CHAPTER 35
FOREIGN AWARDS

Introduction

35.1 Foreign governments (and certain Australian Government recognised international organisations) confer honours or awards on Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel. These may be issued in recognition for gallantry in operations, bravery in civil actions or for meritorious or outstanding service. Awards recognising operational service may also be made.

35.2 Foreign honours or awards are also worn on ADF uniform by highly skilled and experienced personnel who are laterally recruited from foreign countries.

35.3 This chapter provides the policy relating to foreign awards, the requirement for formal approval for acceptance and wearing of foreign honours and awards on uniform, and the procedures for applying for approval.

Application and approval process for foreign awards

35.4 Awards to Australian personnel. The application and approval process for acceptance and wearing of foreign awards is detailed in Annex A.

35.5 Awards held by former members of foreign forces on joining the ADF. The process for application and approval to wear foreign awards held by former members of foreign forces enlisting in the ADF is detailed in Annex B.

35.6 Awards by United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Multinational Force and Observers (MFO). Details on the specific procedures for UN, NATO and MFO are contained in Chapter 36—‘United Nations and other International Organisation Awards’.

Definitions

35.7 The following definitions apply:

a. **Foreign award**—medals or decorations awarded by a foreign government or a multinational organisation.

b. **Multinational organisation**—an organisation representing several nations of which Australia is a member or a coalition of nations to which Australia makes a contribution.

Application of the policy

35.8 This policy applies to the wearing of foreign honours or awards on ADF uniform for:

a. ADF personnel.

b. Lateral enlistments.

Authorities

35.9 The Government Guidelines Concerning the Acceptance and Wearing of Foreign Honours and Awards by Australians (the Guidelines) approved by Her Majesty The Queen and issued in 1997 outline, from a whole of Government perspective, conditions under which foreign honours or awards may be accepted. The Guidelines can be viewed in www.defence.gov.au/medals.

35.10 In 2009, the Chiefs of Service Committee (COSC) agreed to a set of principles that apply to the acceptance and wearing of foreign honours or awards by ADF personnel together with principles that apply to lateral recruits. These principles inform the policy that applies within this chapter, in accordance with the overarching Government Guidelines.
35.11 The *Order of Wearing Australian Honours and Awards* (Order of Wear) issued by Government House is the authority for the manner in which foreign awards may be worn. The Order of Wear can be viewed in [www.defence.gov.au/medals](http://www.defence.gov.au/medals) or in Chapter 4, Annex A.

**POLICY AND PRINCIPLES FOR ACCEPTANCE AND WEARING OF FOREIGN HONOURS AND AWARDS BY AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE PERSONNEL**

35.12 In accordance with COSC agreed principles, the following policy has been developed and applies to ADF personnel.

**Rule of equivalency**

35.13 Each foreign honour or award given to an ADF member will be subjected to an equivalence test against honours and awards within the Australian Honours System. The assessment of equivalence is based on the quality of the service or achievement for which the foreign honour or award is made. The title or level of a particular honour or award within a system does not necessarily indicate equivalence.

**Foreign commemorative awards**

35.14 Foreign commemorative awards will not generally be accepted unless awarded for meritorious service and offered individually. Where these conditions are not met, approval will not be given.

**Multiple foreign awards for a single operation**

35.15 Foreign awards offered for an operation in which ADF personnel are involved will be considered for acceptance and wearing, but only if offered to Australia through a formal diplomatic process, and if made to the entire Australian element. After an award is accepted, any subsequent foreign award offered for the same operation will not be formally accepted for wear by ADF personnel, however, members receiving other awards may retain them as a memento of the service.

**Third country deployments**

35.16 ADF personnel deployed on operations whilst on a third country deployment (TCD) with a foreign defence force may be offered a foreign campaign or operational service award by the host nation for this service. In 1992 the Queen indicated her view that it is appropriate that Australian citizens should be recognised exclusively by the Australian Honours System. This means that Australians serving with foreign forces will, wherever possible, be recognised by an Australian award. A member who receives, or is eligible to receive, an Australian campaign or operational service award will not be given approval to also wear a foreign award for service on a TCD within the same operational area. The foreign award may be retained however as a memento of their service.

35.17 If a member receives a foreign award from the host nation whilst on a TCD for an operation that is not recognised by an Australian award, then approval may be given for the member to formally accept and wear the medal as recognition for that service in lieu of Australian recognition.

35.18 A person on TCD with a nation that is acting in coalition with other nations, including Australia, will be entitled to accept those awards made by the coalition, provided that they have been offered and accepted by Australia. Examples will include NATO and UN medals.

**Foreign badges, commendations, unit citation emblems and other uniform embellishments**

35.19 ADF personnel may accept badges, commendations, unit citation emblems or other uniform embellishments conferred upon them for service with a foreign defence force or organisation. Application to wear such insignia is to be made to the member’s parent Service headquarters for consideration.
POLICY FOR APPROVAL TO WEAR AWARDS BY LATERAL ENLISTMENTS

35.20 In accordance with COSC agreed principles, the following policy has been developed and applies to lateral enlistments. The policy provides that lateral enlistments may be approved to wear awards that had been previously approved by their former nation. Awards not previously approved by that nation will not be approved for wear, even if they are accepted for wearing by Australians. It is accepted that this policy will result in members laterally enlisted from foreign defence forces being able to wear awards for service with those forces that would not be available to Australians.

35.21 Guidance on the policy for assessing awards held by lateral enlistments for approval is given in the following paragraphs.

Length of service awards

35.22 Only those awards which have been issued for service of four years or more will be approved for wear on ADF uniform. Traditionally, long service awards within the Australian Honours System require a minimum of 15 years service. However, the Australian Defence Medal, which recognises the contribution that servicemen and women make through military service to the nation, is normally awarded upon the completion of an initial term of enlistment or four years service, whichever is the lesser. Given that the qualifying criteria for the Australian Defence Medal are similar in nature to those required for long service awards, it now provides an additional avenue for assessing equivalence for foreign awards.

Meritorious, gallantry and distinguished service awards

35.23 Meritorious, gallantry or distinguished service awards are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Only those awards that demonstrate a level of performance or achievement that would be likely to be recognised by an award within the Australian Honours System such as the Order of Australia, Gallantry Decorations or Conspicuous Service Decorations, will be approved for wear on ADF uniform.

Campaign medals

35.24 Generally campaign medals will be approved for wear on ADF uniform, unless awarded to the member as a result of involvement in operations which did not accord with Australia’s national interests, for example, at the time of the award Australia was at war with the nation or was imposing agreed diplomatic or economic sanctions on the nation.

35.25 In the case of lateral establishments from the United Kingdom (UK), those who have received the NATO Medal with Clasp ISAF for service in Afghanistan with UK forces will not have this award approved for wear on ADF uniform as it will not have been approved for wear on uniform by the UK Government. However, if a former UK member who has received the NATO Medal with Clasp ISAF for UK service subsequently serves in Afghanistan with Australian forces and qualifies for a Multiple Tour Indicator (MTI), he or she may be approved to wear the medal previously issued, together with the MTI if applicable, to enable their efforts with the Australian contingent to be formally recognised.

Commemorative and other medals

35.26 In general terms, other medals awarded to mark significant events or given for service not normally associated with Australian awards, may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. Approval will only be considered if awards are from within the parent nation official honours system and eligibility requires the person to demonstrate a level of meritorious performance or commitment that would justify the wearing of the award on uniform. To assist with the assessment, the applicant will be required to describe, as part of their application, the basis of eligibility for the award.

Badges, commendations, unit citation emblems and other uniform embellishments

35.27 These are all deemed to be uniform embellishments so cannot be equated to any element within the Australian Honours System. All requests to wear these on ADF uniform should be referred to the single-Service headquarters for decision as a uniform wearing issue.
Use of postnominals and titles by lateral enlistments

35.28 Since 5 October 1992, the policy\(^1\) has applied that postnominals and titles associated with decorations awarded by a foreign nation are not used by any Australian citizen, including lateral enlistments who may have received the awards prior to enlistment. The only exceptions to this are those British awards made as the Personal Gift of the Sovereign, these being the Order of the Garter, Order of the Thistle and the Royal Victorian Order.

GENERAL POLICY ON FOREIGN AWARDS

Contact with foreign governments

35.29 The first principle of the Australian Honours System in relation to foreign awards is that a formal offer needs to be made by a foreign government to the Australian Government for a unit or individual to be issued an award.

35.30 The policy of successive Australian Governments has been that foreign governments are not formally approached to pursue their awards for Australians. Such requests are considered confronting, place the foreign government involved in a difficult situation and serve only to diminish the integrity of awards within the Australian Honours System. The reverse would also apply if a foreign government were to ask Australia to modify its award criteria to suit their servicemen as a result of service with ADF units.

Wearing of foreign awards

35.31 Only those foreign honours and awards that have been formally approved for wear by the Governor-General may be worn on ADF uniform. Under no circumstance should an ADF member wear a foreign honour or award if this approval has not been given.

35.32 In accordance with the Order of Wear foreign awards are worn immediately after all Australian honours or awards, in the order of date of approval to wear. A postnominal is not used by an Australian who receives an award that may attract a postnominal eg ‘MBE’ (Member of the Order of the British Empire).

35.33 There are some exceptions to this, as follows:

a. When all foreign awards are approved on the same date (this will predominantly only apply to lateral recruits). In this circumstance, the awards may be worn in the order of precedence of the awarding country but must only be worn after all Australian honours and awards the member may hold or subsequently receive.

b. Imperial honours and awards issued under the Australian Honours System before 5 October 1992 are considered Australian and their status will be upheld. As such, they are to be worn in accordance with the Australian Order of Wear and will carry any appropriate postnominals.

c. In cases where more than one foreign honour or award from the same nation has been given to an ADF member, they may be grouped according to the order of wear of that nation, eg an ADF member is given approval to wear two United States awards. As a courtesy to the awarding nation, these may be worn in accordance with the order of wear of the respective nation.

d. Awards made as the Personal Gift of the Sovereign are worn with Australian awards in accordance with the Order of Wear.

e. Australian awards are made to members of foreign defence forces who later enlist in the ADF are worn with other awards approved by their former nation, in accordance

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\(^1\) This policy is currently under review by Government House and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Any proposed changes will be notified to Defence once finalised.
with the rules for wearing foreign awards. If a member requalifies for an award by virtue of Australian service it will be worn as an Australian award with all clasps awarded, both for foreign and Australian service.

Replacement of foreign awards

35.34 The United Nations Medal for Korea and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal which are issued to eligible ADF personnel by DH&A are the only foreign awards that may be replaced. The process for replacement of these medals is contained in Chapter 44—‘Replacement of Service Awards’.

Record keeping

35.35 Awards approved for acceptance and wearing are recorded on members' personal record (PMKeyS).

35.36 Badges, unit citation emblems and other uniform embellishments may be recorded on the PMKeyS achievement screen at the discretion of the relevant Service.

FOREIGN UNIT AWARDS

35.37 Foreign unit awards for warlike service may be offered to Australian units. Approval for acceptance will only be given if the service rendered is considered to be equivalent to that which would meet the conditions for award of the Australian Unit Citation for Gallantry or Meritorious Unit Citation, and where the offer of a unit award is made to an entire Australian contingent.

35.38 Where an Australian is serving with a foreign unit that receives a unit award from the parent nation application to wear the insignia of such award is to be made by the member to the member’s parent Service headquarters for consideration.

35.39 Foreign unit awards will not be accepted where that unit has already been recognised by an Australian unit award for the same service.

Annexes:

A. Application procedure and processing of foreign awards by Australian personnel
B. Application procedure and processing of foreign awards held by lateral enlistments