

CHAPTER 1

ORDERS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS

General

1.1 Orders, decorations and medals are awarded for gallantry, meritorious service or achievement, operational service, certain non-operational service and long or special service. The chapters in this part detail those aspects of orders, decorations and medals which pertain to dress.

1.2 Emblems of citations, individual and unit commendations are included in part 4, [chapter 9—'Emblems of awards'](#).

1.3 This part generally refers to awards made under the Australian system of honours and awards but does include, where appropriate, awards made under the Imperial system as well as awards made by the United Nations and other foreign nations and organisations.

Definitions

1.4 The definition of honours, awards, orders, decorations and medals has never been clear. For example, a person is said to be 'decorated' for gallantry, but the award received is in fact a medal.

1.5 The definitions given below are applied to all aspects relating to honours and awards in the Army Standing Orders for Dress:

- a. **Bars.** A bar is a full width metal device worn on the riband of a decoration or medal awarded for gallantry, bravery, distinguished or conspicuous service to signify an additional award of a decoration or medal.
- b. **Clasps.** A clasp is a full width metal device worn on the riband of medals which indicates one of the following:
 - (1) the geographical area of a campaign;
 - (2) an additional period of qualifying long service; and
 - (3) the date of an award, eg the Champion Shot Medal.
- c. **Decorations.** A decoration is an award, normally in the form of a cross or a star made for gallantry, bravery, distinguished service or conspicuous service. Australian decorations are VC, CV, SG, SC, DSC, CSC and NSC. Decorations may have an associated medal which is lower in the order of precedence. These are MG, BM, DSM and CSM. On invitations the term 'decorations' is sometimes used with dress instructions to refer to all honours and awards.
- d. **Emblems.** The term 'emblem' denotes surcharges affixed to ribbons, such as the miniature crosses on the VC and CV ribbons; and the rosettes worn on long service ribbons to signify additional periods of service. In the Imperial system, emblems such as the silver Tudor rose denoting the award of a bar to a gallantry decoration or medal or the '1' and '8' worn on the Africa Star to signify service in particular organisations. Emblems also include the Commendations for Gallantry and Distinguished Service, Commendations for Brave Conduct and in the Imperial system the bronze oak leaf signifying the award of a mention in dispatches.
- e. **Emblems of citations.** Emblems of unit citations are worn in accordance with part 4, [chapter 9](#).
- f. **Honours and awards.** Collective terms for orders, decorations, medals, commendations and citations awarded to individuals or units.

- g. **Medals.** The term ‘medals’ includes the badges of the lower classes of orders worn as medals rather than as neck badges or breast stars and medals associated with decorations, for example the AM and the OAM. Medals may be divided into the following groups:
 - (1) medals for gallantry in action or for bravery in peacetime;
 - (2) medals for meritorious service and special service or achievement in peacetime;
 - (3) medals for war service and non-warlike service;
 - (4) medals for long service; and
 - (5) Coronation, Jubilee or other commemorative medals.
- h. **Official awards.** An official award is one which is instituted by The Sovereign under Letters Patent to accord recognition to individuals or groups of people. Official awards are worn in accordance with the Order of Wearing of Australian Honours and Awards. Except for neck badges, official awards are worn above the left breast.
- i. **Orders.** An order is a group of awards in varying degrees of precedence under a single title. The only order in the Australian system is the Order of Australia. The lower classes of orders may be medals. The term order is applied to those insignia or badges which are worn as neck badges or breast stars. Insignia worn with medals are known as medals.
- j. **Order of precedence.** Honours and awards are worn in accordance with the Order of Wearing Australian Honours and Awards. This list is produced by Government House and shows official awards in order of seniority.
- k. **Postnominals.** Some awards allow recipients to use postnominals after their names. The postnominal is the initials of such an award. Examples are VC, SG, AM, BM.
- l. **Riband.** The term ‘riband’ is used to denote the silk ribbon from which an order, decoration or medal is suspended or the ribbon-like device which may be incorporated in the actual badge of an order.
- m. **Ribbon.** The term ‘ribbon’ applies to the silk ribbon of an order, decoration or medal when the material is mounted on a brooch affixed to, or sewn on, uniforms.
- n. **Ribbon Bar Emblem.** A miniature of an award which is worn on ribbon bars.
- o. **Unofficial awards.** Unofficial awards are those medals issued by private organisations. These include medals for overseas service, national service and front line service. These are not to be worn on uniform. The exception to this are those medals awarded by civilian societies for bravery in saving life. These may be worn only with Directorate of Personnel Policy—Army (DPP–A) approval.
- p. **Warrant.** A warrant is presented with many Australian awards. This warrant includes the citation for the award.

Promotion within an order

1.6 A person appointed to a higher class of an order, for example from AM to AO, only the insignia of the higher class is worn. The regulations of an order normally require the insignia of the lower class to be returned. A person appointed to a division within an order who already holds an award in another division in the order, for example AM (Military Division) and AO (General Division), can wear both insignia in the correct precedence.

Bars to awards

1.7 A bar (or additional bar) may be awarded to the holder of the following Australian awards:

VC, CV, SG, SC, DSC, CSC, NSC, MG, DSM and CSM

1.8 In the Imperial system bars may have been awarded to signify additional awards of the following:

VC, GC, DSO, RRC, DSC, MC, DFC, DCM, CGM, GM, QGM, DSM, MM, DFM and BEM

1.9 Each bar is signified by a device worn on the riband of the medal and by a miniature cross or rosette on the ribbon of the medal. The original award of the VC, GC, CV, SC and BM includes a miniature replica of the medal for wearing on the ribbon. Additional emblems are worn on the ribbons of those awards to signify additional awards.

Awards for which a medal is not awarded

1.10 The awards listed below are represented by an emblem which is issued in two sizes—the large emblem worn on a riband of appropriate colour with medals, and a small emblem worn on a ribbon of appropriate colour with ribbons of other awards. These awards are:

- a. Commendation for Gallantry,
- b. Commendation for Brave Conduct, and
- c. Commendation for Distinguished Service.

1.11 Subsequent awards are recognised by a warrant describing the subsequent action. Additional emblems are not awarded or worn.

Unofficial awards

1.12 The following unofficial medals may be worn on uniform, subject to Army Headquarters (DPP–A) approval:

- a. Royal Humane Society Medals,
- b. Royal Humane Society of Australasia,
- c. Royal Humane Society of New South Wales,
- d. Royal National Lifeboat institution,
- e. Order of St John of Jerusalem Life Saving Medal, and
- f. Florence Nightingale Medal.

1.13 Approved awards are worn on the right breast.

1.14 **No other unofficial medals and awards are authorised to be worn on the uniform, or on civilian attire, at any time whilst representing the Australian Defence Force.**

Foreign awards

1.15 The policies for accepting and wearing of foreign awards are detailed in part 5, [chapter 4—'Foreign awards'](#).

Order of precedence

1.16 Honours and awards are worn in order of precedence as detailed in the Order of Wearing Australian Honours and Awards. This Order is published in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* No PS208, dated Monday, 17 June 1996 which is reproduced in [annex A](#) to this chapter.

Annex:

- A. [Order of wearing Australian Honours and Awards](#)

