



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT/EASTERN RECRUITING REGION  
PO BOX 19001  
PARRIS ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA 29905-9001

DepO 1650.17D  
ADJ  
09 DEC 2011

DEPOT ORDER 1650.17D

From: Commanding General  
To: Distribution List

Subj: ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR DECORATIONS, MEDALS, AND AWARDS

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 1650.1H  
(b) MCO 1650.19J  
(c) MCRCO 1650.1C

Encl: (1) Administrative Procedures For Decorations, Medals And Awards

1. Situation. This order provides policy and guidance for the preparation of recommendations for professional achievement, leadership achievement, meritorious service, and noncombat heroic personal decorations. It also discusses the Depot's Awards Board procedures and procedures for recommending a Commanding General's Certificate of Commendation.

2. Cancellation. DepO 1650.17C

3. Mission. This order focuses on preparing recommendations for the Legion of Merit (LOM), the Navy and Marine Corps Medal (NMCM), the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM), the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (NMCCM), the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (NMCAM), and Certificates of Commendation (COC). This order does not discuss unit, combat, campaign, service, marksmanship, recruiting service unique, or foreign awards. For information on policy and preparation guidance for those types of awards, and personal decorations other than those listed above, refer to references (a) and (b).

4. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commander's Intent

(a) Ensure the timely submission of appropriate award recommendations for deserving personnel by your subordinates.

09 DEC 2011

(b) Adhere to the instructions contained in this order and the references.

(c) Subordinate commands will establish awards directives and timeframes within their organizations for submission of awards to appropriately meet the guidelines contained in this order.

(2) Concept of Operations

(a) Depot awards board members will adhere to the instructions contained in this order and the references as they review award recommendations.


(b) The depot adjutant will ensure all awards are administratively correct and forward each recommendation.

5. Administration and Logistics. Recommendations concerning the contents of this order should be forwarded to AC/S, G-1, via the appropriate chain of command.

6. Command and signal

a. Command. This order is applicable to Marine Corps Recruiting Depot/Eastern Recruiting Region, Parris Island (MCRD/ERR, PI).

b. Signal. This order is effective the date signed.

  
R. L. GRABOWSKI  
Chief of Staff

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09 DEC 2011

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. Policy. Reference (a) establishes awards policy for the Navy and Marine Corps. Reference (b) prescribes procedures and instructions for issuing decorations, medals, and awards, and sets forth policy guidelines for the submission of personal and unit award recommendations.

a. Awards are a means of publicly recognizing and rewarding extraordinary heroism and meritorious or exceptionally meritorious service.

b. The value of an award is that it is only given in cases where it is clearly deserved.

c. Commanding officers, department heads, and officers in charge are urged to closely scrutinize and identify outstanding performance for appropriate awards. An officer senior in grade may recommend personnel who meet the eligibility criteria for an award. All awards must be addressed to the appropriate awarding authority and forwarded through the chain of command.

d. Awards for specific acts should be bestowed as soon as possible after the act occurred.

e. Awards for sustained superior service should normally be presented to an individual at the termination of the period during which that person demonstrated that performance, such as at the end of an assigned tour of duty. However, a routine end of tour award is not an integral part of the awards system. A successful tour does not constitute sufficient cause for an award. In determining whether or not to recommend an individual for a personal award, the primary consideration must be whether the individual has truly performed in an exceptional manner beyond that normally expected and which distinguishes the individual among those performing similar acts or services. The determining factor should be whether the individual's performance so far exceeds the standard of excellence expected of all Marines that it compels individual recognition.

f. As a general rule, only one award will be generated or authorized for the same act, achievement, or period of service. However, an award of a decoration for heroism or specific achievement performed within a period of meritorious service is not considered duplication. To accomplish that end, a citation issued for a sustained meritorious service award should not mention any heroic act or specific achievement previously

09 DEC 2011

recognized (Since the citation for an award is a summation of the summary of action that recommended the award, specific acts of heroism or achievement will not be mentioned in either the summary of action or the citation for sustained meritorious service awards). This thought process is also applicable to the situation where someone is recommended for an award at the time of his or her retirement. While reference may be made to the person's total service, the award recommended must be based on the specific meritorious service performed during the person's current tour. Per reference (c), district commanders will not award more than two specific achievement awards per 36-month tour without receiving prior concurrence of the ERR commanding general (CG).

g. Per reference (a), in order to present a meritorious service awards before the recipient retires or separates, recommendations must be submitted in sufficient time to be processed by the awarding authority. Also, although reference (a) authorizes specific achievement and end of tour awards to be submitted for presentation at the current or new duty station, it is the policy of this command that all awards be submitted for presentation at the present command. In order to accomplish this and ensure necessary review and processing time, personal award recommendations will be submitted via the Improved Awards Processing System (iAPS) in accordance with the timelines listed below.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) Legion of Merit (LM)                                 | 120 days prior to date of presentation. |
| (2) Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)                      | 60 days prior to date of presentation.  |
| (3) Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (NMCCM)     | 30 days prior to date of presentation.  |
| (4) Commanding General Certificate of Commendation (COC) | 15 Days prior to date of presentation.  |

## 2. Authority to Award

a. The CG, MCRD/ERR, PI, is the awarding authority for the Meritorious Service Medal and below.

b. The commanding officers of the 1st, 4th, and 6th Marine Corps Districts, Weapons and Field Training Battalion,

09 DEC 2011

Headquarters and Service Battalion, and Recruit Training Regiment are authorized awarding authority for the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal. They are only permitted to approve, however, one for every fifty billets in their table of organization per calendar year. The commanding officers of 1st, 2d, 3d and 4th Recruit Training Battalions, and Support Battalion are the awarding authority for Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals and Certificates of Commendation.

3. Requirement for Honorable Service. Title 10 U.S.C. provides that no medal, cross, or bar, or associated emblem or insignia may be awarded or presented to any person or representative if the service after distinction has not been honorable. Awards may be revoked if facts subsequently determined would have prevented the original approval of the award, or if the individual's service after the distinguishing act, achievement, or service has not been honorable.

4. Depot Awards Board

a. Reference (b) requires awarding authorities to establish an awards board to review and make recommendations on all proposed awards.

b. The Depot Awards Board assists the CG with review of recommended awards. The board members are designated by the chief of staff from selected principal depot staff officers (assistant chiefs of staff (AC/S)) who by way of their professional experience, current assignment, and variety of military occupational specialty's (MOS's) are well suited to perform this review function. The board functions under the supervision of the chief of staff. board members review recommended awards based on the criteria established in the references and this order. Each board member will make a specific recommendation as to approval, disapproval, or downgrade. Justification is required if they recommend disapproval or downgrade.

5. Certificates of Commendation

a. Certificates of Commendation (COC) are not personal decorations but they are awards.

b. Commanding officers who have been delegated authority to approve the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal may award Certificates of Commendation. Those commanders are encouraged to award Certificates of Commendation at their level.

09 DEC 2011

c. The CG may also award COC's. Under unusual circumstances, organizational level commanders may request CG COC's. The request must be signed personally by the commander. By direction requests are not authorized.

#### 6. Administration

a. Recommendations for personal awards will be submitted to this headquarters via electronic means using iAPS.

b. Officers in the chain of command may recommend a lower award than that originally recommended, but may not approve a lower award or stop further processing of the recommendation. The recommendation must be forwarded to the commander who has authority to approve the award originally recommended. The same policy applies to awards recommended for upgrade by the original awarding authority. If recommended for upgrade by that commander, the recommendation must be forwarded to the next higher commander who has the authority to approve the endorsed award.

c. Letters of Continuity. A letter of continuity is prepared when it is believed that an individual is deserving of recognition but is only being reassigned and not executing permanent change of station orders. The letter of continuity can be prepared in letter format or as a summary of action and forwarded under separate cover to the individual's new reporting senior or commanding officer. The information contained in the letter of continuity may later be used as a portion of an end of tour award recommendation when that individual actually departs the command.

7. Summary of Action (SOA) Guidance. A SOA will be written on all personal award recommendations with the following as guidance for length and type of SOA:

a. Regular capitalization, Courier New font, 12 pitch, portrait style.

b. NMCAM: NMCAM recommendations (to include impact awards) may be written in bullet or paragraph format and should be limited to one page.

c. NMCCM: NMCCM recommendations (to include impact awards) may be written in bullet or paragraph format and should be limited to two pages.

09 DEC 2011

d. MSM/NMCM: Must be written in paragraph format and will be limited to three pages. For the NMCM, attachments, (e.g., police reports, medical reports, witness statements, etc.) can either be scanned and attached to the award recommendation or forwarded to the next endorser via electronic mail.

e. LOM: Must be written in paragraph format and will be limited to four pages.

f. The writer is responsible for assembling the factual information about the recipient's performance and for employing the proper writing techniques that will turn those facts into a convincing summary of action that satisfies the awards system's requirements.

g. A standard summary of action introduction is: "(Rank) (Name)'s meritorious service while serving as (billet), (specific section or unit), and as (any other billets held or significant additional duties performed), organization and major command, from (date to date) on (specific date) merits recognition by awarding of the (specific award). His/her specific accomplishments are included below."

h. Statistics are an important part of a summary of action, especially in the case of drill instructors and recruiters. The following are examples of tables to be used:

COMPANY COMMANDER/SERIES COMMANDER/COMPANY FIRST SERGEANT/  
DRILL INSTRUCTOR/SENIOR DRILL INSTRUCTOR/SERIES GUNNERY SERGEANT

Platoon/ Series	Rifle Range 1st Time Qual/% Expert	Swim %Qual/%S-2 & Above	Academics Written/ Prac	Final PFT Average Score	SDI Final Drill	Training Efficiency
BN AVG						
RTR AVG						

RECRUITER

Months on Production	APR	Pool Attrition	MCRD Attrition	I-IIIA % contracting/ shipping	TIER I % contracting/ shipping

09 DEC 2011

RS AVG					
DIS AVG					

NCOIC

Months As NCOIC	% Ship Mission Attained	% Contracting Mission Attained	Pool Attrition	MCRD Attrition	I-III A % Contracting /shipping	TIER I % Contracting/shipping
RS AVG						
DIS AVG						

13. Awards Citation Format Instructions.

a. The citation will be written per the following guidance:

(1) Certificates of Commendation: All upper case, Times New Roman, 10 pitch, landscape style, 9 lines of text, 1" left and right margins.

(2) NMCAM/NMCCM: All are prepared using the iAPS and are typed in Times New Roman, 9 pitch, landscape style, 1250 characters with spaces. While typing the citation in the iAPS, no attention must be paid to the margins; however, when transferring the text to the actual certificate, ensure 1" left and right margins are used.

(3) MSM/NMCM/LOM: All are prepared using the iAPS and are typed using upper and lower case type, Times New Roman, 1800 characters with spaces. While typing the citation in the iAPS, no attention must be paid to the margins; however, when transferring the text to the actual certificate, use the following margins: left margin 0.7 inches, right margin 0.5 inches, top margin 2 inches, bottom margin 1 inch.

b. The opening phrases for specific decorations are:

(1) COC - "Exceptionally noteworthy performance of duty while serving as \*\*\*\*\*"

(2) NMCAM - "For professional achievement (or heroic achievement) in the superior performance of duties while serving as \*\*\*\*\*"



09 DEC 2011

(3) NMCCM - "For meritorious service (or meritorious achievement) (or heroic service) (or heroic achievement) while serving as \*\*\*\*"

(4) MSM - "For outstanding meritorious achievement or service while serving as \*\*\*"

(5) LOM - For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service while serving as \*\*\*"

c. The closing phrases are as follows:

(1) COC - "(Rank/Name)'s initiative and devotion to duty reflect credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

(2) NMCAM/NMCCM - (Rank/Name)'s initiative and dedication to duty reflect credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

(3) MSM/NMCM/LOM - (Rank/Name)'s exceptional ability, initiative, and total dedication to duty reflect great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

(4) Retirement NMCAM/NMCCM - "Superior performance of duties as typified above highlights the culmination of more than (# of years) years of honorable and dedicated Marine Corps service. (Rank/Name)'s initiative and dedication to duty reflect credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

(5) Retirement MSM/LOM - "Superior performance of duties as typified above highlights the culmination of more than (# of years) years of honorable and dedicated Marine Corps service. (Rank/Name)'s exceptional ability, initiative, and total dedication to duty reflect great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."