

Headquarters
Department of the Army
Washington, DC
29 June 2015

Personnel – General

Award of the Legion of Merit and Lesser Awards for Service, Achievement, or Retirement During Peacetime

Applicability. This memorandum applies to Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA); its field operating agencies (FOAs); and staff support agencies (SSAs). This memorandum does not apply to HQDA direct reporting units.

Proponent and exception authority. The proponent of this memorandum is the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army (AASA). The AASA has the authority to approve exceptions to this memorandum that are consistent with controlling law and regulations.

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1. Purpose

This memorandum establishes policy and prescribes procedures for recognizing Soldiers (colonels and below) for award of the Legion of Merit (LM) and lesser awards for service, achievement, or retirement within HQDA, its FOAs, and SSAs as authorized by AR 600–8–22 (see peacetime award approval authority). The goal of the HQDA Awards Program is to foster mission accomplishment by recognizing the excellence of military members and motivating them to high levels of performance and service.

2. References

See appendix A.

*This memorandum supersedes DA Memo 600–8–22, dated 9 July 2001.

3. Explanation of abbreviations and terms

See the glossary.

4. Responsibilities

a. The AASA will—

- (1) Serve as the proponent of this memorandum.
- (2) Establish procedures and standards for matters concerning award of the LM and lesser awards for service, achievement, or retirement within HQDA, its FOAs, and SSAs.

(3) In accordance with AASA guidance, the Director, Human Resource Management Directorate (HRMD) will—

- (a)* Ensure that all HQDA agencies, FOAs, and SSAs implement this memorandum.
- (b)* Act as the focal point where personnel may acquire advice and assistance on any questions relating to the application and implementation of this memorandum.
- (c)* Serve as the orders issuing agency for all LM recommendations that must be processed through the HQDA Awards Board.

b. HQDA principal officials will—

- (1) Ensure that recommendations for awards are processed within the guidelines prescribed in this memorandum.
- (2) Maintain an orders log in accordance with AR 600–8–105.
- (3) Process applications (to include the creation of certificates and procurement of medal sets) for personnel assigned or attached to their agency.
- (4) Ensure awards are—
 - (a)* Posted to the Soldier's (officer or enlisted) record brief.
 - (b)* Submitted into the interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System (iPERMS) file.
 - (c)* Filed and stored (to include transfer) in accordance with AR 25–400–2.
- (5) Submit an annual awards report of the preceding calendar year to reflect the total number of each award approved within the agency to the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army (OAA), HRMD no later than 31 January each year (hrmd.hrmdmilitaryawards.inbox@mail.mil).

5. Policy for military awards

(See AR 600–8–22.)

6. Approval authority

Approval authority is shown in table 1. In the event of establishment of a new HQDA principal official agency, approval authority will be commensurate with the principal official's grade based on the table of distribution and allowances until updates can be incorporated into this memorandum. Principal officials in the grade of lieutenant general (or civilian equivalent) may approve all categories of LM (permanent change of station, retirement, or achievement); this authority may not be further delegated. HQDA principal officials in the grade of major general (or civilian equivalent) have the authority to approve LM for retirement and for deceased Soldiers assigned to their agency, all other categories will be submitted in accordance with paragraph 7 of this memorandum.

Table 1
Approval authority for Headquarters, Department of the Army military awards

Commanders and HQDA principal officials (Secretariats and Army Staff) may award—

Army Secretariat	Army Achievement Medal (AAM)	Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM)	Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)	LM	To
Secretary of the Army	X	X	X	X	Per AR 600-8-22
Under Secretary of the Army	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller)	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations, Energy and Environment)	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology)	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Office of the General Counsel	X	X	X	X	See note 2
*Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army	X	X	X	X	See notes 1 and 2
Deputy Under Secretary of the Army	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Chief Information Officer/G-6	X	X	X	X	See note 2
The Inspector General	X	X	X	X	See note 2
The Auditor General	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Executive Director, Army National Military Cemeteries	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Chief, Legislative Liaison	X	X	X		See note 3
Director, Small Business Programs					See note 5
Chief, Public Affairs	X	X	X		See note 3

Army Staff	Army Achievement Medal (AAM)	Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM)	Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)	LM	To
Chief of Staff, Army	X	X	X	X	Per AR 600-8-22
Vice Chief of Staff, Army	X	X	X	X	Per AR 600-8-22
Chief, National Guard Bureau	X	X	X	X	See notes 2 and 4
Director of the Army Staff	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Deputy Chief of Staff, G-2	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8	X	X	X	X	See note 2

Table 1
Approval authority for Headquarters, Department of the Army military awards—Continued

Commanders and HQDA principal officials (Secretariats and Army Staff) may award—					
Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management	X	X	X	X	See note 2
The Surgeon General	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Chief of Engineers	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Chief, Army Reserve	X	X	X	X	See note 2
The Judge Advocate General	X	X	X	X	See note 2
Chief of Chaplains	X	X	X		See notes 2 and 3
Provost Marshal General	X	X	X		See notes 2 and 3

*HQDA commander

Notes:

¹ The AASA is the approval authority for permanent change of station LMs for the District of Columbia National Guard.

² All U.S. Army personnel assigned or attached for duty to their agency; personnel of other Services attached to their organization in accordance with AR 600-8-22.

³ HQDA principal officials in the grade of major general have authority to approve awards of the LM to retiring and deceased Soldiers assigned to their agency.

⁴ When the Chief, National Guard Bureau is occupied by an Army general officer. When the Chief, National Guard Bureau is not an Army general, the senior Army general officer within the headquarters will exercise awards approval authority commensurate with his or her grade. If the senior Army general officer does not have approval authority, recommendations will be forwarded to the AASA.

⁵ No military personnel assigned; any military award recommendation from the Director, Small Business Programs will be processed through the AASA.

7. Headquarters, Department of the Army Awards Board for Legion of Merit

a. In accordance with paragraph 6 of this memorandum, approval authorities may make award decisions without referral to the HQDA Awards Board. The HQDA Awards Board will review recommendations from those HQDA principal officials who do not have LM approval authority.

b. The HQDA Awards Board will be composed of the executive officers to HQDA principal officials. Members will serve on a rotational basis.

c. The HQDA Awards Board will consist of a minimum of three voting members who will review each LM recommendation.

(1) When reviewing LM recommendations for personnel assigned to the Army Staff, a majority of the board (two-thirds) must be assigned to the Secretariat. Board recommendations will be submitted to the AASA.

(2) When reviewing LM recommendations for personnel assigned to the Secretariat, a majority of the board (two-thirds) must be assigned to the Army Staff. Board recommendations will be submitted to the AASA.

8. Award procedures

a. DA Form 638 (Recommendation for Award) will be used to initiate, process, and approve award recommendations for the LM or lesser decorations for service, achievement, or retirement. Recommendations must be submitted no less than the prescribed time before the desired presentation (see table 2). Each recommendation must be entered administratively into military channels within 2 years of the service to be honored.

Table 2
Award recommendation submission timeline

Award	Days before presentation
DA Form 4980–11 (Legion of Merit Certificate)	45
DA Form 4980–12 (Meritorious Service Medal Certificate)	30
DA Form 4980–14 (Army Commendation Medal Certificate)	30
DA Form 4980–18 (Army Achievement Medal Certificate)	30

b. For LM decorations where the HQDA principal official does not have approval authority, items 1 through 26 of DA Form 638 must be completed, endorsed by the HQDA principal official, and submitted to OAA, HRMD (hrmd.hrmdmilitaryawards.inbox@mail.mil). OAA, HRMD will complete part V, complete the certificate, and forward to the AASA for decision.

c. The award citation will be extracted verbatim from DA Form 638, part IV. In accordance with AR 600–8–22, a narrative description of meritorious service or achievement for awards of the MSM, ARCOM, and AAM will be limited to bullet format in the space allowed on DA Form 638. Narratives are required for all LM awards and will be added as an addendum to the recommendation. The narrative should be prepared using the enclosure of DA Form 638.

(1) Citations for LMs will be no more than nine lines and MSMs and below will be no more than six lines.

(2) Ensure protocol etiquette and hierarchy when referencing duty positions and titles in the citation (for example initial and closing sentences).

(3) Soldier must meet the minimum requirements on the Army Physical Fitness Test and be in compliance with AR 600–9 height and weight standards (excluding retirement and valor applications).

(4) LM recommendations requiring boarding will be forwarded to OAA, HRMD (hrmd.hrmdmilitaryawards.inbox@mail.mil) for review and processing. Recommendations submitted in conjunction with permanent change of station must convey the following:

(a) Soldier must have served on the HQDA Staff or Secretariat a minimum of 1 year. Recommendations must receive a unanimous vote for the award to continue further processing.

(b) If the board vote is not unanimous, the recommending agency may rewrite and resubmit the award for reconsideration.

(c) The board will reconsider the rewritten recommendation and vote to recommend approval or downgrade to the AASA.

(5) If approved, a medal set will be issued for presentation only if it is the recipient’s first award of that decoration.

9. Award delegations

a. The AASA hereby delegates to HQDA principal officials, except the Sergeant Major of the Army, the authority to delegate approval of the ARCOM and AAM to members of the Senior Executive Service under their purview. The delegation must be in writing with a copy furnished to OAA, HRMD (hrmd.hrmdmilitaryawards.inbox@mail.mil). Note: The above delegation is limited in scope because in accordance with AR 600–8–22, the AASA has authority to delegate military award approval to certain civilian leaders while the regulation prescribes that only military personnel serving as HQDA principal officials or those serving in command positions have approval authority for ARCOMs and AAMs.

b. The AASA hereby delegates to HQDA principal officials (not having LM approval authority) authority to downgrade LMs for service, achievement, and retirement to a lesser decoration commensurate with his or her grade.

Appendix A References

Section I Required Publications

Army publications are available on the Army Publishing Directorate Web site (<http://www.apd.army.mil>).

AR 600-8-22

Military Awards (Cited in para 1.)

AR 600-8-105

Military Orders (Cited in para 4b(2).)

Section II Related Publications

A related publication is a source of additional information. The user does not have to read a related publication to understand this publication.

AR 25-400-2

The Army Records Information and Management System (ARIMS)

AR 600-8-2

Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flags)

AR 600-8-104

Army Military Human Resource Records Management

AR 600-9

The Army Body Composition Program

AR 670-1

Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia

DOD Manual 1348.33 Volume 3

Manual of Military Decorations and Awards (Available at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pub1.html>.)

EO 10600

Legion of Merit (Amends EO 9260, 29 October 1942) (Available at <http://www.archives.gov>.)

EO 11448

Establishing the Meritorious Service Medal (Amended by EO 12312, 2 July 1981; EO 13286, 28 February 2003) (Available at <http://www.archives.gov>.)

**Section III
Prescribed Forms**

This section contains no entries.

**Section IV
Referenced Forms**

Unless otherwise indicated, DA forms are available on the Army Publishing Directorate Web site (<http://www.apd.army.mil>).

DA Form 4980-11
Legion of Merit Certificate

DA Form 4980-12
Meritorious Service Medal Certificate

DA Form 4980-14
Army Commendation Medal Certificate

DA Form 4980-18
Army Achievement Medal Certificate

DA Form 638
Recommendation for Award

Glossary

**Section I
Abbreviations**

AAM
Army Achievement Medal

AR
Army Regulation

ARCOM
Army Commendation Medal

AASA
Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army

DA
Department of the Army

DOD
Department of Defense

EO
executive order

FOA

field operating agency

HQDA

Headquarters, Department of the Army

HRMD

Human Resource Management Directorate

iPERMS

interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System

LM

Legion of Merit

MSM

Meritorious Service Medal

OAA

Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army

SSA

staff support agency

Section II

Terms

This section contains no entries.

Section III

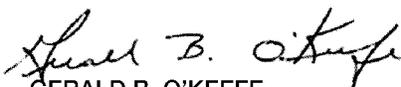
Special Abbreviations and Terms

This section contains no entries.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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Distribution:

This publication is available in electronic media only and is intended for HQDA, its FOAs, and SSAs.