CHAPTER 21

OPERATIONAL SERVICE MEDAL

Introduction

21.1 The Australian Operational Service Medal (OSM) provides recognition for members of the ADF who render service in certain military operations. It is primarily intended to replace the Australian Active Service Medal (AASM), the Australian Service Medal (ASM) and campaign medals for future declared operational service. A description of the OSM is contained in Volume 2, Chapter 16—Australian operational service and campaign awards.

21.2 A variant of the OSM is also established to recognise civilians employed on ADF operations under the auspices of the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982. The OSM (Civilian) is detailed in Chapter 22—Australian Operational Service Medal (Civilian).

Authority

21.3 The OSM was approved by The Queen on 22 May 2012. OSM Regulations are published in Commonwealth of Australia Gazette (CAG) S67 of 6 June 2012.

Definitions

21.4 The following definitions apply:

a. **ADF member** means a member of the Australian Defence Force.\(^1\)

b. **Minister** is the Minister for Defence.

Application and processing procedures

21.5 OSM application and processing procedures are detailed in the annexes to this chapter.

OSM POLICY FRAMEWORK

Purpose

21.6 The OSM policy framework establishes the conditions on which decisions to recommend particular operational service for recognition with the OSM and OSM (Civilian) are to be based. A transparent and clearly stated policy framework that defines the conditions that must be met is designed to ensure the integrity of the OSM and to maintain a level of consistency across the broad range of operational service.

Conditions for recognition

21.7 Conditions under which the OSM may be recommended include:

a. **Warlike operations.** These include:

   1. State of declared war.
   2. Conventional combat operations against an armed adversary.
   3. Peace Enforcement activities which are military operations in support of diplomatic efforts to restore peace between belligerents who may not be consenting to

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\(^1\) Refers to the status of a person on deployment. A Reservist deployed in a civilian capacity is not an ADF member for the purpose of the OSM. Such persons should refer to Chapter 22 Operational Service Medal (Civilian)
intervention and may be engaged in combat activities. Such operations may be conducted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter where the application of all necessary force is authorised to restore peace and security. Similar nationally agreed rules of engagement will be established for operations not conducted under the auspices of the UN.

b. **Non-warlike operations.** Non-warlike operations are defined as those military activities short of warlike operations where there is risk associated with the assigned task(s) and where the application of force is limited to self defence. Casualties could occur but are not expected. These operations are declared to be non-warlike.

c. **Other service.** This may include any operational activity, in Australia or overseas, that involves a level of hazard above that normally associated with peacetime training or service. The regulations for the OSM allow the CDF to recommend any operation that in his judgement warrants recognition by the OSM.

**Exclusions**

**21.8** The following service is excluded from recognition with the OSM:

a. Normal overseas service in diplomatic or representational appointments.

b. Exchange, training or Defence Cooperation Program activities; noting that case by case consideration may be given if these activities are performed in an area that has been declared for the award of the OSM and the tasking is associated with the operation. Operational service rendered by ADF personnel on Third Country Deployment may be considered on case-by-case basis.

c. Involvement in Defence Aid to the Civil Community, either in Australia or overseas, where that service is integrated with other Commonwealth, State or civilian agencies, and that service or threat does not involve the use of uniquely military skills, for example, relief or assistance as a result of natural disasters, and assistance to the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions.

d. Normal duties carried out either in Australia or overseas involving no military risk or hazard.

e. Any operation already given medallion recognition from within the Australian Honours System.

f. Involvement in any operational service not recommended and approved for recognition by the OSM.

**Declaration and determination**

**21.9** The OSM Regulations provide that the Governor-General may declare that an operation is a declared operation and that service on an operation is eligible service. This declaration is on the recommendation of the Minister, who must have regard to the recommendation of the CDF.

**21.10** The Governor-General may also determine conditions that apply to a declared operation, also on the recommendation of the Minister, who must have regard to the recommendation of the CDF.

**Qualifying criteria**

**21.11** Standard criteria have been agreed for eligibility for the award of the OSM and OSM (Civilian). These standard criteria are:

a. A period of 30 days qualifying service applies to the OSM and OSM (Civilian). This service may be continuous or aggregated.

b. A total of 30 sorties flown in support of an operation from outside the prescribed area of operations at a rate of one per day.
c. A person who does not complete the required 30 day period because of death, illness or disability resulting from the operational service would be eligible for the medal.

21.12 It should be anticipated that the standard criteria will be applied for the award of the OSM and OSM (Civilian), however the CDF may recommend variations to these conditions in response to the circumstances that may exist for a particular operation.

21.13 The CDF may also recommend changes to criteria during the course of an operation in response to changed operational conditions.

**Accumulated service device**

21.14 The regulations for the OSM provide that an accumulated service device may be issued to ADF personnel who complete multiple deployments on a particular operation. The device is in the form of an Arabic numeral, finished in antique silver. A member’s first deployment period is recognised by the medal. Additional deployments would attract the numerals ‘2’, ‘3’, ‘4’ etc.

21.15 The accumulated service device is not automatically awarded for every declared operation. When it is determined that it be awarded, the qualifying conditions for the device are the same as those for the award of the medal or that operation. In exceptional circumstances the CDF may recommend modified conditions for the accumulated service device.

21.16 Return to an operational area from leave, medical treatment or temporary detachment does not constitute redeployment for the purposes of the accumulated service device.

21.17 The OSM (Civilian) does not provide for recognition through an accumulated service device. The OSM (Civilian) is in the form of the standard OSM with a unique civilian ribbon and operations are identified by means of clasps. Using this form of recognition precludes the use of the accumulated service device.

**Operational service badge**

21.18 A badge known as the Operational Service Badge (OSB) may be issued with the OSM. The badge is issued to all personnel on the first award of an OSM, including those who die on operational service. The badge has an ADF and a civilian version that are issued with the OSM and OSM (Civilian) respectively. Information on the OSB, including images, is provided in Volume 2, Chapter 24—War badges and medallions.

21.19 The OSB may be issued posthumously.

21.20 A member may be awarded both the ADF and civilian OSB if the OSM and OSM (Civilian) are awarded for separate qualifying service.

21.21 The Returned from Active Service Badge (RASB) will continue to be issued, but only for those existing warlike operations that are currently recognised by the AASM. The RASB will not be awarded with the OSM. The OSB will be issued to personnel who have been previously issued the RASB for warlike operational service who are subsequently awarded the OSM.

**Ribbons**

21.22 For ADF members, the OSM is awarded with a unique ribbon for each declared operation. Details of the ribbon design are provided in the determination made for each declared operation.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Regulations and determinations**

21.23 CAGs and determinations detailed in this manual can be viewed at www.defence.gov.au/medals.
Wearing of medals

21.24 Medals are to be worn in accordance with single Service dress regulations. The order of wearing of medals is detailed in Annex A to Chapter 4—Order of wearing.

Record keeping

21.25 The regulations for the OSM require that a register of awards is maintained. DH&A maintains this register and also records the details of members’ approved awards on their personal records (PMKeyS) etc.

Cancellation and reinstatement

21.26 The regulations provide that the Governor-General may cancel the award of a medal and may reinstate an award so cancelled. Any proposal under this provision that a medal should be cancelled or that a cancelled medal should be reinstated is to be submitted to DH&A for consideration and action in accordance with the provisions detailed in Chapter 46—Forfeiture and Restoration of Service Awards.

Annex:

A. Operational Service Medal - Border Protection