Directorate of Honours and Awards

Guidance to applicants on preparing a submission for Defence to review honours and awards

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Guidance to Seeking Review

Defence requires individuals apply for an internal review of its decision regarding a military member’s eligibility for a Defence honour or award prior to considering lodgement of an application for a review with the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal, an independent statutory body. The Tribunal is unable to accept an application for review if Defence has not already made a determination on eligibility for the requested award.

What will Defence review?

Defence will review a decision for a member’s eligibility for a Defence honour or award from the following categories (for a full list see ‘Reviewable honours and awards on page 8’):

1. Valour, Gallantry, Distinguished and Meritorious Service Decorations.
2. Unit Citations.
3. Campaign awards, operational service awards and long service awards.

In what circumstances will Defence consider conducting a review?

Defence will undertake a review of an application when an applicant is able to identify maladministration or provide compelling new evidence.

1. Maladministration: a failure to follow established policy that may lead to disadvantage to the nominee. Conduct is deemed to be maladministration if it involves action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory, or based wholly or partly on improper motives. Some examples of this conduct include:
   a. Breaches of natural justice or procedural fairness;
   b. Unfair decisions or action that do not take into account all relevant considerations, are not justified by any evidence or are unreasonable;
   c. Decisions or actions based on information that is factually in error or misinterpreted;
   d. Delays in making a decision or taking action;
   e. Failures to investigate properly;
   f. Conflicts of interest;
   g. Bad faith or dishonesty;
   h. Policies applied inflexibly without regard to the merits of each case; or
   i. Important facts omitted from reports or deliberations, or ignored.

2. Compelling new evidence: reliable information that was not available to the commanders or decision-makers of the day.

What evidence and information is the applicant required to provide?

The application checklist (page 9) included in this guidance document contains detail of all required information to be provided and criteria that must be satisfied prior to Defence commencing a review.

An application will benefit greatly by an applicant’s assistance in compiling sufficient evidence to support their case for current day decision-makers to consider the review.

The evidence used to support the application should be substantive and therefore:

- Relevant (it must directly relate to the case);
- Authoritative (it must be derived from official records and not be anecdotal in nature); and
- Objective (free from prejudice or bias).
Accepted forms of evidence include:

- Eyewitness statements, appropriately signed and dated by the witness;
- Policy and/or decision documents that support the claim;
- Copies of recommendations or citations for the individual/s relating to the cited action or service;
- Copies of research papers or book extracts, where the source research is identified;
- Documents held by the Australian War Memorial (AWM), National Archives of Australia (NAA) and/or within private records.

The application should include good quality (readable) and certified copies of any documentary evidence to support the claims. Original documents are not to be included in the application.

Additionally, all applications for honours should address the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requested award</td>
<td>Identify what award is being sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of the action</td>
<td>What happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is the specific action undertaken and the circumstances surrounding it in which the subject of the application is to be considered for an honour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where did it happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When did it happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide official records to confirm details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Who’</td>
<td>Who else was involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What were their actions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who witnessed the action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide witness statements to confirm actions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide official records and literature to confirm events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compelling new evidence (if applicable)</td>
<td>What information is available now, that wasn’t available at the time of action that would change the current outcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomination</td>
<td>Is there evidence that the application subject was nominated or was intended to be nominated at the time of the action occurring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations and Legislation</td>
<td>How does the action undertaken meet the eligibility criteria stipulated in the regulations for the desired honour?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidence that does not meet this criteria may be considered insufficient and may affect the outcome of the review. Applications in which the evidence that is provided is anecdotal, or based on unsubstantiated claims, will be returned to the applicant with a request to provide more substantiating evidence.

**Format of application**

It is the applicant’s responsibility to undertake the necessary research to support their application for review. An application can be lodged once an applicant is satisfied that they have sufficient evidence to support their claim for a review, and it should contain the following:

1. **Covering Letter** which includes:
   a. The applicant’s personal details (name and contact details, preferred contact telephone number, email and postal address);
b. The service details of the member, or members, for who the review is sought; 
c. A concise statement of the applicant’s desired outcome; and 
d. Relationship with member (if not self-nominating).

2. **Presentation of Case** which includes:
   a. A concise summary of the issue; 
   b. A presentation of the evidence, specifically addressing the requirements of where due process was not followed, or where maladministration has occurred; and 
   c. Presenting of any new compelling and authoritative evidence.

Any sensitive and/or confidential material must be clearly identified as such when it is included as evidence to an application. Any documents that are provided as evidence are to show its source. In the case of book extracts, the title of the book, its author/s and the publication date is to be provided. Records obtained from the AWM or NAA are to contain the file reference and any other document/file identifying information.

**Things to consider when deciding to apply for a review**

**Precedence:**

Applicants cannot rely on comparable actions, previous decisions or previous examples of the awarding of honours as a reason for justifying a review. Both the Imperial and Australian Honours and Awards Systems recognise that no two situations that lead to a member being granted an honour or award are exactly the same.

**The Quota Policy:**

Defence does not consider the application of the ‘quota’ policy used up to 2008, as a sole justification for reviewing a recommendation for an honour or award. The use of a quota was a policy put in place by The Sovereign and does not constitute maladministration.

**Requests for Medal Upgrades**

Should an application request the review of an already received honour (e.g. honour upgrade); it is required that the member in question confirms they are aware of the following:

1. If an application is successful and the review recommends the award of a higher honour, they are required to surrender any existing awards before the higher award can be awarded; and 
2. If an application is unsuccessful, the review may recommend that a lesser honour be awarded or advise that the existing honour was awarded incorrectly, and in this event they are required to surrender existing awards.

**Third Party Applications; Applications on behalf of others**

If an application is being submitted on behalf of a member; the applicant is required to identify their relationship with the member. Additionally, if not part of the immediate family, the applicant is required to confirm that the member (or immediate family if the member is deceased) is aware that an application has been submitted on their behalf.

Defence will not accept applications from third parties without confirmation that the member (or immediate family if the member is deceased) is aware that an application has been submitted on their behalf.

**Size limits for electronic and email submission**

If the application is to be lodged via email, the preferred format is as a readable PDF. Applications are to be no greater than 1.5MB (including any attachments).
Where to send submissions
The preferred method for receiving submissions and supporting information is via email. Applications are to be emailed to: DHA.Policy@defence.gov.au or posted to:

The Directorate of Honours and Awards
C/O Policy Team
Department of Defence
PO Box 7952
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Next Steps
Once Defence has received all required information, applicants will be advised that their review has been passed onto a researcher within the applicable Service. Following the conclusion of the review, the applicant will be advised of the outcome.

Timeframes
Where Defence has requested additional information from applicants, information must be provided within 60 working days. If information is not provided within this time period, the application will be closed and the applicant will be advised accordingly.

The length of time to research, review and consider an application for an honour is dependent on the complexity of the case and the quality of evidence provided by the applicant. The Directorate of Honours and Awards endeavors to finalise cases within 12 months from the date all required information is provided by the applicant. However, this timeframe may be extended or reduced due to circumstances outside of the control of the Directorate of Honours and Awards.

Applicants will be advised of the progress of their application through each review stage.
Additional Information

Defence Honours and Awards contact information

Should you request an update on the progress of an application or wish to ask questions surrounding the review process, please send an email to: DHA.Policy@defence.gov.au

What is the review process?

1. Process Review
   a. Defence will undertake a process review to determine whether due process had been followed throughout the original nomination process, according to the extant rules and policy at the time of the nomination and cited service/action, in order to reach a correct and preferable decision. If due process had been followed, if no evidence of maladministration is presented, or if there is no new substantial and compelling evidence provided, then the original decision will remain unchanged.
   b. In circumstances where Defence is satisfied that the application has demonstrated a possible failure in due process, an occurrence of maladministration, or that new evidence has been presented that was not available to the decision-makers of the time, it will undertake further investigation to verify and confirm the information to determine if a fresh merits review is warranted.
   c. If Defence is not satisfied that the application has made a compelling case for maladministration, or provided new authoritative and substantive evidence, Defence will not pursue further investigation of the application. The applicant will be advised of this decision in writing by the appropriate decision-maker.

2. Merits Review
   a. A merits review will commence once Defence is satisfied that an application provides substantive new evidence.
   b. A merits review examines the evidence of the member’s actions in the context of the nature of the conflict, the policies and practices of the time, and the circumstances of the specific action or service that is being reviewed.
   c. This will determine whether sufficient evidence exists that would support a new decision that a member could be recommended for suitable recognition.
   d. A merits review does not automatically result in a member being recommended for an honour or award – a decision to conduct a separate merits review rests with the chain of command.

3. Historical Honours Review Board consideration
   a. The Board will consider the merits of each case based on the information that is provided and make a recommendation to the respective Service Chief on the outcomes of its consideration. Its recommendations may range from not recommending medallic recognition be awarded, to recommending an appropriate Australian honour be awarded under the Australian Honours and Awards System.
   b. If the Board recommends that an honour is to be awarded, endorsement of this decision will be sought from the respective Service Chief and subsequently, the Chief of the Defence Force, prior to consideration and approval to award by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.
   c. If the Board decides that medallic recognition is not warranted, the applicant will be advised of this decision. If the applicant is not satisfied with the Board’s decision, the applicant is able to seek an external independent review of the decision by the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal.
Research tips for applicants

Records relating to operational service from World War Two up to the Vietnam War can be accessed through the AWM Research Centre and the NAA. When researching evidence for an application, applicants are strongly encouraged to access or seek assistance from these agencies as their staff will be happy to assist.

Australian War Memorial

The AWM has custody of the war diaries of Australian units. Many have been digitised and may be accessed through the AWM website.

To access these records from the AWM home page:

- click on the links labelled “Search our collections” and/or “Australian Military Units”.
- further access will be available to records including official histories, records based on the different times of conflicts, and Unit and Commanders war diaries.

Website:  www.awm.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 6243 4315 (Research Centre)
E-mail:    info@awm.gov.au

National Archives of Australia

The NAA also has official files which document the nomination and approval processes for honours and awards.

Reflecting the administrative processes of the day, there will be relevant files created by the then Departments of the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force, the Department of Defence and the Office of the Governor-General.

Website:  www.naa.gov.au
Telephone: (02) 6212 3600
E-mail:    archives@naa.gov.au

## Reviewable honours and awards

**Defence honours that can be reviewed:**

1. Victoria Cross for Australia
2. Victoria Cross
3. Star of Gallantry
4. Companion of the Distinguished Service Order
5. Distinguished Service Cross (Australia)
6. Conspicuous Service Cross
7. Nursing Service Cross
8. Royal Red Cross (1st Class)
9. Distinguished Service Cross (Imperial)
10. Military Cross
11. Distinguished Flying Cross
12. Air Force Cross
13. Royal Red Cross (2nd Class)
14. Medal for Gallantry
15. Distinguished Service Medal (Australia)
16. Distinguished Conduct Medal
17. Conspicuous Gallantry Medal
18. Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (Flying)
19. Conspicuous Service Medal
20. Distinguished Service Medal (Imperial)
21. Military Medal
22. Distinguished Flying Medal
23. Air Force Medal
24. Queen’s Gallantry Medal
25. Commendation for Gallantry
26. Queen’s Commendation for Brave Conduct
27. Queen’s Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air
28. Mention in Despatches
29. Commendation for Distinguished Service

**Campaign, operational service and Defence long service awards that can be reviewed:**

1. Naval General Service Medal
2. 1915–62
3. General Service Medal 1918–62
4. 1939–45 Star
5. Arctic Star
6. Atlantic Star
7. Air Crew Europe Star
8. Africa Star
9. Pacific Star
10. Burma Star
11. Italy Star
12. France and Germany Star
13. Defence Medal
14. War Medal 1939–45
15. Australia Service Medal 1939–45
17. Korea Medal
18. United Nations Service Medal for Korea
19. General Service Medal 1962
20. Vietnam Medal
21. Vietnam Logistic and Support Medal
22. Australian Active Service Medal
23. International Force East Timor Medal
24. Afghanistan Medal
25. Iraq Medal
26. Australian Service Medal 1945–75
27. Australian General Service Medal for Korea
28. Australian Service Medal
29. Rhodesia Medal
30. Defence Force Service Medal
31. Reserve Force Decoration
32. Reserve Force Medal
33. Defence Long Service Medal
34. Australian Cadet Forces Service Medal
35. Champion Shots Medal
36. Army Best Shots Medal
37. Queen’s Medal for Champion Shots of the RAAF
38. Royal Navy Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
39. Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve Decoration
40. Royal Navy Reserve Decoration
41. Royal Naval Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
42. Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
43. Royal Fleet Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
44. Meritorious Service Medal
45. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Army)
46. Efficiency Decoration
47. Efficiency Medal
48. Meritorious Service Medal (RAAF)
49. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (RAAF)
50. Air Efficiency Award
51. Cadet Forces Medal
52. Australian Defence Medal
53. Anniversary of National Service 1951–1972 Medal
54. Australian Operational Service Medal
Application checklist

Please ensure applications include the following:

- Applicants' personal details (name and contact details, preferred contact telephone number, email and postal address).
- Relationship between applicant and nominated member.
- The service details of the member, or members, for who the review is sought.
- Details of the action or service to be considered.
- Statement of desired outcome / clearly identify the award being sought.
- Summary of issue.
- Eyewitness statements, appropriately signed and dated by the witness.
- Policy and/or decision documents that support the claim.
- Copies of recommendations or citations for the individual/s relating to the cited action or service.
- Copies of research papers or book extracts, where the source research is identified.
- Relevant documents held by the Australian War Memorial (AWM), National Archives of Australia (NAA) and/or within private records.
- Evidence that the subject of the application meets the eligibility criteria stipulated in relevant regulations.