CMC or higher. Per reference (c), CMC (MMMA) will take action on requests to expedite PMDs in cases of retirement, relief and appointments, or changes of command. A request to expedite an award must be signed by a General Officer or his/ her Chief of Staff; requests "by direction" will not be acted upon. A request to expedite an award reduces the number of votes required by the HQMC Military Awards Board; it does not guarantee that the award will be completed by the desired presentation date. The request must include an explanation as to why the award must be expedited; "due to administrative oversight" or "operational tempo" are not acceptable justifications.

6. Retirement and separation awards. Please note that the "end of action" date on separation or retirement awards is the date of presentation or a date prior to the commencement of terminal leave, whichever comes first. This ensures that the award can be reported in MCTFS and added to the DD-214 discharge certificate. Awards not reported in MCTFS prior to a Marine commencing terminal leave are normally not recorded on the DD-214 discharge certificate and require the Marine to request a correction to his/her DD-214 and to update his/her service record.

7. Combat Action Ribbon (CR) and "Combat Conditions" PMDs. CR

criteria is in reference (b), and is more restrictive than the criteria for "combat conditions" PMDs (includes the Bronze Star Medal (BS) as well as PMDs with "C" device). Therefore, it is possible to receive a PMD with a "C" device or a BS for meritorious service under combat conditions but, not qualify for the CR. By contrast, since the CR criteria is more restrictive than that of the "C" device, qualifying for the CR satisfies the "personal exposure to hostile action" requirement for the "C" device or BS for meritorious service under combat conditions.

8. Common mistakes on personal awards processing.

8.a. Incorrect opening or closing sentences.

8.b. Different action dates on the NAVMC 11533 award form, SOA, citation, and/or certificate.

8.c. Incorrect action dates for Marines separating from service.

8.d. Different dates for award approval in IAPS and date on certificate, see reference (b).

8.e. Incorrect use of "great" credit. "Great" is only used on awards of the Air Medal and above.

8.f. A commander approving an award for which he/she is not the awarding authority. Also, the commander directing an originator to rescind an award and originate a lesser award. Per reference (b), an award nomination may only be downgraded or disapproved by the official who has the authority to approve the nominated award.

8.g. Award approved in IAPS does not match award certificate/citation presented to the recipient.

8.h. A Marine commander approving a DON PMD for a foreign service member. Per reference (a), SECNAV is the awarding authority for DON PMDs to all foreign service members.

8.i. Failing to attach the signed citation/certificate to the "certificate" field in IAPS for upload into the recipient's OMPF.

9. This MARADMIN is applicable to the total force.

10. Release authorized by BGen Michael J. Borgschulte, Director, Manpower Management Division.//