



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
1000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

SECNAVINST 1650.1J  
ASN (M&RA)  
29 May 2019

SECNAV INSTRUCTION 1650.1J

From: Secretary of the Navy

Subj: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY MILITARY AWARDS POLICY

Ref: See enclosure (1)

Encl: (1) References  
(2) Cancellations  
(3) Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Definitions  
(4) Military Award Policies, Requirements, and  
Limitations  
(5) Timeliness Standards  
(6) Delegation of Authority to Approve Awards  
(7) Responsibilities

1. Purpose. To promulgate policies for awarding military decorations, medals, and ribbons within the Department of the Navy (DON). This instruction complies with pertinent Executive Orders and Department of Defense (DoD) regulations. Detailed guidance for implementation of this instruction is in reference (a).

2. Cancellations. See enclosure (2).

3. Definitions. See enclosure (3).

4. Applicability. This instruction applies to the Offices of the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and all U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps installations, commands, activities, field offices, and all other organizational entities within the DON. This instruction also applies to the U.S. Coast Guard when operating as part of the Navy.

5. Policy. Policy is a governance tool through which the intent of the SECNAV is published. It is DON policy that:

a. The purpose of DON military awards is to provide deserving members of the Naval Service recognition for

qualifying acts of valor or non-combat heroism, for exceptionally meritorious achievement or service, and for arduous or otherwise special service.

b. DON military awards are intended as public recognition of a Service Member's heroism, achievement, service, and sacrifice. Accordingly, a Personal Military Decoration (PMD) and the Purple Heart (PH) shall be presented to the recipient (or to the Primary Next of Kin in case of a posthumous award), in a suitable ceremony by a commissioned military officer or other DoD official of appropriate grade and position. Unit decorations should be publicly presented in ceremony when possible. CNO and CMC may set their own Service's policy concerning presentation of the Combat Action Ribbon (CAR) and Campaign, Expeditionary, and Service (CE&S) awards.

c. PMDs are discretionary honors conferred upon individuals who have distinguished themselves by acts of valor or non-combat heroism, or by exceptionally meritorious achievement. PMDs are the most prestigious and selective military awards, and should only be nominated and approved when the facts and circumstances clearly merit such special recognition. Enclosure (4) and references (a) through (f) provide further guidance on eligibility and circumstances in which PMDs are authorized.

d. Unit decorations recognize ships and other military units for collective demonstration of extraordinary heroism in combat or otherwise exceptionally meritorious achievement that clearly and distinctly, by nature and magnitude, place the unit's performance significantly above that of other units performing similar missions. Enclosure (4) and references (a), (b), and (e) provide further guidance on unit decorations.

e. CE&S medals and ribbons recognize individuals for participation in significant military operations, or for unique or arduous service. With the exception of the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (MOVSM), Service Members need not be specifically nominated for CE&S awards, but rather qualify for them by meeting the eligibility requirements. Eligibility for CE&S awards is found in references (a) through (f). Qualification for CE&S awards shall be based on evidence in official records.

f. The rank/grade of the intended award recipient shall not be a factor in the nomination or approval of any DON military decoration, medal, or ribbon, unless an explicit rank/grade restriction exists within the award criteria published in statute, executive order, references (a) through (f), or this instruction. No rank/grade limitation shall be established within DON on any award except by specific written authorization from SECNAV.

g. No quota may be established limiting the number of PMDs that may be nominated or approved for acts of valor or acts of non-combat heroism.

h. Timely recognition of deserving acts is the hallmark of an effective awards program. Therefore, award nominations shall be originated and processed in accordance with the timeliness standards in enclosure (5).

i. Prior to the final award decision, it is neither necessary nor appropriate to disclose the existence of, or any details related to, any nomination for a PMD, unit decoration, PH, or CAR to anyone not directly involved in the award decision process. This includes disclosure of recommendations made by intermediate echelons of review.

j. Authority to approve military awards is retained by SECNAV except as delegated in enclosure (6).

k. Pursuant to section 8299 of reference (g) no military decoration medal, cross, bar, or associated emblem or insignia may be awarded or presented to any individual if the service after the distinguishing act or period has not been honorable.

(1) Prior to presentation, any award may be revoked by the official who approved it;

(2) After any PMD, PH, or unit decoration has been presented, SECNAV is the sole authority for revocation; and

(3) CNO and CMC may revoke or rescind CE&S awards, and the CAR, if it is later determined the criteria had not been met, or the individual's service after the fact had not been honorable.

6. Responsibilities. See enclosure (7).

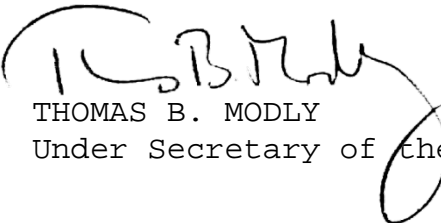
7. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned according to the records disposition schedules found on the Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page:

<https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local Records Manager or the DRMD program office.

8. Reports. The reporting requirement contained in enclosure (7), 2d and 2e is exempt from information collection control, per Part IV, paragraph 7p of reference (h).



THOMAS B. MODLY  
Under Secretary of the Navy

Distribution:

Electronic only, via Department of the Navy Issuances website  
<https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/>.

**REFERENCES**

- (a) SECNAV M-1650
- (b) DoD Instruction 1348.33 of 21 December 2016
- (c) DoDM 1348.33 Volume 1, Manual of Military Decorations and Awards: Medal of Honor (MOH) of 21 December 2016
- (d) DoDM 1348.33 Volume 2, Manual of Military Decorations and Awards: DoD Service Awards-Campaign, Expeditionary, and Service Medals of 21 December 2016
- (e) DoDM 1348.33 Volume 3, Manual of Military Decorations and Awards: DoD-Wide Personal Performance and Valor Decorations of 21 December 2016
- (f) DoDM 1348.33 Volume 4, Manual of Military Decorations and Awards: DoD Joint Decorations and Awards of 21 December 2016
- (g) 10 U.S.C. §668, §1121-§1135, §8290-§8308, §8330, §12733, §12739
- (h) SECNAV M-5214.1
- (i) DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms

**CANCELLATIONS**

1. SECNAVINST 1650.1H is hereby cancelled.
  
2. The following messages are superseded or incorporated into the current instruction and/or reference (a), and are therefore cancelled:
  - a. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 051544Z May 08 (ALNAV 036/08)
  - b. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 211358Z Sep 11 (ALNAV 060/11)
  - c. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 011853Z Nov 11 (ALNAV 068/11)
  - d. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 092016Z Dec 11 (ALNAV 079/11)
  - e. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 181946Z Oct 12 (ALNAV 065/12)
  - f. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 191412Z Oct 12 (ALNAV 066/12)
  - g. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 151534Z Nov 12 (ALNAV 068/12)
  - h. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 171433Z Apr 14 (ALNAV 025/14)
  - i. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 171547Z Apr 14 (ALNAV 027/14)
  - j. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 072017Z Aug 14 (ALNAV 060/14)
  - k. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 032046Z Dec 14 (ALNAV 080/14)
  - l. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 052000Z Dec 14 (ALNAV 082/14)
  - m. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 211202Z Apr 15 (ALNAV 031/15)
  - n. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 181616Z Aug 15 (ALNAV 063/15)
  - o. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 031512Z May 16 (ALNAV 030/16)
  - p. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 031938Z Jun 16 (ALNAV 041/16)
  - q. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 051515Z Jul 16 (ALNAV 049/16)
  - r. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 211924Z Aug 17 (ALNAV 055/17)

SECNAVINST 1650.1J  
29 May 2019

s. SECNAV WASHINGTON DC 211900Z Sep 17 (ALNAV 064/17)

3. The following memorandums are superseded or incorporated into the current instruction and/or reference (a), and are therefore cancelled:

a. SECNAV memo DON Military Awards Policy Changes of 10 May 2007;

b. SECNAV memo Change to Delegation of Approval Authority for the Air Medal (Strike/Flight) of 13 Mar 2009;

c. SECNAV memo Change to Eyewitness Requirements for Combat Awards of 18 Mar 2009;

d. SECNAV memo Delegation of Award Approval Authority for Navy and Marine Corps Personnel Assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Joint Commands of 17 Aug 2009;

e. SECNAV memo Navy Ceremonial Duty Ribbon of 3 Jun 2012;

f. SECNAV memo Combat Action Ribbon Criteria of 14 Nov 2012;

g. SECNAV memo Announcing the Ending of Eligibility for the Air Medal (Strike/Flight) for Kosovo of 18 Jul 2013;

h. SECNAV memo Recognition of Acts of Valor of 20 Apr 2017;

i. ASN (M&RA) memo Delegation of Awarding Authority for OPERATION NEW DAWN of 12 Oct 2010;

j. ASN (M&RA) memo Navy Recruiting Service Ribbon of 3 Nov 2010;

k. ASN (M&RA) memo Designation of Libya Operations for Strike/Flight Air Medal Eligibility and the Combat Distinguishing Device (Combat "V") of 16 Feb 2012;

l. ASN (M&RA) memo Authorization of the Strike/Flight Air Medal, CAR, and Combat Distinguishing Devices for Operation INHERENT RESOLVE of 31 Oct 2014;

m. ASN (M&RA) memo Implementation Guidance for Statutory Changes to Purple Heart Criteria of 25 Aug 2016

**ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND DEFINITIONS**

SECTION 1 - ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout this instruction:

AH	Air Medal with "V" device
AOE	Area of Eligibility
ASN (M&RA)	Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)
BSM	Bronze Star Medal
BV	Bronze Star Medal with "V" device
CAR	Combat Action Ribbon
CE&S	Campaign, Expeditionary, and Service
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CO	Commanding Officer
CV	Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with "V" device
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross
DNS	Director, Navy Staff
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
DoDI	Department of Defense Instruction
DoDM	Department of Defense Manual
DON	Department of the Navy
DON/AA	Department of the Navy Assistant for Administration
DSM	Distinguished Service Medal
DUSN	Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy
EH	Extraordinary Heroism
EOT	End of Tour
HFP	Hostile Fire Pay
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HSM	Humanitarian Service Medal
IDP	Imminent Danger Pay
ISIC	Immediate Superior in Command



LOM	Legion of Merit
MOH	Medal of Honor
MOVSM	Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal
MUC	Meritorious Unit Commendation
NAM	Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NC	Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal
NDBDM	Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals
NM	Navy and Marine Corps Medal
NROTC	Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps
NUC	Navy Unit Commendation
NX	Navy Cross
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PH	Purple Heart
P.L.	Public Law
PMD	Personal Military Decoration
PNOK	Primary Next of Kin
PUC	Presidential Unit Citation
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SECNAV	Secretary of the Navy
SS	Silver Star Medal
U.S.C.	United States Code
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
USPHS	U.S. Public Health Service
VCNO	Vice Chief of Naval Operations

**SECTION 2 - DEFINITIONS**

These terms and definitions are for the purpose of this instruction.

1. Area of Eligibility. A specific geographic area where Service Members deployed to participate in a designated U.S. military operation for which a CE&S medal is authorized. The Area of Eligibility is established in the award criteria, and limits eligibility of Service Members for the award.
2. Armed Forces or Armed Services of the United States. All components of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Coast Guard.
3. CE&S Awards. Recognize Service Members for participation in military campaigns, expeditions, or other significant military operations, and for otherwise meritorious military service. The subcategories are:
  - a. Campaign Award. Recognizes active participation in a war, or significant military operation of long duration, normally combat;
  - b. Expeditionary Award. Recognizes direct participation in military operations against an armed opposing force or military operations where Service Members are exposed to the imminent threat of hostilities; and
  - c. Service Award. Recognizes either participation in military operations that do not involve conflict with an armed enemy or military service meeting specific criteria found in references (a), (b), and (d).
4. Decoration. An award bestowed upon an individual or unit for a specific personal act of gallantry or meritorious service/achievement. One cannot qualify for or earn a decoration. It is a discretionary honor conferred by the awarding authority in the name of the President or SECNAV.
5. Device. An accessory authorized to be attached to an award's ribbon. The following are letter devices authorized for certain PMDs:

- a. "V" Device. Denotes a PMD awarded for valor;
- b. "C" Device. Denotes a PMD was awarded for meritorious service or achievement performed under combat conditions; and
- c. "R" Device. Denotes a PMD was awarded for hands-on employment of a weapons system or other warfighting activities, performed remotely without personal physical combat risk that had a direct and immediate impact on a combat operation or other military operation (i.e., outcome of an engagement or specific effects on a target), through any domain.

(1) Direct Impacts. "Hands-on" employment of a weapons system or other activities that had direct, immediate, and on-site effects on the outcome of an engagement or other operation intended to have an effect upon the target.

(2) Domain. Described as air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains in accordance with reference (i).

6. Gallantry. Nobility of behavior or spirit. Heroic courage.

7. Naval Service. Service in the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and all Reserve components thereof. Also includes the U.S. Coast Guard and its Reserve component when operating under statutory control of the Navy.

8. Official Channels. Entered into official channels means received by the first commanding officer (CO) in the chain of command.

9. PMD. A military medal bestowed upon an individual to recognize valor, meritorious service or achievement under combat conditions, remote impacts on combat operations, non-combat heroism, or non-combat meritorious service or achievement.

a. End of Tour (EOT) Award. A PMD recognizing outstanding meritorious service at the conclusion of a tour of duty. These awards may cover the entire tour of duty, plus any extensions, but cannot include travel or terminal leave periods. EOT decorations are normally only awarded for meritorious service for periods of service greater than 12 months.

b. Impact (specific achievement) Award. A PMD bestowed for performance that exceeds that expected by virtue of grade and experience, based on a specific act or accomplishment covering a short discrete period of time with clearly identifiable beginning and ending dates.

c. Meritorious Service. Performance that exceeds that expected by virtue of grade and experience, based on accomplishments during an entire tour of duty.

d. Meritorious Service or Achievement Under Combat Conditions. Meritorious service or achievement while personally exposed to hostile action or while at significant risk of exposure to hostile action. See also "C" device.

10. Service Member. A member of the Armed Forces of the United States.

11. Unit. A ship or other organization, normally battalion/squadron or larger, composed primarily of military personnel, under military command, and charged with carrying out a military mission or function

12. Unit Decoration. A decoration bestowed on a military unit to recognize the heroic or meritorious service or specific achievements of that unit. The DON unit decorations are: Presidential Unit Citation (PUC), Navy Unit Commendation (NUC), and Meritorious Unit Commendation (MUC).

13. Valor. An act or acts of heroism by an individual above what is normally expected while engaged in direct combat with an enemy of the U.S., or with an opposing foreign or armed force, while exposed to enemy hostilities and at personal risk. Synonymous with combat heroism.

**MILITARY AWARD POLICIES, REQUIREMENTS, AND LIMITATIONS**

1. Eligibility Policy

a. General Eligibility

(1) Eligibility restrictions for each specific award are contained in references (a) through (f). With the exception of the Medal of Honor (MOH), which is limited to members of the Naval Service, all other DON PMDs may be awarded to any member of the U.S. Armed Forces, and any member of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), who is serving in any capacity with the Navy or Marine Corps.

(2) Unit decorations may be awarded to any U.S. Armed Forces unit within, or attached to, the Navy or Marine Corps, subject to the limitations described in this enclosure and in reference (a).

(3) DON officials shall not award CE&S medals and ribbons, the PH, or the CAR to members of other Military Services. SECNAV is the sole authority for approving any exception.

(4) DON Officials shall not award DON PMDs to members of other Military Services unless those members are attached or assigned to a Navy or Marine Corps unit. Specifically, DON PMDs shall not be awarded to members of other Military Services who are serving in joint activities.

(5) Unless a specific rank/grade restriction exists within the criteria published in references (a) through (f), all DON PMDs, unit decorations, CE&S awards, the PH and CAR, may be awarded to any member of the Naval Service who meets the award criteria.

(6) USPHS personnel permanently assigned to DON commands and organizations are generally eligible for military awards on the same basis as the assigned Navy and Marine Corps personnel. Before presenting a PMD to a USPHS officer, the award authority must obtain concurrence from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

b. When on Joint Duty

(1) Members of the Navy and Marine Corps assigned as individuals to joint duty in a joint activity are normally eligible only for Joint/Defense PMDs, which are governed by references (b) and (f). They are specifically not eligible for any military award from one of the other U.S. Armed Forces.

(2) As an exception to this policy, on the occasion of retirement or transfer to the Fleet Reserve or Fleet Marine Corps Reserve, a DON PMD may be nominated and approved in lieu of a Joint/Defense PMD.

(3) Receipt of a Joint/Defense PMD is subject to the DoD limits on duplicate recognition set forth in reference (b) and paragraph 2 of this enclosure. An individual may not receive both a Joint/Defense PMD and a DON PMD in recognition of the same act, achievement, or period of service.

(4) Personnel serving in Navy or Marine Corps units, including the commanders of such units, are not eligible for Joint/Defense PMDs, regardless of whether the unit is apportioned to a combatant command or operating as part of a joint task force.

c. When Assigned to Units of Other U.S. Armed Forces

(1) Navy and Marine Corps personnel assigned on orders to an Army, Air Force, or Coast Guard command for a period in excess of 179 days may accept, retain, and wear any non-heroism PMD proffered by that Service up to and including the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM).

(2) Presentation or acceptance of any other award from another Service is not authorized without prior written concurrence by DON. Authority to concur with cross-Service awards is addressed in enclosure (6).

(3) Concurrence will not be granted for CE&S medals or ribbons, the PH, or any award specifically intended to recognize satisfactory participation in combat. In such cases, the request for concurrence will be reviewed as a recommendation for an equivalent DON award, and if an award is merited, a DON award shall be approved in lieu of the other Service award.

(4) Receipt of PMDs from other Services is subject to the DoD limits on duplicate recognition set forth in reference (b) and paragraph 2 of this enclosure. An individual may not receive both a DON or Joint PMD and another Service's PMD in recognition of the same act, achievement, or period of service.

d. When on Duty with a Federal Agency outside DoD

(1) Pursuant to reference (b), the most appropriate type of decoration to recognize a military Service Member for achievement or service is a military PMD.

(2) If the billet is a joint duty assignment, the member remains eligible for a Joint/Defense PMD as specified in paragraph 1.b of this enclosure. If it is not a joint duty assignment, the member remains eligible for a DON PMD.

(3) In exceptional cases, CNO or CMC may approve acceptance, retention, and wear of a federal agency decoration recognizing meritorious performance. Such an exception must be officially requested by the proffering agency and approval granted prior to any presentation ceremony.

(4) Pursuant to reference (b), under no circumstances will a military Service Member be permitted to accept from another federal agency any decoration intended to recognize heroism. Valor and non-combat heroism by Navy and Marine Corps personnel serving outside DoD shall only be recognized by a DON PMD.

(5) Receipt of a federal agency decoration is subject to the DoD limits on duplicate recognition set forth in reference (b) and paragraph 2 of this enclosure.

e. Eligibility for Awards from a Friendly Foreign Government

(1) Navy and Marine Corps personnel are generally not eligible to accept, retain, or wear any award, any title, or membership in any order, proffered by a foreign head of state or foreign government. However, reference (b) allows Service Members to accept awards or decorations from a foreign government under certain conditions. Service Members may not

request, or otherwise encourage, the offer of an award or decoration from a foreign government.

(2) Acceptance, retention, and wear of any foreign PMD is subject to concurrence by CNO or CMC, in accordance with the limitations set forth in references (a) and (b).

(3) Acceptance, retention, and wear of any other foreign award is subject to approval by SECNAV or the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) as specified in reference (a) and (b). Acceptance of foreign CE&S awards will only be approved in the most exceptional cases.

(4) Receipt of foreign decorations is subject to the DoD limitations on duplicate recognition specified in reference (b) and paragraph 2 of this enclosure.

f. Midshipmen

(1) While performing training on active duty in the fleet, U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen are eligible for awards on the same basis as other members of the Naval Service. However, while performing service as students at the academy, they are not eligible for unit decorations or PMDs for meritorious achievement or service. They remain eligible at all times for PMDs for acts of non-combat heroism, and for any CE&S medals and ribbons for which they qualify.

(2) Midshipmen in the Naval Reserve Officer Training (NROTC) are generally eligible for military awards only when serving under orders on active duty. As an exception to the general policy, when not on active duty NROTC midshipmen are eligible for PMDs for acts of non-combat heroism on the same basis as inactive members of the Navy Reserve.

g. Members of Other U.S. Armed Forces

(1) U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Coast Guard personnel assigned on orders to a DON command for a period in excess of 179 days may accept, retain, and wear any non-heroism PMD proffered by the DON up to and including the MSM.

(2) By multi-Service agreement, those members may be presented non-combat PMDs up to and including the MSM without



parent Service concurrence. All other proposed PMDs must be submitted to the parent Service for concurrence, and the award may not be presented until official written concurrence is received.

(3) DON officials shall not award DON PMDs to any other Service personnel who are serving in joint activities. If such personnel are not eligible for Joint/Defense PMDs, or there is no suitable Joint/Defense PMD available, a recommendation for a PMD shall be forwarded to the individual's sponsoring parent Service command for consideration.

(4) DON commands will not award CE&S medals and ribbons, the PH, or the CAR to members of the other Services. If any such award is merited, the command may submit a recommendation for the equivalent parent Service award to the member's parent Service sponsoring agency or personnel office for consideration.

h. Military Personnel of Friendly Foreign Nations

(1) Foreign military personnel permanently assigned to DON commands or organizations (e.g., on an exchange program) are generally eligible for PMDs on the same basis as assigned Navy and Marine Corps personnel. However, foreign personnel may not be awarded the MOH or the Distinguished Service Medal.

(2) Award of the Legion of Merit (LOM) to foreign personnel must be in one of the four degrees, and in accordance with the procedures set forth in reference (b). SECDEF retains authority to approve the LOM in any of the four degrees, and must approve an exception to policy for any PMD to a foreign Flag/General Officer.

(3) PMDs to foreign personnel require concurrence by the Department of State and a counterintelligence check. The procedures depend upon the level of award, and are specified in references (a) and (b).

(4) Award of a DON unit decoration to a foreign unit also requires concurrence from the U.S. Embassy in the foreign unit's parent nation. The procedures for obtaining this concurrence are in reference (a).

(5) Foreign personnel are not eligible for CE&S awards, the PH, or the CAR.

i. Civilians

(1) Civilians are generally not eligible for DON PMDs or CE&S awards. Specific decorations exist to recognize deserving DON civil service employees, and to recognize other civilians not employed by the Executive Branch. By law civilians are not eligible for the PH.

(2) However, DON civilian employees may be included in a unit decoration to a military unit if they contributed significantly to the accomplishments recognized by the award.

(3) CNO or CMC may approve a MUC that includes civilians. In all other cases, SECNAV retains authority to approve any DON military award to a civilian.

2. PMDs

a. General Policy

(1) DON PMDs and their authorized uses are shown in Table 1. A PMD is a discretionary honor conferred upon an individual in recognition of valor, non-combat heroism, or exceptionally meritorious achievement or service. PMDs are awarded in the name of either Congress (MOH only), the President (Air Medal and above), or the SECNAV (Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (NC) and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal). However, some PMDs may be approved under delegated authority pursuant to enclosure (6) of this instruction.

(2) To preserve the prestige and motivational value of our DON PMDs, they must be judiciously awarded in accordance with the published criteria and the empirical standards established by previous awards within the Navy and Marine Corps.

(3) A nomination for a PMD may be officially originated by a commissioned officer of the U.S. Armed Forces, who was senior in grade or position to the awardee at the time of the distinguishing act or the period of meritorious service. A nomination for a PMD may also be originated by a DoD civilian,

equivalent to a GS-11 or above, who was senior in grade and position to the awardee. A civilian originator must be in a supervisory position to the awardee at the time of the distinguishing act or the period of meritorious service. If the originator is not the individual's CO, the nomination must be forwarded to the CO for endorsement and further forwarding up the chain of command to the award approval authority.

(4) An originator may voluntarily withdraw a PMD nomination before a final decision on it is made. However, an official PMD nomination can only be disapproved or downgraded by the official who has authority to approve the nominated award. Intermediate commanders/officials may recommend a lower award, or outright disapproval, but may not refuse to endorse and forward the nomination. See reference (a) for required actions by endorsers and award approval authorities.

(5) Pursuant to reference (b), no act, accomplishment, or period of meritorious service shall be recognized by more than one PMD. This includes any military PMD awarded under authority of Congress, the President, the SECDEF, or the Secretaries of the Military Departments. It also includes PMDs awarded by other federal agencies and friendly foreign nations.

(6) However, a PMD awarded in recognition of an act of valor or non-combat heroism does not preclude award of another PMD for meritorious service, provided the heroic act is not included in the summary of action narrative, or the citation, of the meritorious service PMD.

(7) Similarly, a specific achievement or impact PMD awarded in the midst of a tour of duty does not preclude consideration for a PMD covering the entire tour of duty. However, the accomplishment(s) that justified the impact PMD may not be included in the summary of action narrative justification or the citation for the EOT PMD. See paragraph 2.e of this enclosure and reference (a) for further guidance on duplicate recognition.

Table 1. DON PMDs and Authorized Uses

Title of Decoration	Valor Only (No Device)	Valor "V" Device	Meritorious Service or Achievement Under Combat Conditions. "C" Device	Remote Combat Impacts "R" Device	Non-Combat Heroism (No Device)	Other Specific Achievement (No Device)	Other Meritorious Service (No Device)
Medal of Honor (MOH)	●						
Navy Cross (NX)	●						
Distinguished Service Medal (DSM)			●			●	●
Silver Star Medal (SS)	●						
Legion of Merit (LOM)			●	●		●	●
Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)		●	●		●	●	
Navy and Marine Corps Medal (NM)					●		
Bronze Star Medal (BSM) <sup>1</sup>		●	See Note 1				
Meritorious Service Medal <sup>2</sup>		See Note 2	See Note 2	●		●	●
Air Medal		●	●		●	●	●
Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (NC)		●	●	●	●	●	●
Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (NAM)			●	●		●	●
<p><sup>1</sup> The "C" device is not authorized. All awards of the BSM must be in circumstances where there was personal exposure to hostile action or significant risk of exposure to hostile action.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> The "V" and "C" devices are not authorized. The MSM is equivalent to the BSM in degree of merit. If the achievement or service was performed under combat conditions, the BSM is the appropriate award.</p>							

b. PMDs for Valor

(1) By law the MOH, Navy Cross (NX), and Silver Star Medal (SS) may only be awarded in recognition of valor, or combat heroism. Pursuant to reference (b), if any other PMD is awarded in recognition of valor, the "V" device shall be worn on the PMD. The PMDs on which the "V" may be authorized are shown in Table 1. See references (a), (b), and (e) for further guidance on the "V" device.

(2) Prompt and appropriate recognition of acts of valor is a primary goal of the awards program. Accordingly, valor award nominations will be originated and processed within the timelines in enclosure (5).

(3) All awards for valor must be based on verifiable facts and supported by eyewitness testimony. Reference (a) provides detailed guidance on the essential elements of information and evidence that must be included in valor award nominations.

(4) All valor awards are specific achievement, or impact awards. Valor decorations may not be awarded in recognition of any sustained period of service. The MOH, NX, SS, Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) with "V" device, Bronze Star Medal with "V" device, Air Medal with "V" device (AH), and Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with "V" device may only be awarded in recognition of singular acts of valor, such as during a single mission or short duration battle.

c. PMDs for Non-Combat Heroism

(1) PMDs for non-combat heroism are also impact awards. The only DON awards that may be awarded in recognition of acts of non-combat heroism are, in order of precedence: DFC, Navy and Marine Corps Medal (NM), Air Medal, and NC.

(2) When these PMDs are awarded for non-combat heroism, no letter device shall be authorized.

(3) Although the NM is only awarded for acts of non-combat heroism, such acts can occur within a combat zone.

(4) Awards for accumulation of minor acts of non-combat heroism are not authorized. Each award must recognize only a singular act of heroism.

(5) Like a valor decoration, an award for non-combat heroism shall be based on verifiable facts and eyewitness testimony. See reference (a) for further guidance.

d. PMDs for Exceptionally Meritorious Achievement or Service

(1) PMDs authorized for meritorious achievement or service are shown in Table 1. Achievement in this context means a single non-heroic accomplishment of exceptional merit, or a short period (no more than 12 months) of exceptionally meritorious performance. By contrast meritorious service means exceptional accomplishment or performance over a longer period, but generally no longer than 48 months.

(2) PMDs recognizing specific meritorious achievement are also called impact awards. Such awards should recognize discrete, clearly identifiable accomplishments, such as the completion of an important project or mission, rather than merely recognize excellence in executing broad and continuing responsibilities. The latter are more appropriately recognized by meritorious service awards. Paragraph 2.e. of this enclosure provides further guidance on when these awards are/are not appropriate.

(3) If the accomplishment(s) occurred while the individual was personally exposed to hostile action, or at significant risk of hostile action, the "C" device shall be authorized on the PMD.

(a) If the individual qualified for the CAR during the period covered by the PMD (or would have qualified were it not for the limit of one CAR per operation), the "C" device shall be authorized. See references (a), (b), and (e) for further guidance on the "C" device.

(b) The only exceptions to the above rule are the MSM and the Bronze Star Medal (BSM), which are never awarded with the "C" device. The same level of merit is required for

the MSM and the BSM, but they are awarded under different circumstances.

(c) By law, pursuant to section 1133 of reference (g), the BSM may only be awarded if the achievement or service occurred in a location where Imminent Danger Pay (IDP) or Hostile Fire Pay (HFP) was authorized, or the individual actually receives IDP or HFP as a result of the event to which the award pertains. Further, pursuant to reference (b), the BSM may only be awarded if the individual was exposed to hostile action, or at significant risk of hostile action (same criteria as the "C" device). Therefore, the "C" device on the BSM would be redundant.

(d) Pursuant to reference (b), the MSM is not authorized when the individual was exposed to hostile action or at significant risk of hostile action. Therefore, the "C" device can never be authorized on the MSM. If the "C" device criteria are met, and the degree of merit of the accomplishment is at the BSM/MSM level, the BSM is the more appropriate award.

(4) If the accomplishment(s) had direct impact on combat operations, but was performed from a remote location where the individual was neither exposed to hostile action, nor at significant risk of exposure to hostile action, the "R" device may be authorized on the PMD. The "R" device is only authorized on impact awards, not awards for sustained performance. See references (a), (b), and (e) for detailed guidance on the "R" device.

e. Occasions for Award of PMDs for Meritorious Service

(1) Sustained meritorious performance is normally recognized only at the end of the prescribed tour of duty. This might be upon occasion of a Permanent Change of Station transfer, retirement, or the end of a deployment.

(2) A PMD must not be nominated solely because the individual has completed a tour of duty, deployment, or career. Merely successfully completing a tour of duty in any billet does not entitle any individual to a PMD. Routine awards of that nature are not a legitimate part of the DON Military Awards Program. A nomination for a PMD must be based on

performance/accomplishment that clearly exceeds that normally expected from a person of that grade and experience.

(3) The occasion of retirement, or transfer to the Fleet Reserve or Fleet Marine Corps Reserve, is a significant milestone in one's career, and deserves consideration as an opportunity for recognition by a PMD. DON does not have a "retirement award", i.e., an award intended to recognize the entire period of one's military service upon occasion of retirement. A PMD awarded on occasion of retirement must be sufficiently justified by the individual's performance in the most recent tour of duty.

(4) Award of a PMD in the midst of a tour of duty is rarely appropriate unless the achievement or accomplishment is so significant it cannot be appropriately recognized in any other way. If such an award is deemed appropriate, it shall be an impact award, as described in paragraph 2.d. of this enclosure.

(5) Receipt of an impact PMD (or any PMD for valor or non-combat heroism) does not preclude nomination for a meritorious service PMD recognizing the entire tour of duty. However, any act or accomplishment used to justify the impact or heroism award must be excluded from the justification for the meritorious service PMD, and not mentioned in the citation.

(6) Detachment of individual's CO, reporting senior, or other supervisor in the midst of the individual's normal tour of duty is not an occasion for recognition of that individual by a PMD. DON PMDs are honors conferred in the name of the President or SECNAV for heroism or exceptional service to the nation. They shall not be awarded as tokens of personal appreciation, or rewards for personal loyalty. The prestige and validity of the PMD does not depend upon the specific official who signs or presents the award.

(7) Selection as Sailor or Marine of the Year for a major command can be an occasion for recognition by an impact PMD. However, an individual may only receive one such PMD per calendar year. If a Sailor or Marine of the Year is selected at multiple levels, a single PMD is authorized and should recognize the highest level attained.



(8) Individuals with multiple responsibilities or reporting chains, sometimes referred to as "dual-hatted", may only receive one PMD covering the same period of meritorious service. An individual may not receive a separate PMD for each additional duty or reporting relationship. If the PMD includes the totality of functions performed, it should be submitted to the highest authority for approval. For example, if an individual is performing some functions directly for SECNAV, and others directly for CNO, a PMD covering all would be submitted to SECNAV for approval.

### 3. Unit Decorations

#### a. General Policy

(1) The DON unit decorations are: the PUC, the NUC, and the MUC. The specific criteria for these awards are in reference (a).

(2) Unit decorations recognize entire organizations for collective extraordinary heroism, outstanding performance in action, or exceptionally meritorious achievement. Such awards are restricted to acts or services that clearly and distinctly, by nature and magnitude, place the unit's performance significantly above that of other units performing similar missions under similar circumstances. The unit's performance should be such that it cannot be adequately recognized in any other way. Unit decorations are not intended to recognize actions of individual members of the units or parts of a unit, but rather to commend the accomplishments of the organization as a team.

b. Unit Nominations. Unit decorations may only be officially originated by the unit's Immediate Superior in Command or another commander in the chain of command. Under no circumstances may the commander of the unit to be decorated, or any member(s) of the unit to be decorated, officially originate a nomination for a unit decoration.

### 4. Miscellaneous Award Policy

a. PH. The PH shall be awarded in strict accordance with the criteria and standards in references (a), (b), and (e). In accordance with longstanding policies and practices, officials

within the DON will not award the PH to members of other military Services.

b. CAR. The CAR shall be awarded in strict accordance with the criteria and standards in reference (a). Eligibility for the CAR is limited to military personnel of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and to members of the U.S. Coast Guard when operating as part of the Navy.

c. Extraordinary Heroism (EH)

(1) Pursuant to sections 8330 and 12739 of reference (g), upon transfer to the Fleet Reserve/Fleet Marine Corps Reserve, or retirement under section 12733 of reference (g), an enlisted member who has been credited by SECNAV with EH in the line of duty is entitled to a 10 percent increase in retainer pay. This may be subject to other laws limiting the maximum amount of retainer pay.

(2) The criteria and standards for EH, and the procedures for making EH determinations are in reference (a). By law, once made the EH determination is final and conclusive for all purposes.

d. Reconsideration of Previous Award Decisions

(1) Pursuant to reference (b), a previously approved award, or a previously reviewed and disapproved award nomination, can only be reconsidered upon presentation of new, substantive, and relevant material evidence that was not available when the original decision was made. To meet this requirement, the information must be such that it reasonably would not have been known to the chain of command, and would have had bearing on the endorsements and ultimate decision. New information that merely adds detail to what was previously available will not meet the reconsideration requirement.

(2) Reference (b) also permits previous award decisions to be reconsidered if there is evidence of material error or impropriety in the processing or adjudication of the original nomination. This may include, but is not limited to, loss of accompanying or substantiating official documents or witness statements during the original routing of the recommendation; clearly incorrect application of official policy; or

SECNAVINST 1650.1J  
29 May 2019

substantiated gender, religious, or racial discrimination.  
SECNAV is the sole authority for determining whether  
reconsideration is merited due to material error or impropriety.

(3) See reference (a) for further guidance on submission  
and processing of requests for reconsideration.

**TIMELINESS STANDARDS**

1. General. Timely origination of, and command action on, award nominations is vital to the success of the awards program. A nomination should be originated as soon as practicable following the distinguishing act or achievement, or end of the period of meritorious service. However, care must be taken to ensure nominations include sufficient detail to enable an informed decision by the awarding authority, and that the essential facts have been verified.

2. Time Limits for PMDs. A nomination must be officially originated within three (3) years of the distinguishing act or period of service, and a final determination made within two (2) years of that, in no case more than five (5) years after the act.

3. Time Limits for Valor PMDs. Nominations for valor decorations (i.e., MOH, NX, SS, and any medal with a "V" device) are a priority and warrant special handling.

a. Valor award nominations should be originated and entered into official channels within 45 days of the distinguishing act that justifies the award. For units with small footprint and little deployed administrative support, nominations will be originated within 45 days of return to home base.

b. Each echelon of review will act upon valor award nominations within ten (10) working days of receipt.

c. Final action must be taken on nominations for the NX and all lower-level valor awards within 12 months of origination. For MOH nominations, within 12 months SECNAV must either forward a favorable MOH endorsement to SECDEF, approve an award lower than the MOH, or approve no award.

4. Time limits for unit decorations are the same as for PMDs.

5. The PH and CAR are not limited by the above time limits.

a. Pursuant to enclosure (6) of this instruction, CNO and CMC are delegated authority to take final action on all PH or CAR nominations except those stemming from international terrorist attacks.

b. Authority for any other official to approve the PH or CAR beyond the three-year time limit must be delegated by CNO or CMC in writing.

c. Without specific retroactive award authority, all commanders with authority to approve the PH and CAR may only do so when the actions occurred within the most recent three years, and within the scope of their operational authority.

6. Eligibility for CE&S awards is normally a matter of service record verification, and therefore generally not subject to time limits. One exception is the MOVSM, which is subject to the PMD time limits in paragraph 2 above.

7. Consideration of PMD nominations made outside time limits

a. If a nomination was officially originated within the specified time limits, but was lost or not acted upon due to inadvertence, the nomination may be submitted to SECNAV via the chain of command for consideration. A full explanation of the circumstances that caused the delay must accompany the nomination. "Administrative oversight" is not an acceptable explanation.

b. In all other cases, out-of-time-limit award nominations will only be considered if referred to SECNAV by a Member of Congress under the provisions of section 1130 of reference (g). See reference (a) for further guidance on consideration of award nominations under this process.

**DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO APPROVE AWARDS**

1. The SECNAV retains awarding authority to approve all awards covered by this instruction and reference (a), except as specified in this enclosure. Any further sub-delegation must be specified in writing.
2. Award nominations and other award matters requiring approval by SECNAV or the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASN (M&RA)) shall be routed via the Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals (NDBDM).
3. Awarding Authority Retained by SECNAV
  - a. All awards to Flag/General Officers in grade of O-10.
  - b. SS and above.
  - c. PUC and NUC.
  - d. Any military award to a civilian. Exception: a MUC approved by CNO or CMC may include civilians assigned to the unit.
  - e. All awards to foreign nationals. Exception: a MUC approved by CNO or CMC may include foreign military personnel permanently assigned to the unit.
  - f. All awards, including the PH, related to domestic and international terrorist attacks.
  - g. All awards for military personnel serving within the staffs of the Assistant Secretaries of the Navy, Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy, and the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration.
  - h. Awards beyond time limits, and all other awards requiring an exception to DoD or DON policy.
  - i. Revocation of any PMD, unit decoration, or PH after the award has been presented.
  - j. Approval of benefits of EH.

k. Concurrence with any unit decoration proffered by another Military Department that specifically recognized a Navy or Marine Corps unit in the citation.

l. Concurrence with any unit award proffered by any federal office or agency outside DoD or any foreign government.

4. Awarding Authority Delegated to ASN (M&RA)

a. Combat and heroism awards below the SS to Flag and General Officers, grades O-9 and below. Includes authority to concur/non-concur with any awards of this level proffered to Navy or Marine Corps Flag and General Officers by other Military Services.

b. Designation of new areas and operations for which: the CAR may be awarded; sorties may earn credit toward the Air Medal on a Strike/Flight basis; and PMDs can be awarded with the "V", "C", and "R" devices.

c. LOM and lesser PMDs for personnel serving with the organizations listed below. Authority to approve the MSM and below may be sub-delegated:

- (1) Office of Naval Research;
- (2) Office of the General Counsel;
- (3) Naval Criminal Investigative Service;
- (4) Office of Legislative Affairs;
- (5) Office of the Judge Advocate General;
- (6) Office of Information; and
- (7) Office of the Naval Inspector General.

5. Authority delegated to the CNO and CMC

a. All combat and heroism related awards below the SS to assigned personnel in grades O-6 and below.

b. Non-combat awards, LOM and below, to assigned personnel in grades O-9 and below.

c. LOM and below to Navy or Marine Corps personnel assigned to the Office of SECDEF or a joint activity, when the Service Member is recommended for a DON, vice Joint, award upon occasion of retirement. For all other occasions, nominations for DON awards for personnel on joint duty shall be forwarded to ASN (M&RA) for consideration as an exception to policy.

d. The MUC to assigned Navy and Marine Corps military units. These awards may include assigned foreign military personnel and civilian units.

e. Concurrence with PMDs, up to and including the LOM (or foreign equivalent), awarded to Navy CNO and CMC personnel by other Military Departments or Services, other federal agencies, or foreign governments.

f. Concurrence with decorations to units of the other Military Departments that include Navy or Marine Corps Service personnel. However, if a Navy or Marine Corps unit is the principal unit recognized by the decoration, SECNAV must concur.

g. Revocation of the CAR or any CE&S award, if it is later determined the criteria had not been met, or the recipient's service after the fact had not been honorable.

h. Sub-delegation is authorized with the following limitations:

(1) LOM, DFC, and NM may not be sub-delegated below the grade of O-9;

(2) NC may not be sub-delegated below the grade of O-6;

(3) Nominations for the MSM and above for members of a Flag/General officer's immediate staff (e.g., Executive Assistant, Aide, or Flag Secretary) shall be forwarded to the next higher awarding authority for appropriate action;

(4) MUC may not be sub-delegated;



(5) Awarding Authority will not be sub-delegated to civilian officials;

(6) Authority to concur with non-DON awards is not inherent in authority to approve the equivalent DON award. Sub-delegation of concurrence authority must be specified in writing; and

(7) Award authority sub-delegation extends only to award nominations that are compliant with statutory and regulatory policy, including time limits. Awards requiring exception to any policy may not be approved under delegated authority.

6. Authority delegated to the NDBDM

a. NDBDM may approve on behalf of SECNAV and ASN (M&RA) all non-combat/heroism awards, LOM and below, to personnel in grades O-6 and below, when the Board concurs with the senior endorsing official as to the appropriate award.

b. NDBDM is also delegated authority to disapprove credit for Extraordinary Heroism.

c. All other cases will be forwarded with the Board's recommendation to SECNAV or ASN (M&RA), as appropriate, for approval.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. ASN (M&RA) shall

- a. Administer the policies for military awards; and
- b. Provide advice and assistance to SECNAV in all matters pertaining to military awards.

2. CNO and CMC shall

- a. Implement the policies in this instruction throughout the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps, and ensure all internal Service level regulations are consistent with these policies;
- b. Ensure approved and authorized awards are entered into official records in accordance with references (a) and (j);
- c. In accordance with reference (b), make required notification to the appropriate Members of Congress when certain awards for valor are approved;
- d. Submit quarterly to NDBDM a report of all MUCs and all combat and heroism awards approved under delegated authority during that quarter; and
- e. Submit quarterly to NDBDM a report on the timeliness of processing valor decorations. This report must be compiled and submitted by DON to DoD in accordance with reference (b).

3. All Officials Delegated Authority to Approve Awards shall

- a. Ensure local policies and procedures are in compliance with this instruction and the references in enclosure (1);
- b. Take one of the following actions on every award nomination officially submitted for your consideration:
  - (1) Approve the award recommended;
  - (2) Approve a lower award;

(3) Approve a higher award if so empowered, or forward the nomination to the appropriate higher awarding authority;

(4) Approve no award (i.e. disapprove the nomination);

(5) Return the nomination to the originator, or lower level endorser, for further justification. However, if further justification is not forthcoming, one of the above four decisions must still be made on the merits. Award officials may only refuse to act on an official award nomination if it is non-compliant with DoD and DON policy; and

c. Maintain a local record of all awards approved, and ensure approved awards are properly recorded in accordance with references (a) and (j).

4. NDBDM shall

a. Review and recommend appropriate action on all award matters and nominations requiring approval or endorsement by SECNAV or ASN (M&RA);

b. Review and recommend appropriate action on all SECRET and CONFIDENTIAL award nominations and matters requiring approval or endorsement by CNO, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, or Director, Navy Staff;

c. When appropriate, make recommendations to SECNAV or ASN (M&RA) on military awards policy matters, and provide interpretation of award policy to offices and commands within DON. When requested, review awards made under delegated authority for compliance with DON award policy;

d. Review all military award related correspondence, directives, and instructions prior to approval by ASN (M&RA) or SECNAV;

e. Respond to military awards related inquiries and requests that were submitted to SECNAV, or referred to SECNAV by the SECDEF or any agency or office outside DON. If another official is tasked to provide the official DON response, NDBDM will provide advisory support as needed;

SECNAVINST 1650.1J  
29 May 2019

f. Represent DON in DoD and multi-Service awards forums, and maintain liaison with the offices in DoD and the other Military Departments that have oversight of military awards policy; and

g. Maintain and update this instruction and reference (a).