



THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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Date: 28 March 2021

File Number: NAAMS 01/21

ABN 55 653 989 978

Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal
Level 1, 5 Tennant Street,
Fyshwick Locked Bag 7765
CANBERRA BC ACT 2600

INQUIRY INTO RECOGNITION FOR MEMBERS AND FAMILIES OF MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE WHO ARE INJURED, WOUNDED OR KILLED IN OR AS A RESULT OF SERVICE

1. After careful consideration, the prevailing view within The Naval Association of Australia (NAA), is that members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who are injured, wounded, or killed in or as a result of service, or their families, should receive an Australian honour or award. In supporting this initiative, we have prepared two options for the Tribunal to consider.

Proposed Options:

2. Our preferred option; is the award of a Device to be attached to the medal ribbon of either a 'specific' Operational Service Medal or the Australian Defence Medal (ADM). We propose there be two devices; a Poppy for the loss of a life and a Sprig of Golden Wattle for having sustained a physical or psychological wound or injury, whether it be in operational or non-operational service.

DEVICE Preamble: *It is proposed these Devices be awarded in the name of the Australian Head of State to any member of the Australian Defence Force who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity after (date TBD), has been killed or having sustained a physical or psychological wound or injury as a consequence of their service, or as a consequence of an action intended to impact upon a hostile force.*

3. The alternate option; is for a Medal to be instituted to recognise and commemorate the loss of life, sustaining a physical or psychological wound or injury, whether it be in operational or non-operational service. The Devices proposed could perhaps be attached to this medal ribbon.

MEDAL Preamble: *It is proposed this Medal be awarded in the name of the Australian Head of State to any member of the Australian Defence Force who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity after (date TBD), has been killed or having sustained a physical or psychological wound, or injury as a consequence of their service, or as a consequence of an action intended to impact upon a hostile force.*

Start Date:

4. The proposed start-date is 03 September 1945, in-line with the ADM.

Recommendations:

5. In developing the Device and Medal options, we have been mindful of those considerations that featured prominently in these deliberations. This has led us to make the following recommendations:

- a. we advocate the loss of life whilst in Service, not be differentiated by whether it occurred in operational or non-operational service. To do so would invariably attribute a differing worth or significance to one over the other;
- b. to have sustained a 'wound' generally infers it is was as a result of a combative clash. There are, however, circumstances where sustaining a wound may have resulted from 'friendly fire'. In the NAA we remember the two sailors who lost their life and the four who were wounded when HMAS *Hobart* was mistakenly fired upon by a USAF Jet Aircraft during the Vietnam War. We also remember the sailors involved in the RAN Logistic Support role who would subsequently suffer the consequences of exposure to dioxins. We see it being an imperative that the '*consequence of an action intended to impact upon or impair the ability of a hostile force to function*' i.e., friendly fire, including the use of traps, snares, mines, projectiles, the use of nuclear, biological, or chemical agents, be taken into account in this regard;
- c. we advocate there be no prioritising dependent upon operational status, applied to the sustaining of a wound or injury, whether it be physical or psychological. Regardless of the circumstance, the member's ability to fully-function in the Service and in life, may be compromised to such an extent as to have a profound and life-changing consequence. To differentiate based on operational status will inevitable attribute a different worth or significance to one over the other;
- d. in line with the wider Australian community who see that mental health matters affect many in our general and Uniformed Services communities, those within our Association who strongly share this view, advocate psychological issues be deemed to satisfy the criteria of death, a wound or injury for the purposes of this Award; and,
- e. it is seen that DVA would need to be the determining authority as to what is to be deemed to be a death, wounding, or injury attributable to Service in the ADF.

6. In proposing the Device be attached to a specific operational service medal (concept images provided at the attachment), we see it would provide a direct link to the conflict or campaign in which the loss of life, wounding, or injury occurred, and it would be in-line with existing medal protocols when affixing a Device. In non-operational service, the appropriate Device would be affixed to the ADM ribbon. The ADM is awarded to all who have served and it will not be incumbered with 'bars' for additional periods of service as will be the case with other Service Medals e.g., National Medal-Defence Force Service Medal-Defence Long Service Medal. Where a member loses their life or is unable to continue their service due to being medically unfit before completing the required 4 years-service, we see provision is already made in the awarding of the ADM in such circumstances. This protocol could possibly be replicated in Services operating with the ADF e.g., the AFP or DFAT, within their respective service medals and awards criteria.

7. The Device Option is seen to eliminate the need to produce another medal and could facilitate a quintessentially Australian form of recognition, and one that could be implemented in a timely manner. Another consideration in regard to the Device is that it should not necessarily conform in size to the existing MID 'Oakleaf', rather, consideration could be given to designing something of a larger size befitting the desired gravitas. It is appreciated that in doing so would preclude its placement on a medal ribbon bar (worn only by serving members), but in the nature of such an award, that is not seen to be an impediment.

8. Should the determination be that a Medal be instituted, the proposed devices could be fixed to that medal ribbon, or the colours or images of the Poppy and The Golden Wattle could perhaps, be incorporated in some aspect of the medal or medal ribbon design.

9. If it is determined that a Commemorative Medallion or Brooch is to be issued in lieu of a Device or Medal, we would advocate that the issuing of such a commemorative device be limited to 'one only', to be awarded to the applicant or designated next-of-kin in order to maintain the desired gravitas.

10. Different to other Australian Honours and Awards, we propose consideration be given to establishing a protocol wherein an individual is 'not recommended' for this award, rather, upon meeting specific criteria, the member applies in person or, it would be awarded in response to a request from the designated next-of-kin after the death of the member. In this instance we would not wish to compel someone to wear a Device or Medal if they would not want to deal with an 'intrusive inquiry' as to their personal circumstance that led to recognition being awarded in this form.

11. The NAA stands ready to assist The Tribunal in its deliberations on this matter, or to provide clarification as to any aspect of our submission.

12. For your consideration.

Yours aye,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

David Manolas
National President
Naval Association of Australia

Attachment:

Concept Images for Poppy and Golden Wattle Devices

Medal Devices – Concept Images

Devices



Poppy for Killed



Wattle Sprig for wounded or injured

Incurred in Non-Operational Service



Incurred in Operational Service

