

CHAPTER 48

RECOGNITION OF AWARDS WITHIN THE ORDER OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM

Introduction

48.1 The Official Order of Wearing Australian Honours and Awards allows for the wearing of some awards from within the Order of St John (see [Chapter 4, Annex A](#)). This permission pertains only to awards of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, that is, the Anglican offshoot of the original Order of St John. The Venerable Order is a Royal Order of Chivalry, under the patronage of the British and Australian Crown.

48.2 In recent years, members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) have been appointed to various levels within versions of the Order of St John that are not recognised by the Australian Government. This includes the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, the original branch of the Order. For a history of the Order of St John and its current recognised legitimate branches, see [Annex A](#).

48.3 In addition to the several legitimate branches of the Order of St John discussed in [Annex B](#), a number of members of the ADF are known to have become involved in recent years with one of the many so-called 'false orders of St John.' A brief history and outline of the 'false' or 'self-styled' 'Orders of St John' are given in [Annex B](#).

48.4 Applications to the Directorate of Honours and Awards for the official recognition of appointment in Orders of St John, other than the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, are always refused.

48.5 This chapter provides guidance and information on the various Orders of St John. Descriptions of the various insignia and medals are shown in Volume 2, Chapter 4.

48.6 The chapter has application to both members of the ADF and civilian employees of the Department of Defence.

The wearing of insignia of the Order of St John

48.7 The only insignia of an Order of St John authorised for unrestricted wear on ADF uniform, are insignia of the Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem. This is an Order under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, in her right as Queen of Australia.

48.8 The entry in *The Order of Wearing Australian Honours and Awards* that authorises wear of insignia of the 'Order of St John' refers to the insignia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem only. This approval does not extend to the insignia of any other Order of St John, including the other four Alliance Orders ([Annex A](#)) or any self-styled 'Order of St John' ([Annex B](#)).

48.9 The following insignia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem are approved for wear:

- a. Bailiff/Dame Grand Cross;
- b. Knight/Dame of Justice;
- c. Knight/Dame of Grace;
- d. Chaplain;
- e. Commander (Brother or Sister);
- f. Officer (Brother or Sister);
- g. Serving Brother/Serving Sister;
- h. Lifesaving Medal; and
- i. Service Medal.

48.10 Insignia. The full-sized and miniature insignia of the grades listed above are to be worn on appropriate occasions in the manner prescribed by the Regulations of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, in the position prescribed by *The Order of Wearing of Australian Honours and Awards*.

48.11 Riband. The riband of the Order, as appropriate to the grades listed above, with appropriate emblem, is to be worn in accordance with single-Service dress instructions in the position prescribed by *The Order of Wearing of Australian Honours and Awards* (see [Chapter 4, Annex A](#)).

Lifesaving Medal

48.12 The Lifesaving Medal may be awarded to those people, either members or non-members of the Order, who in a conspicuous act of bravery have endangered their own life in saving or attempting to save the life of others.

48.13 The following criteria must be satisfied:

- a. that the act was a conspicuous act of bravery;
- b. that the person endangered their own life; and
- c. that the act was performed in saving or attempting to save the life of one or more other persons.

48.14 It is not necessary that the attempt to save the life was successful. The degree of courage displayed and the extent to which the respondent's own life was risked determine whether the award will be granted and if it will be gold, silver or bronze.

48.15 The regulations for the award have a non-duplication provision which states that the award is not made to persons who have been recognised with a national award or an award from an organisation of standing for the same act of bravery. A person may elect a particular award if the intention to make an award is known.

48.16 The insignia or riband of the Lifesaving Medal is to be worn on appropriate orders of dress above the right breast pocket. For items of dress without a right hand pocket, the medal and riband are to be worn on the right-hand side of the jacket in a position equivalent to where the item would be located for a jacket with a right-hand breast pocket.

Service Medal

48.17 The Service Medal of the St John Ambulance Brigade, while not part of the insignia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, is considered to be a medal attached to the Order. In Australia this medal is awarded for 12 years' efficient service with clasps awarded for additional five year periods of qualifying service. As such, the medal is authorised for wear on ADF uniform in accordance with *The Order of Wearing of Australian Honours and Awards*. The Service Medal of the Order of St John, both full-sized and miniature, and the riband are to be worn in appropriate orders of dress on the left breast as a Long Service Medal after all other Imperial Long Service awards and before the Anniversary of National Service Medal 1951–1971.

Precedence and privileges

48.18 The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem is not a State Order, but a Royal Order of Chivalry. While its insignia may be worn on military uniform on appropriate occasions, no grade confers any title or social precedence outside the order. Thus a 'Knight of Grace' or a 'Knight of Justice' is not entitled to use the title 'Sir' which a knight of State Orders of Chivalry is entitled to use. New knights of the Order receive the accolade from the Grand Prior when they are touched on the shoulder with a sword and receive their robes and insignia.

Postnominal letters

48.19 The various grades of the Order are given specific postnominal letters; however, these only show that the recipient has been honoured, unlike State Orders or Decorations, which indicate precedence. Members of the ADF and the Department of Defence may not use the postnominal letters of the various grades of the Order in any official or semi-official correspondence, including Defence-provided business cards.¹

Conclusion

48.20 The inclusion of the Order of St John in *The Order of Wearing Australian Honours and Awards* has been the cause of some confusion. This has been especially so on the part of members of the ADF appointed to one of the various grades of the (Catholic) Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta (SMOM). As these persons have felt secure in the (totally correct) belief that the SMOM is a quite legitimate Order of Chivalry, they have believed that they are entitled to wear the insignia of the Order on ADF uniform. This is incorrect. As outlined in this chapter, and for the reasons given, only insignia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem may be worn on ADF uniform. This non-authorisation applies to the insignia of the other Alliance Orders (German, Dutch and Swedish) as well as the SMOM.

48.21 In addition to members of the ADF appointed to the SMOM (or the other Alliance Orders), there have been a number of members of the ADF over recent years who have been appointed to or have purchased appointments in one of the various self-styled or false 'Orders of St John'. As with the insignia of the SMOM, insignia of these self-styled or false orders may not be worn on ADF uniform at any time or under any circumstances.

Annexes:

- A. [Historical background to the Order of St John of Jerusalem](#)
- B. [List of self styled or false orders of St John](#)

¹ Postnominals within the Order of St John are not recognised as notified in the Governor-Generals media release of 14 August 1982.