NOMINATION AND PROCESSING PROCEDURES FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE DECORATIONS

Overview

1. In all cases, recommended nominations for Distinguished Service Decorations are to be staffed through the chain-of-command to the Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS).

Confidentiality

2. Commanders at all levels are to ensure that individuals are not aware that they have been nominated for an award.

Assessment of nominations

3. Nominations are to be assessed on merit with strict attention paid to the criteria for the award. There is to be no cascade effect from one level downwards where higher ranking members are nominated for higher awards. Nominations are to be submitted no later than three years after the end of the conflict.

NOMINATION OPTIONS

4. There are three categories of nomination for Distinguished Service Decorations. These are:
   a. Immediate.
   b. Priority.
   c. Periodic.

Immediate awards

5. In exceptional cases, regulations allow for the immediate recognition and approval of Distinguished Service Decorations by the Governor-General, on the recommendation of the Minister. Such cases are rare and can only occur in situations involving actual combat and acts of distinguished leadership that warrant immediate recognition. Recommendation action should commence within 24 hours of an action with a view to gaining approval within 36 to 48 hours.

6. A recommendation for immediate approval of a decoration is to be made via the operational chain-of-command through the Australian Operational Joint Force Commander and CJOPS to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). If the CDF concurs with the award, the CDF will advise the Minister to recommend the award to the Governor-General for approval. Once the Governor-General’s approval is given, the member may wear the decoration ribbon. The decoration ribbon should be formally presented to the member at a parade in the operational area or soon after arrival back in Australia. Recommendations may be verbal, but at each stage of the process, a written record of any conversation is to be made and retained.

7. Follow-up administration. Following the Governor-General’s approval appropriate paperwork, in the form of a narrative, synopsis and approval request is to be submitted through the chain-of-command to the Governor-General to enable formal gazettal of the award. The Directorate of Honours and Awards (DH&A) is responsible for preparing the necessary documentation for the Minister and Governor-General. The decoration is awarded as part of the Government House investiture program.

Priority awards

8. On occasions there may be compelling reasons to have decorations relating to a particular operation, which do not meet immediate award criteria, announced separately from the Queen’s Birthday and Australia Day Honours Lists. These decorations are identified as priority awards.
9. A written recommendation for a priority award is to be made from the unit through the operational chain-of-command to the Australian Operational Joint Force Commander and CJOPS. If CJOPS is satisfied with the recommendation, he will forward it to the CDF. The CDF may then endorse the recommendation and forward it to the Minister for the Minister’s recommendation to the Governor-General for approval (DH&A is responsible for preparing the necessary documentation to the Minister and Governor-General). The member must not wear the decoration ribbon before gazettal of the award. After approval, the decoration ribbon should be formally presented to the member at a parade in the operational area or soon after arrival back in Australia. The decoration will be formally awarded as part of the Government House investiture program.

Periodic awards

10. A list of awards may be prepared and included in the Australia Day and Queen’s Birthday Honours Lists for any Australian Defence Force (ADF) operation. These awards are known as periodic awards.

Periodic awards nomination submission

11. An individual may be recommended for an award at any level from within a unit, formation or command. Nominations are to be processed through the operational chain-of-command and the appropriate force commander, to Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) for consideration by the CJOPS.

12. HQJOC is to pass endorsed nominations to DH&A who will check whether any individual has also been nominated in the honours list for a non-operational award, and check that nominations conform to guidelines detailed in the relevant regulations and determinations. If a nomination is found in both lists, or if any other anomaly is identified, the matter is to be highlighted and brought to the attention of CJOPS. In the case of dual nominations, CJOPS will consult with the applicable single-Service chief to determine which nomination is to stand or whether both nominations are to be processed.

13. When final clearance is received from CJOPS, DH&A will prepare the documentation required for processing the nominations through CDF and the Minister to the Governor-General, for final approval. At any point in the chain-of-command, a nomination may be upgraded, downgraded, rejected or remain intact.

NOMINATION PROCESS

14. A cover sheet (Form AD 104—Nomination for Half-Yearly Honours), narrative and synopsis are required with each award nomination. Nominations which do not comply with the requirements detailed in this Instruction may be returned to the nominating authority for corrective action. This may result in the processing of the nomination being delayed until the next honours list.

15. Cover sheet. An electronic copy of the cover sheet (Form AD 104) may be accessed from the Defence Web Forms System or the DH&A website www.defence.gov.au/medals. The cover sheet is to contain the following information:

a. Nominee details:
   (1) PMKeyS number, rank, given names, and surname;
   (2) honours, decorations or awards held (do not include service medals, active service medals or long service medals);
   (3) corps, mustering, unit, ship, establishment as applicable; and
   (4) next posting and separation date (if applicable).

b. General information:
   (1) name of award for which the member is being recommended;

1 Rank shown is to be the member’s worn rank. If this is different to the member’s rank at the time of nomination this should be reflected in the narrative.
(2) the nominated applicable honours list;

(3) whether the nomination is a re-nomination;

(4) the signature blocks of the nominating officer and recommending officers in the chain-of-command; and

(5) whether any or all details of the award are to be withheld from public view.

16. **Narrative.** An example of a narrative layout is in Appendix 1. The narrative justifies the award for which the nominee is being considered. Abbreviations are not to be used. The narrative will normally be no more than one page and include the following information:

a. the Service to which the nominee belongs (in the heading);

b. the award for which the nominee is being considered;

c. the nominee’s PMKeyS number, rank and full name (in the heading);

d. a one to three line citation describing the actions applicable to the award and the activities undertaken; and

e. justification for the award, which must be a clear description of the action to be recognised.

17. **Synopsis.** An example of the synopsis layout is in Appendix 1. The synopsis provides a summary of the narrative for printing in the Government Gazette and announcement at the investiture ceremony. It should not contain any military terms or jargon and must include:

a. the award for which the nominee is being considered;

b. rank, full name and residential address of the nominee;

c. a one to three line citation describing the actions applicable to the award and the activities undertaken (identical to the citation in Paragraph 1 of the narrative); and

d. no more than six lines outlining the actions to be recognised which justify the main reason(s) for the nomination.

18. **Layout.** Nomination documentation is to be:

a. prepared using Times New Roman 12 point font;

b. justified left and right, using single line spacing within the paragraphs and double line spacing between paragraphs; and

c. provided as follows:

(1) in hard copy; and

(2) in electronic form with signed Form AD 104 in PDF format and narrative and synopsis in MS Word format.

19. **Privacy requirements.** The HONOURS–IN–CONFIDENCE privacy marking should not appear on the narrative or synopsis. This classification should only be used on the covering documentation.

20. Following consideration of nominations by Service honours committees and Joint Operations Command honours committee, advice will be provided to the 2 Star recommending officer on unsuccessful nominations. At the discretion of those officers, this advice may be further advised to nominating officers.

**Appendix:**

1. Example Narrative and Synopsis layout for Distinguished Service Decorations