CHAPTER 29

DEFENCE FORCE SERVICE AWARDS

Introduction

29.1 The Defence Force Service Awards (DFSA) were instituted on 20 April 1982. They replaced the National Medal (NM) as the long service recognition for Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel. The DFSA are described in Volume 2, Chapter 18.

29.2 The DFSA comprise the following:
   a. **Defence Force Service Medal.** The Defence Force Service Medal (DFSM) and clasps to the medal recognise long and efficient service in the Permanent Forces.
   b. **Reserve Force Decoration.** The Reserve Force Decoration (RFD) and clasps to the decoration recognise long and efficient service as an officer of the Reserve Forces.
   c. **Reserve Force Medal.** The Reserve Force Medal (RFM) and clasps to the medal recognise long and efficient service as a member of the Reserve Forces.

Authority

29.3 Source documents for DFSA are:

29.4 A consolidated version of these regulations can be viewed in [www.defence.gov.au/medals](http://www.defence.gov.au/medals).

Nomination and processing procedures

29.5 The nomination and processing procedures for DFSA are in Annex A.

QUALIFYING CONDITIONS

Initial qualification

29.6 A DFSA may be awarded to a member of the ADF who has completed 15 years qualifying service on or after 14 February 1975 and before 20 April 1999.

29.7 **Defence Force Service Medal.** The DFSM is awarded to members of the ADF who have completed 15 years qualifying service or for periods that in the aggregate, amount to 15 years qualifying service in the Permanent Forces. The following conditions apply:
   a. A maximum of three years qualifying service as a member of the Reserve Forces may be counted as qualifying service for the DFSM.
   b. Service that has been taken into account as part of the qualifying service for the award of the RFD and RFM, or a clasp to the RFD or RFM, cannot be taken into account as qualifying service for the DFSM.
   c. Reserve service does not qualify towards the award of clasps.

29.8 **Reserve Force Decoration.** The RFD is awarded to officers of the Reserve Forces who have completed 15 years qualifying commissioned service or for periods that in the aggregate, amount to 15 years qualifying service. The following conditions apply:
29.9 Reserve Force Medal. The RFM is awarded to members of the Reserve Forces who have completed 15 years qualifying reserve service or for periods that in the aggregate, amount to 15 years qualifying service. The following conditions apply:

a. A maximum of three years qualifying service as a member of the Permanent Forces may be counted as qualifying service for the RFM.

b. Service that has been taken into account as part of the qualifying service for the award of the DFSM or a clasp to that medal shall not be taken into account as qualifying service for the RFM.

c. Commissioned service and permanent service does not qualify towards clasps for the RFM.

d. An officer who has been awarded the RFD is not eligible for an award of the RFM except as provided in Paragraph 29.13 below.

29.10 An award of the DLSM affects eligibility for a DFSA. However, service taken into account as qualifying service for an Imperial long service award, or for the NM, may be taken into account as qualifying service for the DFSA.

Clasps

29.11 A clasp to a DFSA may be awarded for each successive period of five years qualifying service following the initial award of the medal or decoration. When the medal or decoration is not worn, a rosette is affixed to the ribbon bar of the medal denoting the award of each clasp. On award of the fifth clasp the previous four rosettes are replaced with a single Federation Star ribbon bar emblem. Additional Federation Star emblems are added for the sixth and subsequent clasps.

29.12 Details of the types and method of wearing clasps and ribbon bar emblems is provided in Volume 2, Chapter 18, Annex A.

Awards of the Reserve Force Decoration and Reserve Force Medal to the same person

29.13 A member, who has been awarded the RFD, and any subsequent clasps, is not eligible for an award of the RFM unless there is a clear 15 years or more other rank service coupled with a clear 15 years or more officer service. An officer with an aggregate of 15 years other rank service, which does not qualify for the RFD, may be eligible for the RFM.

29.14 An anomaly in the original DFSA Regulations incorrectly allowed some Reserve officers to qualify for the award of both the RFD and RFM. This anomaly meant that a Reserve officer after completion of 30 years service as an officer, 15 years of that service could be used as qualifying service for an RFM whilst the other 15 years service could be used as qualifying service for the RFD.

29.15 An amendment to DFSA Regulations to remove this anomaly was approved by the Queen on 26 May 1998. Under this amendment Reserve officers who have been awarded an RFD can no longer be awarded a RFM, except as detailed in Paragraph 29.13.
29.16 **Ramifications for officers.** Officers who had been awarded a RFD and elected to have additional service recognised for an award of a RFM removed themselves from the RFD stream. As a result, future officer service cannot be recognised by clasps to either the RFD or RFM. Options available are:

a. An officer may choose to retain both the RFD and RFM awards and accept that any additional service will not be recognised by any additional award or clasp.

b. The officer may elect to return the RFM, return to the RFD stream and have all eligible service recognised by clasps to the RFD.

c. An officer may elect to return both the RFD and RFM and receive a DLSM in lieu, with appropriate clasps, recognising all ADF service.

29.17 **DLSM options.** Individuals who stay within the DFSA Regulations and who qualify first for the RFM for other ranks service, if later commissioned, may be awarded the RFD and clasps to the RFD for that officer service. Individuals who have such a mix of service may have three options for recognition for their ADF service depending on individual circumstances as follows:

a. A Reserve member who completes 15 years of other rank qualifying service followed by a further 15 years officer qualifying service, all before 20 April 1994, can be awarded both the RFM and RFD (in this case, no unrecognised service would occur under DFSA Regulations and the individual could not elect to receive a DLSM).

b. A Reserve member who completes 15 years of other rank qualifying service followed by a further 15 years officer qualifying service, with the 30-year point occurring between 20 April 1994 and 19 April 1999, may be awarded both the RFM and RFD, or may elect to receive the DLSM with three clasps.

c. A Reserve member who completes 15 years other rank qualifying service followed by a further 10 years officer qualifying service, may elect to surrender the RFM for a DLSM with two clasps as clasps to the RFM cannot be awarded.

29.18 **Exemption.** A Reserve member may be awarded both the RFD and RFM if qualification is gained before 26 May 1998, the date when Regulations were amended. This is consistent with the Letters Patent to the DFSA Regulations (as amended) where it stipulates that amendments are effective from 26 May 1998 without prejudice to anything lawfully done under previous regulations. This is an ‘accrued entitlement’ which was gained under DFSA Regulations before the amendment and therefore remains for service before 26 May 1998.

**Service by a member of the forces of another country**

29.19 A member of the naval, military or air forces of the ‘Sovereign’s Realms’ [British Commonwealth], who serves with the ADF on secondment or exchange, and subsequently joins the ADF, is eligible to have their previous service with the ADF recognised as qualifying service for a DFSA. As the definition of what constitutes the ‘Sovereign’s Realms’ is continually evolving, applications submitted in accordance with this paragraph will be considered in accordance with the prevailing circumstances when the service with the ADF was completed.

**Reserve qualifying service**

29.20 The details of the various minimum periods of annual qualifying service required by the various elements of the Reserve Force for the award of DFSA, or clasps to the DFSA, are detailed in Annex B. These conditions are not affected by the Chief of the Defence Force determination in 2000 that the qualifying period for all members for the DLSM is 20 days.

**Annexes:**

A. Nomination and processing procedures for Defence Force Service Awards

B. Minimum periods of annual qualifying service—Defence Force Service Awards