

Administrative Change to DAFI 36-2803, *Military Decorations and Awards Program*

OPR: AF/A1P

Reference to “12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year” in paragraph 2.8.2 is hereby changed to “Outstanding Airmen of the Year”. 7 February 2025

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
INSTRUCTION 36-2803**



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Personnel

***MILITARY DECORATIONS AND
AWARDS PROGRAM***

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This instruction implements Department of the Air Force Policy Directive (DAFPD) 36-28, *Awards Program*. It applies to the United States Space Force, Regular Air Force, the Air Force Reserve, the Air National Guard, and the Civil Air Patrol where specified. In collaboration with the Chief of Air Force Reserve (AF/RE), the Director of the Air National Guard (NGB/CF), and the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital (SF/S1), the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services (AF/A1) develops personnel policy for the awards program. Ensure all records generated as a result of processes prescribed in this publication adhere to Air Force Instruction 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, and are disposed in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule, which is located in the Air Force Records Information Management System. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the office of primary responsibility (OPR) using the DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route DAF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. This publication may not be supplemented. The authorities to waive wing, unit, or delta level requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier (“T-0, T-1, T-2, T3”) number following the compliance statement. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority, or alternately, to the publication OPR for non-tiered compliance items. The applicable System of Records Notice (s) F036 AFPC V, *Awards and Decorations*, available at <https://dpcl.d.defense.gov/Privacy/SORNS/>. This Instruction requires the collection and or maintenance of information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 authorized by Department of

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This interim change updates the opening paragraph, revises DAFI 36-2803 by correcting all references to DAFMAN 36-2806 throughout this publication, clarifies the Distinguished Service Medal **approval authority** (paragraphs **2.2.5.3.1.1** and **2.2.5.3.2.1**), adds approval authority for the Valor “V” and **Combat “C” devices** (**paragraph 2.2.7**), adds the unit award approval authority **information in a table (Table 2.4)**, and updates the references, **forms, and terms (Attachment 1)**. A margin bar (|) indicates newly revised material.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. General Information. This instruction prescribes guidance for DAF military awards. Personnel and units at all levels ensure compliance with this publication. Processing procedures and award criteria can be found in DAFMAN 36-2806, *Military Awards: Criteria and Procedures*.

1.2. Roles and Responsibilities.

1.2.1. Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF). Approves changes to the approval authorities for personal military decorations and unit awards.

1.2.2. Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR).

1.2.2.1. Approves new and changed guidance pertaining to this publication.

1.2.2.2. Submits to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs changes to the criteria and eligibility for the Silver Star (SS), Legion of Merit (LOM), Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart (PH), Bronze Star Medal and Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) for approval.

1.2.3. Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Force Management Integration (SAF/MRM).

1.2.3.1. Oversees the DAF military awards program and develops awards guidance.

1.2.3.2. Interfaces with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, and the other Military Departments regarding management, execution, and interpretation of the awards program.

1.2.4. Director of Air Force Military Force Management Policy (AF/A1P).

1.2.4.1. Under the authority and direction of the AF/A1, assists SAF/MRM with the development of awards guidance.

1.2.4.2. Collaborates with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, other Military Departments, other federal agencies, and non-federal entities as necessary.

1.2.5. Director of Space Force Military Personnel Programs (SF/S1P).

1.2.5.1. Under the authority and direction of the SF/S1, assists SAF/MRM with the development of awards guidance.

1.2.5.2. Collaborates with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, other Military Departments, other federal agencies, and non-federal entities as necessary.

1.2.6. Commanders and Civilian Directors. Ensure the integrity of the awards programs.

Chapter 2

OVERVIEW

2.1. Considerations. The DAF military awards program is designed to recognize sustained and superior performance demonstrated by individuals and units. Commanders use personal military decorations; campaign, expeditionary, and service awards; unit awards; and special trophies and awards to recognize meritorious or outstanding service, as well as excellence above and beyond the actions of others.

2.1.1. Personal military decorations and unit awards are processed using a 3-step process: proper recommendation and submittal into official channels, approval of the recommendation, and presentation of the approved award. Campaign, expeditionary, and service awards typically do not enter the 3-step process, as they are entitlement awards that are authorized based on confirmation the eligibility criteria were met through service record verification.

2.1.2. Recommendations are formally entered into official military channels within 3 years and awarded within 5 years of the termination date of the act, achievement, or service performed. **(T-0)**.

2.1.3. Personal military decorations and awards may be awarded posthumously. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for guidance on specific awards.

2.1.4. Only one personal military decoration or award of the same type is authorized for the same act, achievement, or period of service. **(T-0)**. This includes DoD and the other Military Departments' awards. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for duplicate recognition procedures.

2.1.5. Recommendations should be based on specific projects, plans, programs, or actions that are beneficial to DAF. Recommendations for awards should not become a routine expectation at career milestones (e.g., promotion, transfer, retirement) unless merited by the individual's performance.

2.1.6. Personal military decorations and awards are issued and replaced in accordance with Title 10 United States Code (USC) Sections 9277, *Medal of Honor; Air Force Cross; Distinguished-Service Cross; Distinguished-Service Medal; Silver Star: Replacement*, and 9281, *Service Medals: Issue; Replacement; Availability of Appropriations*. Replacement medals will be mailed to the person requesting replacement within 90 days after verification of entitlement. **(T-0)**.

2.1.7. Recognition by inspection agencies for superior duty performance, attainment of honors based solely on academic achievement (such as graduating with honors), or receipt of other forms of recognition (for example, selection as Airman/Guardian of the Month, Quarter, Year; recipient of a trophy, or identification as a superior performer by the Inspector General) do not, in themselves, justify a personal military decoration.

2.1.8. Each award criteria prescribes standards that define the degree and magnitude of an act, achievement, or service considered worthy for awarding that particular personal military decoration.

2.1.9. Do not establish preconditions or use personal military decorations for incentives (e.g., if certain inspections are achieved or attainment of a high fitness assessment score), as prizes

in contests, or supporting voluntary programs (e.g., contributions to Air Force Assistance Fund).

2.1.10. Immediate supervisors and commanders evaluate all related facts regarding the service of a member before recommending or approving an award.

2.1.11. Do not purchase certificates, medals, and streamer items commercially, unless authorized in this instruction or DAFMAN 36-2806. **(T-0)**.

2.1.12. The appropriate recognition for members assigned to defense and joint units or organizations is with a DoD joint award in DoD Manual (DoDM) 1348.33, Volume 4, *Manual of Military Decorations and Awards: DoD Joint Decorations and Awards*. **Exception:** DAF awards may only be approved for retirement and separation conditions when the service or act being recognized was DAF-specific (not related to the joint mission), and for combat operations or conditions where an appropriate DoD joint award does not exist.

2.1.13. DAF does not issue certificates, medals, ribbons, emblems, devices, and badges awarded by foreign governments. These items may be available commercially at the individual's expense.

2.1.14. Veterans may be considered and reconsidered for personal military decorations and awards pursuant to 10 USC § 1130, *Consideration of Proposals for Decorations Not Previously Submitted in Timely Fashion: Procedures for Review*. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for additional guidance.

2.1.15. The use of acronyms in award nominations should be minimized. Limit to commonly known acronyms (e.g., NCO, TSgt, Maj) and unit and functional designators (e.g., MAJCOM, FLDCOM, IG).

2.1.16. Foreign military personnel and units may be recognized with a personal military decoration or valorous unit award, respectively, in accordance with guidance in this instruction and DAFMAN 36-2806, provided the valorous acts, non-combat heroism, meritorious service, or extraordinary achievement are in accordance with the following:

2.1.16.1. Were of significant benefit to the United States (US), or

2.1.16.2. Materially contributed to the successful prosecution of a DoD or DAF military operation or campaign.

2.1.17. Awards governed by this publication are not used to recognize military service animals, such as K-9 dogs, horses, etc. **(T-0)**.

2.2. Personal Military Decorations. Service members make many personal and professional sacrifices to ensure successful completion of DAF missions. Acts of valor, non-combat heroism, and meritorious service and achievement deserve special recognition (see [Table 2.1](#)). Criteria and processing procedures for personal military decorations can be found in DAFMAN 36-2806.

2.2.1. Any member of the US Armed Forces or DoD civilian employee who has firsthand knowledge of the act, achievement, or service can recommend a personal military decoration. In cases where the person initiating the recommendation does not have firsthand knowledge of the act or service performed, or access to official supporting records, supporting documentation should be included.

2.2.2. Do not award, approve, or present a personal military decoration to any person whose entire service during or after the time of the distinguished act, achievement, or service has not been honorable. (T-0). Refer to [paragraph 2.12](#) for additional guidance.

2.2.3. Eligibility for Civil Air Patrol personnel who conduct official Air Force Auxiliary missions is restricted to those awards authorized for civilian personnel in [Table 2.1](#).

2.2.4. Grade is not a factor in determining the type or level of an award (unless stipulated in DAFMAN 36-2806), nor are any quotas established limiting the number of awards that may be recommended or approved. Recommendations are based solely on the merits of a member's actions or the member's level of responsibility, achievements, accomplishments, and manner of performance.

Table 2.1. Personal Military Decorations (Listed in order of precedence).

Personal Military Decorations	Awarded For				Awarded To			
	Valor	Non-Combat Heroism	Service	Achievement	US		Foreign	
					Military	Civilian	Military	Civilian
Medal of Honor (MOH)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Air Force Cross (AFC)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Distinguished Service Medal (DSM)	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Silver Star (SS)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legion of Merit (LOM)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Airman's Medal (AMNM)	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bronze Star Medal (BSM)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Purple Heart (PH)	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Air Medal (AM)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Aerial Achievement Medal (AAM)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Air and Space Commendation Medal (ASCOM)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Air and Space Achievement Medal	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

2.2.5. Approval Authority. In general SECAF retains awarding authority for personal military decorations under SECAF's purview. **Table 2.2** contains SECAF's delegated approval authority for non-combat related acts, achievements, and service. This table applies to DAF officers or civilian leaders in assumed or appointed command, deputy command or director positions, or in writing by delegated approval authorities from higher commands. This authority may not be further delegated unless stipulated in **Table 2.2.**, DAF messages or memorandums. Exceptions, delegations or further delegations not already authorized require SECAF approval.

2.2.5.1. Refer to paragraphs **2.4** and **2.5** for combat related decorations and awards.

2.2.5.2. The Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board acts on behalf of SECAF and approves, disapproves, downgrades, and upgrades recommendations, except for the MOH, AFC, and PH.

2.2.5.3. Headquarters Air Force (HAF). The Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) and the Chief of Space Operations (CSO) are the DSM approval authority for their Services' MAJCOM or FLDCOM commanders, with no time in position requirement.

2.2.5.3.1. For US Air Force (USAF) nominations:

2.2.5.3.1.1. The Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force (VCSAF) is the DSM approval authority for retiring USAF general officers assigned to HAF (including their Field Operating Agencies (FOA) and Direct Reporting Units (DRU)), MAJCOM commanders, USAF general officers not falling under a MAJCOM, and the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force.

2.2.5.3.1.2. The Air Force Director of Staff (AF/DS) is the LOM (and below) approval authority for members assigned to the offices of the AF/CC and the AF/CCC, and Air Staff directorates headed by 2-star general officers (or below) or an equivalent civilian leader.

2.2.5.3.2. For US Space Force (USSF) nominations:

2.2.5.3.2.1. The Vice Chief of Space Operations (VCSO) is the DSM approval authority for retiring USSF general officers assigned to HAF, FLDCOM commanders, USSF general officers not falling under a FLDCOM, and the Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force.

2.2.5.3.2.2. The Space Force Director of Staff (SF/DS) is the LOM (and below) approval authority for members assigned to the offices of the CSO and the Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force, and Space Staff directorates headed by 2-star general officers (or below) or an equivalent civilian leader.

2.2.5.4. MAJCOM or FLDCOM commanders are approval authority for:

2.2.5.4.1. DSM for retiring general officers meeting all eligible criteria. This authority applies to 4-star and 3-star MAJCOM or FLDCOM commanders only and may not be further delegated.

2.2.5.4.2. LOM for qualifying officers and Chief Master Sergeants. This authority may be further delegated to the MAJCOM or FLDCOM deputy commander in the grade of major general and above (or civilian leader equivalent).

2.2.5.4.3. MSM, ASCOM and ASAM to US military members. This authority may be further delegated to the MAJCOM or FLDCOM deputy commander and their directors in the grade of O-6 or higher and civilian leader equivalent.

2.2.5.4.4. MSM, ASCOM, and the ASAM to foreign military personnel in a grade equivalent to an O-6 and below. This authority may only be further delegated to the MAJCOM or FLDCOM deputy commander.

2.2.5.5. Wing, Delta, Garrison, Numbered Air Force (NAF), DRU, FOA, and Center Commander may delegate ASCOM and ASAM approval authority to their directors in the grade of O-6 or higher and civilian leader equivalent.

2.2.5.6. Unless [Table 2.2](#) stipulates a grade, approval authority exists if an officer or civilian leader, regardless of grade, assumes or is appointed to a position by written orders. Approval authority is not based on “senior rater” identification (the term only applies to evaluations/promotions) or other status or factor. Commanders must be on G-series orders. **(T-1)**.

2.2.5.7. Joint Units. Approval authority for awards to DAF members assigned to a joint unit is listed in [Table 2.2](#). Refer to [paragraph 2.1.12](#) for additional guidance.

2.2.5.8. The Air Force and Space Force Element Commanders at US Combatant Commands, in the grade of major general and higher, are approval authority for retirement Legion of Merits.

Table 2.2. Approval Authorities.

<i>(An "X" in a column indicates approval authority for the personal military decorations in the heading.) See paragraph 2.2.5.</i>	PERSONAL MILITARY DECORATIONS						
	DSM	LOM	MSM	AM	AAM	ASCOM	ASAM
HAF: CSAF, CSO, VCSAF, and VCISO (see paragraph 2.2.5.3)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
HAF: Secretariat, AF/DS, SF/DS, and 2-Letter Deputy, Associate, and Director (Lt Gen or higher and civilian leader equivalent) (see paragraph 2.2.5.3)		X	X	X	X	X	X
HAF: 2-Letter Assistant Deputy, Associate, Director, and Chief of Staff (O-6 or higher and civilian leader equivalent)			X	X	X	X	X
MAJCOM and FLDCOM Commander, Director and Deputy Director Air National Guard, and Superintendent of the Air Force Academy (see paragraph 2.2.5.4)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAJCOM and FLDCOM Deputy Commander, Director or Head of Staff Office, Deputy Chief of Staff/Staff Office (O-6 or higher and civilian leader equivalent), and Chief Air Directorate Staff/Air			X		X	X	X
NAF, DRU, FOA and Center Commander (Maj Gen or higher) (see paragraph 2.2.5.5)		X	X	X	X	X	X
NAF, DRU, FOA and Center Commander and Deputy Commander (O-6 or higher and civilian leader equivalent)			X		X	X	X
Joint Task Force or Combined Task Force Commander, Air Force or Space Force Component Commander (Maj Gen or higher) (see paragraphs 2.2.5.7 and 2.2.5.9)			X	X	X	X	X

Joint Task Force or Combined Task Force Commander, Air Force or Space Force Component Commander (O-6 or higher) (see paragraphs 2.2.5.7 and 2.2.5.9)			X		X	X	X
Air Force or Space Force Element Commander at Combatant Commands (Maj Gen or higher) (see paragraphs 2.2.5.7, 2.2.5.8 and 2.2.5.9)		X	X	X	X	X	X
Air Force or Space Force Element Commander at Combatant Commands (O-6 or higher) (see paragraphs 2.2.5.7 and 2.2.5.9)			X		X	X	X
Wing, Delta and Garrison Commander, Deputy Commander and civilian leader equivalent			X		X	X	X
Group (or equivalent) Commander or Deputy Commander (or civilian leader equivalent)			X		X	X	X
State Adjutants General			X		X	X	X
Squadron Commander (military officers only)						X	X

2.2.6. **Disapproval Authority.** A recommendation (except under combat conditions) may be disapproved by an O-6 or higher (and civilian leader equivalent) in the chain of command provided the officer has approval authority for the next lesser personal military decoration.

2.2.7. **Devices.** The devices consist of ribbon bars, discs, rosettes, oak leaf cluster, stars, clasps, and devices. Refer to [Table 2.3](#) for devices that can be worn on personal military decorations and DAFMAN 36-2806 for criteria. The Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board authorizes the Valor “V” and Combat “C” devices to be affixed to select personal military decorations (see [Table 2.3](#)), unless otherwise delegated (refer to [paragraph 2.4.1](#)).

Table 2.3. Authorized Uses of Devices.

Personal Military Decorations	Devices				
	No Device	Valor “V” Device	Combat “C” Device	Remote “R” Device	Oak Leaf Clusters
MOH	X				
AFC					X
DSM			X		X
SS					X
LOM (see note)			X	X	X
DFC		X	X		X
AMNM					X
BSM		X			X
PH					X
MSM				X	X
AM		X	X		X
AAM					X
ASCOM		X	X	X	X
ASAM			X	X	X

Note: Devices are not authorized for LOMs approved for foreign military.

2.3. Unit Awards. Unit awards are designed to recognize DAF units and organizations for acts of valor, non-combat heroism, or meritorious service or achievement during peacetime, armed conflicts, international tension, national emergencies, or extraordinary situations or events that involve national interests. Unit awards are not awarded based on the actions of a few individuals or subordinate units within a larger unit. The award should acknowledge and recognize the combined efforts of every member of a unit or organization. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for criteria and processing guidance. The following requirements apply to all DAF unit awards:

2.3.1. The unit's entire service must have been honorable during the inclusive period of the nomination. **(T-1)**.

2.3.2. Units from other Military Departments are not authorized DAF unit awards. **(T-1)**. However, they may share a DAF unit award approved for a DAF unit in direct support of a war or armed conflict.

2.3.3. A foreign unit may only be recommended for a DAF unit award if the qualifying combat action was in direct support of a US military operation.

2.3.4. **Approval Authority.** Refer to [Table 2.4](#).

Table 2.4. Approval Authority--Unit Awards.

<i>(An "X" in a column indicates approval authority for the personal military decorations in the heading.) See paragraph 2.3.4.</i>	UNIT AWARDS				
	Presidential Unit Citation (PUC)	Gallant Unit Citation (GUC)	Meritorious Unit Award (MUA)	Air and Space Outstanding Unit Award (ASOUA)	Air and Space Organizational Excellence Award (ASOEA)
SECAF (see paragraphs 2.3.4.1 and 2.3.4.2)	X	X	X	X	X
Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board		X	X	X	X
MAJCOM and FLDCOM Commanders (may delegate the ASOUA and ASOEA to their deputy commander)			X	X	X

2.3.4.1. SECAF retains approval authority for all Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) nominations and nominations for the Air and Space Organizational Excellence Award (ASOEA) to HAF, MAJCOMs, FLDCOMs, FOAs, and DRUs.

2.3.4.2. Refer to paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 for nominations arising from combat operations, international incidents, and terrorist attacks.

2.3.4.3. DELETED

2.3.4.4. DELETED

2.3.4.5. DELETED

2.3.4.5.1. DELETED

2.3.4.5.2. DELETED

2.4. Combat Operations and Conditions. The SECAF retains approval authority for the AFC and PUC. All other lesser awards (except the Purple Heart) are submitted through the chain of command to the Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board for final decision unless the authority has been delegated in accordance with **paragraph 2.4.1.**

2.4.1. Upon written request, SECAF may delegate approval authority to the Air Component Commander or Commander of Air Force Forces (or equivalent USSF commander) to the US Combatant Command concerned. At such time, the commander with delegated authority acts

as the sole approval authority for DAF members serving in and acts impacting the area of eligibility.

2.4.1.1. Within 120 days of approval of a SS (and AFC, if delegated), the approval authority will send copies of the decision package to the Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board to review against the MOH and AFC criteria.

2.4.1.2. If the Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board's review (in accordance with [paragraph 2.4.1.1](#)) results in a recommendation to upgrade the originally awarded valor decoration, then the basis for the upgrade request may be based solely on the merit of the original recommendation (i.e., there is no requirement for new and substantive material information, or an error or injustice with processing of the original recommendation). In such cases, the initially approved valor decoration will be considered an interim award and revoked upon approval of the upgrade. **(T-0)**.

2.4.2. In cases when approval authority has not been delegated, the Air Component Commander or Commander of Air Force Forces (or equivalent USSF commander) to the supported Combatant Command forwards all recommendations arising out of combat operations to the Air Force Personnel Center Military Promotions, Evaluations, and Recognition Branch (AFPC/DP1SSP). In the absence of an Air Component Commander or Commander of Air Force Forces, a lieutenant general or general designated by CSAF and CSO for this purpose, forwards nominations to AFPC/DP1SSP. To the extent feasible, recommendations should be evaluated only after they have been aggregated, but the benefits of aggregation (and associated delays) should be balanced against the goal of timely recognition of the members' accomplishments. If there is a singular, distinctive event, or other unusual factors that support expediting a nomination, that nomination should be processed without aggregation and the nomination package should include an explanation of the reason for expedited processing. After review, the MAJCOM or FLDCOM commander or the CSAF and CSO designee, forwards the nomination to AFPC/DP1SSP (AFPC.DP1SSP.RecognitionProcess@us.af.mil) for processing to the Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board.

2.4.3. It is DoD and DAF's policy that decorations arising from combat operations are initiated within 90 days of the act, event,, or service being recognized. In the case of hostilities of limited duration, all recommendations should be submitted within 90 days after the cessation of hostilities. Timely initiation helps ensure witness statements and other evidence is collected as close to the date of the combat action as possible.

2.4.3.1. For act(s) of valor, a member will be accorded appropriate recognition based solely on the merits of the member's actions. **(T-0)**. Nominations will be processed within 20 working days of receipt at each command in the review process. **(T-0)**. Follow the guidelines in DAFMAN 36-2806.

2.4.3.2. Recommendations for the MOH and AFC must be forwarded to SECAF within 11 months of initiation. **(T-0)**. Advanced notification is required to ensure timely processing.

2.4.3.3. The guidelines listed above should not be used to avoid processing any recommendation that is initiated within the time limit.

2.4.3.4. MOH recommendations are deliberative, pre-decisional, and are exempt from release to the public. Nominations should be marked and handled as Controlled Unclassified Information until approval is announced officially by the White House. Premature disclosure of information to the public or to the individual being recommended for a MOH is prohibited.

2.4.3.5. Reconsiderations and recommendations originating from home station are submitted through the member's current chain of command to the Air Component Commander or Commander of Air Force Forces (or equivalent USSF commander) to the supported Combatant Command, for consideration.

2.5. International Terrorists and Foreign Terrorist Organizations Incidents. SECAF retains approval authority for recommendations involving international terrorists, foreign terrorist organizations, and foreign and transnational terrorist incidents.

2.6. Valor Decorations and Awards. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806, for additional guidance.

2.6.1. **Timeliness.** Pursuant to DoDI 1348.33, *DoD Military Decorations and Awards Program*, award nominations shall be initiated and processed in a timely manner. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for the time limitation process.

2.6.2. **Nominations.** Recommendations should, at a minimum, contain an AF Form 3994, *Recommendation for Decoration Deployment/Contingency Operation*, narrative justification, proposed citation, sworn statements, other relevant evidence, and copies of any investigations (related to the combat engagement).

2.6.3. **Mandatory Review.** All AFC and SS nominations approved by an authority other than SECAF (in accordance with [paragraph 2.4](#)) or the Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board (for the SS), will be reviewed against the AFC and/or MOH criteria by the Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board. **(T-0)**. The review must be completed within 120 days of approval. **(T-0)**.

2.6.4. **DoD Valor Website.** To publicly recognize MOH, AFC, and SS recipients, their name, grade, and conflict or campaign will be annotated on the DoD valor awards website, <https://valor.defense.gov/>; provided there are no security, privacy, and administrative restrictions. **(T-0)**. The names of recipients excluded from publication on the website due to security or classification reasons will be reviewed annually, each January, to determine if the earlier justification for exclusion is still relevant. **(T-0)**.

2.6.5. **Congressional Notification.** After official announcement or presentation of an approved MOH, AFC or SS, the recipient's congressional representatives in the House and Senate will be notified of the decoration.

2.7. Campaign, Expeditionary, and Service Awards. Campaign, expeditionary, and service awards are based on a member's: degree of personal risk, degree of personal hardship, degree of participation in designated military operations, and extent of military service during specified periods or types of duty. Members may not be awarded more than one award for the same act or period of service, except when authorized for DoD or DAF. Eligibility criteria for these awards are provided in DAFMAN 36-2806.

2.7.1. **Campaign Medals.** Recognize long-duration combat operations and are associated with the highest level of personal risk and hardship. The medals are awarded to Service members who are deployed to the geographic areas where the combat is actually occurring. Members deployed to areas where combat is occurring as a result of prolonged or large-scale military combat operations should be recognized with a separate and distinct campaign medal.

2.7.2. **Expeditionary Medals.** Recognize deployed participation in small-scale and/or short-duration combat operations or military operations where there is an imminent threat of hostilities. Expeditionary medals are also awarded to members deployed in support of combat operations, but who are not in the geographic area where the actual combat is occurring. Expeditionary medals are associated with high levels of personal risk and hardship.

2.7.3. **Service Awards.** Recognize support to military operations while deployed or at home station, military service during a period of time, or attainment of a requirement.

2.7.4. US civilians, foreign nationals, and foreign military personnel are not eligible for campaign, expeditionary, and service awards, unless specified in the award criteria. **(T-0)**.

2.7.5. The period of service qualifying a member for an award must have been honorable. **(T-0)**. Refer to [paragraph 2.12](#) for additional guidance.

2.8. Special Trophies and Awards. Pursuant to 10 USC § 1125, *Recognition for Accomplishments: Award of Trophies*, and DoDI 1348.19, *Award of Medals, Trophies, Badges, and Similar Honors in Recognition of Accomplishments*, special trophies and awards recognize individual and unit accomplishments that are unique and meritorious or that clearly contributed to increased effectiveness or efficiency of DAF. These awards are announced annually and are considered through a nominative selection process. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for criteria, eligibility, and processing guidance.

2.8.1. Commanders and civilian directors at any level may establish special trophies and awards to recognize military members, DAF civilian employees, teams, units, and organizations, provided the award fosters morale and esprit de corps.

2.8.1.1. Commanders and civilian directors at all levels must monitor the distinction between DAF awards programs, non-Federal entity awards programs and DAF awards sponsored by non-Federal entities. In this context, such sponsorship is limited to non-Federal entity funding of the master repository of award winners, individual recognition items, and travel of awardees, in accordance with DAFMAN 36-2806.

2.8.1.2. Co-sponsored or jointly selected and presented awards are not allowed. **(T-1)**. The type of award category determines the funding structure of the award program and commanders and directors should ensure that the selection/nomination process and presentation ceremonies make it clear to participants and spectators what category of award is involved. Awards programs should be supported and presented in a manner that does not reflect adversely on the integrity of DAF personnel, programs, and operations. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for further guidance.

2.8.2. Special trophies and awards managed by the Air Force Personnel Center are earned in a nominative process, through a boarding system. The boards for these awards, except for the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year, First Sergeant of the Year, and Guardian of the Year awards, are chaired by a general officer or civilian leader equivalent. **(T-1)**.

2.8.3. Non-Federal Entities.

2.8.3.1. Certain non-Federal entities that may sponsor special trophies and awards may offer to fund and/or facilitate the presentation of recognition items. Such sponsored awards remain DAF level awards. The name of the non-Federal entity may be included in the award description (e.g., “sponsored by XXX organization”), provided that the non-Federal entity is a national, regional, or local non-profit organization (in accordance with Title 26 USC Section 501(c)(3)) or veteran service organization (in accordance with Title 26 USC Section 501(c)(19) or (23)). “For profit” non-Federal entities are not authorized to sponsor DAF special trophies and awards. **(T-0)**.

2.8.3.2. Sponsoring non-Federal entities may fund recognition items, including certificates, plaques, and trophies, for individual and team members and units. Recognition items should have little intrinsic value and be intended primarily for presentation. Sponsors may also assume responsibility for financially assisting DAF with maintaining a master repository of award winners (e.g., a central trophy with the names of award winners inscribed on it). Such funding of recognition and master repository items should be processed as a gift to DAF in accordance with AFI 51-506, *Gifts to the Department of the Air Force from Domestic and Foreign Sources*, or gifts to a Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentality (NAFI) in accordance with AFMAN 34-201, *Use of Nonappropriated Funds (NAFS)*. However, for recurring funding of identical items, only the original gift to DAF or NAFI need be processed if the original gift specifies the gift will be continuing in nature and does not vary substantially in cost and value.

2.8.3.3. Sponsoring non-Federal entities may also desire to pay for the travel to award presentation events by individual and team award winners and/or unit commanders or civilian directors (in the case of unit awards), as well as possibly spousal travel (individual and team awards only). Refer to the Joint Travel Regulations, Chapter 9 in AFI 51-506, and paragraphs 2.8.5 and 2.8.6 below. Although recurring payments of awardee travel do not have to be reprocessed as a 31 USC § 1353, *Acceptance of travel and related expenses from non-Federal sources*, gift after the initial acceptance, the recurring acceptance of travel payments do need to be reported (if they exceed \$250 per occasion) on the Semiannual Gift of Travel Report per AFI 51-506, paragraph 8.8.

2.8.3.4. Subject to all applicable Ethnics rules, sponsoring non-Federal entities may gift to DAF, pursuant to 10 USC § 2601, funds only (not the actual service), for the benefit of members and their families attached to a DAF unit, organization or installation that wins a unit award.

2.8.3.4.1. Said gift may be used for the following items including, but not limited to: food, beverages, venue costs, set-up and take-down expenses, tables and chairs, awards and entertainment integral to the event.

2.8.3.4.2. To the maximum extent possible, such funds should be donated in-kind; i.e., such funds should be paid directly to the venue, caterers and other service providers.

2.8.3.5. Non-Federal entities often maintain their own awards programs for recognition of DAF personnel, define the selection criteria, and periodically request nominees. DAF officials should not select the winners of non-Federal entity awards programs. These types

of awards will not be included in the special trophies and awards database (<https://access.afpc.af.mil/>).

2.8.3.5.1. Commanders and civilian directors may nominate meritorious individuals, teams, or subordinate units for non-Federal entity recognition. Once the non-Federal entity selects the awards winner(s), it coordinates with the applicable functional community or organization for presentation at their ceremony and venue to individual and team award winners. DAF officials may be present (and on-stage) at the awards presentation and may congratulate DAF individual and team award recipients (and unit commanders in the case of awards to units), but the entire demeanor of their presence (including any remarks made) should make it clear that the event is a non-Federal entity (and not a DAF) award presentation. Non-local travel solely for the purposes of attending such a non-Federal entity awards presentation is usually not appropriate. If the awards event is a fundraising event for the non-Federal entity, then DAF officials (other than the actual award recipient(s)) should not be on stage or otherwise supporting the event, except as permitted by Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 2635.808.

2.8.3.5.2. Individual and team award winners may accept recognition items, travel to the award presentation for themselves and their immediate family members, and other items incident to the award pursuant to 5 CFR § 2635.204(d). The servicing legal office should be consulted before such items are accepted.

2.8.3.5.2.1. If the total value of all items (including travel benefits) exceeds \$200, then the non-Federal entity award must be regularly funded and awarded, and the selection of the recipient(s) be conducted pursuant to written standards. The servicing legal office should be consulted before such items are accepted.

2.8.3.5.2.2. Although senior leaders are eligible as recipients of non-Federal entity awards for meritorious public service, caution should be exercised before accepting such an award (and the invitation to the award ceremony) to determine if it would be better packaged in the nature of a unit award or if acceptance of the award would give a reasonable person, with knowledge of all relevant facts, the perception of special treatment towards the non-Federal entity or the existence of a special relationship with the non-Federal entity.

2.8.3.5.3. Non-Federal entities may invite award recipients (individuals and teams) of the non-Federal entity's award, and their immediate families, to a dinner, reception, ceremony, banquet, picnic, family day or similar event, pursuant to 5 CFR § 2635.204(d)(4). In the case of a non-Federal entity award bestowed on a DAF unit, organization or installation, the event may encompass all unit members (including those current members who reported after the period of eligibility).

2.8.3.5.3.1. Award recipients, including unit members in the case of a unit award, may accept free attendance for themselves and their immediate family members at the event. Free attendance may include, but is not limited to, acceptance of food, beverages (including alcohol for adult guests), and entertainment integral to the event.

2.8.4. Procurement of Recognition Items. In accordance with DAF budget guidance, commanders and civilian directors may authorize the use of unit funds for reasonable costs, such as the purchase of trophies, plaques, certificates, and other items intended primarily for presentation and having little intrinsic value. Cash (or cash equivalent) awards are not authorized. **(T-0)**.

2.8.4.1. Use only appropriated funds for awards presented to personnel paid from appropriated funds. **(T-0)**. Use only nonappropriated funds for awards presented to personnel paid from nonappropriated funds. **(T-0)**. Do not use nonappropriated funds to supplement awards paid from appropriated funds. **(T-0)**. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for guidance on allowing cross-funding (between appropriated and nonappropriated fund programs) of minor recognition items (e.g., Unit Recognition Coins).

2.8.4.2. Value of Recognition Items. Recognition items (e.g., trophies, plaques, or coins) must not be redeemable for cash, merchandise, or services at commercial entities, Army Air Force Exchange Store, Defense Commissary Agency, or Forward Support Squadron activities, unless authorized by AFMAN 34-201.

2.8.4.3. The cost of recognition items should be commensurate with the significance of the achievement being recognized.

2.8.4.4. Non-Federal entity sponsors of DAF awards may donate venue services for the presentation of individual, team, and unit awards. Such presentations, which are often conducted at annual conferences and symposia, should be conducted in a manner that clearly conveys whether the award is a DAF award, a DAF award sponsored by a non-Federal entity or solely a non-Federal entity award. Planning staffs should be sensitive to the perception that such award ceremonies may give the impression that such conferences and symposia are co-sponsored. For recurring donations of venue services, only the original gift to DAF need be processed if the original donation specified the gift was continuing in nature and would not vary substantially in cost.

2.8.4.5. Co-sponsored award presentation events (for DAF awards) may only be conducted with approval by the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, as such co-sponsored presentations usually take place at non-Federal entity conference or similar event. See [paragraph 2.8.1.2](#), regarding co-sponsored awards programs.

2.8.4.6. Co-sponsored awards are not authorized.

2.8.5. Travel for Military or Civilian Employees.

2.8.5.1. Refer to the Joint Travel Regulations, *Uniformed Service Members and DoD Civilian Employees*, Sections 0305 (Invitation to Travel) and 0309 (*Travel to Receive or Present an Award*) and AFI 24-602, Volume 1, *Passenger Movement*, for eligibility criteria.

2.8.5.2. Non-Federal entities that sponsor awards may offer to pay travel costs pursuant to AFI 51-506, Chapter 8, and Title 31 USC Section 1353, for an award recipient (or unit commander in the case of unit awards) to participate in a DAF award presentation ceremony. Such payment of travel benefits for military and civilian employees is handled as a gift to DAF and not as a gift to the employees personally. Therefore, public and

confidential financial report filers do not have to report such benefits. Consult with your local legal office prior to accepting an offer to pay travel costs.

2.8.6. Travel for Non-Military Members or Non-DAF Civilian Employees. Refer to Joint Travel Regulation, 0305 and AFI 24-602, Volume 1 for additional guidance. Only invitational travel is available for this purpose.

2.8.6.1. Spousal travel is not authorized in conjunction with an award presented to a team or unit. **(T-1)**.

2.8.6.2. Non-federal entities that sponsor an individual (not team) award may also, if the travel of the recipient is funded as outlined in [paragraph 2.8.3.3](#), offer to pay the travel of the spouse of the award recipient in accordance with paragraph 8.6.2.6.2 in AFI 51-506.

2.9. Other Military Departments' Personal Military Decorations.

2.9.1. **Non-Combat Related.** The MSM and the other Military Departments' Commendation and Achievement Medals (e.g., Army Commendation Medal and Navy Achievement Medal) will only be awarded to DAF members permanently assigned to a unit or organization of the other Military Departments without written concurrence from the DAF, provided the act, achievement, or service was performed under non-combat conditions. **(T-0)**.

2.9.2. **Combat Related.** Personal military decorations for acts, achievements, or service arising from combat operations will only be considered for DAF members permanently or temporarily assigned to another Military Department. **(T-0)**. Concurrence from the DAF is required prior to approval of the personal military decoration.

2.9.3. Concurrence is not granted for DAF members with no command relationship to another Military Department. The appropriate recognition for these members is with a DAF award.

2.10. US Non-Military Awards. DAF members are not authorized to wear US non-military decorations or awards specifically intended to recognize valorous acts, participation in campaigns and expeditions, or fulfillment of specific service requirements. **(T-0)**.

2.11. Foreign Awards. Acceptance of awards from foreign governments and international organizations is prescribed by 5 USC § 7342, *Receipt and Disposition of Foreign Gifts and Decorations*, and DoDI 1348.33.

2.11.1. Foreign awards proffered to DAF members and/or units by foreign governments will only be accepted in recognition of combat service, or outstanding or unusually meritorious performance. **(T-0)**. Activities normally undertaken by DAF in support of a friendly foreign nation during peacetime are not considered sufficient to merit foreign awards.

2.11.2. DAF members will not request, or otherwise encourage, the offer of an award from a foreign government. **(T-0)**. Acceptance is only authorized upon receiving official approval to accept the award.

2.11.3. **Approval Authority.** The approval authority evaluates the award to determine its appropriateness and approves or disapproves acceptance and retention.

2.11.3.1. The Secretary of Defense approves acceptance of foreign awards intended to recognize participation in campaigns, expeditions, or fulfillment of specific service requirements. In cases where advanced authorization has not been made through joint channels, requests may be staffed through DAF command channels.

2.11.3.2. SECAF approves acceptance of foreign unit awards after coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

2.11.3.3. Air Force Personnel Center Promotions, Evaluations and Recognitions Policy Branch (AFPC/DP3SP) approves and disapproves acceptance of foreign awards for DAF general officers and members not falling under a MAJCOM or FLDCOM, FOA and DRU.

2.11.3.4. The MAJCOM, FLDCOM, FOA and DRU Director of Manpower, Personnel, and Services approves and disapproves acceptance of foreign awards for DAF members in the grade of O-6 and below, assigned or attached to their command.

2.12. Honorable Service Requirements. The requirement for honorable service to receive an award (including personal military decorations) is governed by 10 USC § 1136, *Honorable Service Requirement for Award of Military Decorations*, and DoDI 1348.33.

2.12.1. No military decoration, including a medal, cross, or bar, or an associated emblem or insignia (e.g., device), may be awarded or presented to an individual, or a representative of the individual, if the individual's service during or after the act, achievement, or service being recognized has not been honorable.

2.12.2. Determination that an individual's service has not been honorable service should be limited to cases where the individual's actions:

2.12.2.1. Are not compatible with continued military service (e.g., dismissal of a commissioned officer from military service),

2.12.2.2. Result in Federal, State or court-martial criminal convictions,

2.12.2.3. Result in determinations that the person did not serve satisfactorily in a specific grade or position, or

2.12.2.4. Result in a discharge from military service that is characterized as "Other Than Honorable," "Bad Conduct," or "Dishonorable."

2.12.3. When needed, AF/JA will confirm honorable conduct through relevant databases.

Chapter 3

OTHER RECOGNITION

3.1. Background. Acts, achievements, or services that do not meet the criteria for military awards (e.g., personal performance decorations, unit awards, and campaign, expeditionary, and service medals) may be recognized with other forms of recognition. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for criteria and procedures.

3.2. Cold War Recognition Certificate. Established by Public Law (PL) 105–85 Section 1084, *Commendation of Members of the Armed Forces and Government Civilian Personnel Who Served During the Cold War; Certificate of Recognition*, to recognize all members of the US Armed Forces and qualified Federal Government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the US during the Cold War Era, from 2 September 1945 to 26 December 1991.

3.3. Military Working Dog Handler Certificate of Commendation. Authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, Section 582, *Award of Medals or Other Commendations to Handlers of Military Working Dogs*, to recognize military working dog handlers for acts of valor or meritorious achievement on or after 13 August 2018, by such handlers and their working dog.

3.4. Atomic Veterans Service Certificate. Authorized by NDAA FY19, Section 581, *Atomic Veterans Service Certificate*, is awarded to radiation-exposed veterans as defined in 38 USC § 1112(c)(3), *Presumptions Relating to Certain Diseases and Disabilities*.

3.5. Certificate of Commendation. Military and civilians serving as commander, director, or division chief may recognize members for an unusual achievement or contribution that does not meet the criteria for other awards.

3.6. Certificate of Achievement. Military and civilians serving as commander, director, or division chief may recognize members for periods of faithful service, acts, or achievements, which do not meet the criteria for a decoration.

3.7. One-Time Recognition Awards. Unit Recognition Coins (and similar one-time recognition items) may be presented to an individual or team members (except contractor employees) whose achievements make a significant contribution to the effectiveness and efficiency of DAF, or to recognize meritorious performance not warranting a personal military decoration or special trophy or award. Such unit coins are for on-the-spot recognition and not usually given out as part of formal awards programs. Refer to DAFMAN 36-2806 for additional guidance and DAFMAN 65-605, Volume 1 for funding requirements.

JOHN A FEDRIGO
Acting Assistant Secretary
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

5 USC § 7342, *Receipt and Disposition of Foreign Gifts and Decorations*

10 USC § 1125, *Recognition for Accomplishments: Award of Trophies*

10 USC § 1130, *Consideration of Proposals for Decorations Not Previously Submitted in Timely Fashion: Procedures for Review*

10 USC § 1136, *Honorable Service Requirement for Award of Military Decorations*

10 USC § 2601, *General Gift Funds*

10 USC § 9277, *Medal of Honor; Air Force Cross; Distinguished-Service Cross; Distinguished-Service Medal; Silver Star: Replacement*

10 USC § 9281, *Service Medals: Issue; Replacement; Availability of Appropriations*

26 USC § 501, *Exemption from Tax on Corporations, Certain Trusts, etc.*

38 USC § 1112(c)(3), *Presumptions Relating to Certain Diseases and Disabilities*

5 CFR § 2635.808, *Fundraising Activities*

5 CFR § 2635.204, *Exceptions to the Prohibition tor Acceptance of Certain Gifts*

PL 105–85 § 1084, *Commendation of Members of the Armed Forces and Government Civilian Personnel Who Served During the Cold War; Certificate of Recognition*

NDAA FY19, Section 581, *Atomic Veterans Service Certificate*

NDAA FY19, Section 582, *Award of Medals or Other Commendations to Handlers of Military Working Dogs*

DoD 5500.07-R, *Joint Ethics Regulation*, 30 August 1993

DoDI 1348.19, *Award of Medals, Trophies, Badges, and Similar Honors in Recognition of Accomplishments*, 3 February 2014

DoDI 1348.33, *DoD Military Decorations and Awards Program*, 21 December 2016

DoDI 5400.11, *DoD Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*, 29 January 2019

DoDM 1348.33, Volume 4, *Manual of Military Decorations and Awards: DoD Joint Decorations and Awards*, 21 December 2016

DAFPD 36-28, *Awards Program*, 24 May 2021

DAFI 24-602, Volume 1, *Passenger Movement*, 15 December 2020

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 23 March 2020

AFMAN 34-201, *Use of Nonappropriated Funds (NAFS)*, 28 September 2018

DAFMAN 36-2806, *Military Awards: Criteria and Procedures*, 27 October 2022

AFI 51-506, *Gifts to the Department of the Air Force from Domestic and Foreign Sources*, 16 April 2019

AFI 65-601, Volume 1, *Budget Guidance and Procedures*, 24 October 2018

DAFMAN 65-605, Volume 1, *Budget Guidance and Technical Procedures*, 31 March 2021

DAFMAN 90-161, *Publishing Process and Procedures*, 15 April 2022

Joint Travel Regulations, *Uniformed Service Members and DoD Civilian Employees*, 1 December 2018

31 USC § 1353, *Acceptance of Travel and Related Expenses from Non-Federal Sources*

Prescribed Forms

None

Adopted Forms

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

AF Form 3994, *Recommendation for Decoration Deployment/Contingency Operation*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAM—Aerial Achievement Medal

AF—Air Force

ASAM—Air and Space Achievement Medal

AFC—Air Force Cross

ASCOM—Air and Space Commendation Medal

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFMAN—Air Force Manual

AM—Air Medal

AMNM—Airman's Medal

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

ASOEA—Air and Space Organizational Excellence Award

ASOUA—Air and Space Outstanding Unit Award

BSM—Bronze Star Medal

CFR—Code of Federal Regulations

CSAF—Chief of Staff of the Air Force

CSO—Chief of Space Operations

DAF—Department of the Air Force

DAFI—Department of the Air Force Instruction

DAFPD—Department of the Air Force Policy Directive

DFC—Distinguished Flying Cross

DoD—Department of Defense

DoDI—Department of Defense Instruction

DoDM—Department of Defense Manual

DSM—Distinguished Service Medal

DRU—Direct Reporting Unit

FLDCOM—Field Command

FOA—Field Operating Agency

FY—Fiscal Year

GUC—Gallant Unit Citation

HAF—Headquarters Air Force

LOM—Legion of Merit

MAJCOM—Major Command

MOH—Medal of Honor

MSM—Meritorious Service Medal

MUA—Meritorious Unit Award

NAF—Numbered Air Force

NAFI—Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentality

NCO—Noncommissioned Officer

NDAA—National Defense Authorization Act

OPR—Office of Primary Responsibility

PH—Purple Heart

PL—Public Law

PME—Professional Military Education

PUC—Presidential Unit Citation

SECAF—Secretary of the Air Force

SORN—System of Record of Notices

SS—Silver Star

US—United States

USAF—United States Air Force

USC—United States Code

USSF—United States Space Force

VCSAF—Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force

VCSO—Vice Chief of Space Operations

Terms

Armed Forces—Denotes collectively all components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard.

Campaign—A series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space.

Campaign Medal—Used to recognize active participation in a war or significant military combat operation, of long duration and significant scope. Award is limited to those who have physically participated in the campaign from within the actual area of operations. Historically, all of the following factors are present before a campaign medal is created: (1) a declared war, state of emergency, or legislative resolution; (2) the presence of sustained hostilities by an opposing force within a defined geographic area; and (3) the assumption of significant risk (proximity to the enemy), personal hardship, or extended family separation by the Service member.

Combatant Command—A unified or specified command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander established and so designated by the President of the United States, through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Combatant commands typically have geographic or functional responsibilities.

Conflict—An armed struggle or clash between organized groups within a nation or between nations in order to achieve limited political or military objectives. Although regular forces are often involved, irregular forces frequently predominate. Conflict often is protracted, confined to a restricted geographic area, and constrained in weaponry and level of violence. Within this state, military power in response to threats may be exercised in an indirect manner while supportive of other instruments of national power. Limited objectives may be achieved by the short, focused, and direct application of force.

Decoration—Refer to personal military decoration.

Device—An accessory or other item associated with an award (i.e., lapel button, rosette, or oak leaf cluster).

Expedition—A military operation conducted by an armed force to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country.

Expeditionary Medal—Used to recognize direct participation: 1) In military operations against an armed opposing force; or, 2) In limited hostilities against an opposing force; or, 3) In military operations where Service members are exposed to the imminent threat of hostilities. Award is typically limited to those who have physically participated in the military expedition from within the area of operations. Expeditionary operations are typically shorter in duration and more limited in scope than operations that qualify for creation of campaign medals.

Foreign Government—Includes any unit of foreign governmental authority (including any foreign national, state, local, and municipal government, as well as any political party or commercial entity exercising sovereign authority) or any international or multinational

organization whose membership is composed of the agents or representatives of any of these foreign governments.

Headquarters Air Force (HAF)—The HAF includes the Secretariat, the Air Staff, and the Office of the Chief of Space Operations. See DAFMAN 90-161.

Honorable—Acceptable conduct and service based on US law and DoD standards.

International Incident—Any peacetime event involving US military forces that generates or could generate formal protests by the US government and/or the foreign government involved.

Military Awards—Authorized DoD and DAF medals and ribbons.

Medal—A term used to include the three categories of awards, namely: personal military decorations, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, and service medals. Also refers to the distinctive physical device made of metal and ribbon, which constitutes the tangible evidence of an award.

Meritorious Achievement—A single, specific act or accomplishment, separate and distinct from regularly assigned duties, with definite beginning and ending dates.

Meritorious Service—Individual performance that exceeds that expected by virtue of grade and experience, based on accomplishments during an entire tour of duty. Awards given for meritorious service cover the period of the controlled duty tour, plus any extensions. Awards for meritorious service are typically granted for a period of service greater than 12 months.

Non-Combat Heroism—Heroic conduct especially as exhibited in fulfilling a high purpose or attaining a noble end involving the voluntary risk of life.

Operation—1) A military action or the carrying out of a strategic, operational, tactical, service, training, or administrative military mission. 2) The process of carrying on combat, including movement, supply, attack, defense, and maneuvers needed to gain the objectives of any battle or campaign.

Personal Military Decoration—Distinctively designed mark of honor denoting valor, non-combat heroism, or meritorious service or achievement of Service members and units.

Service—The time period of the assignment (to include any extensions).

Service Medal—Denotes: 1) Participation in military operations that do not involve conflict with an armed enemy; or, 2) Military service meeting specific criteria (for example, honorable service while a Prisoner of War). Prolonged military presence, peacekeeping, and humanitarian relief are examples of military actions that warrant consideration for a service medal.

Support—1) The action of a force that aids, protects, complements, or sustains another force in accordance with a directive requiring such action. 2) A unit that helps another unit in battle. 3) An element of a command that assists, protects, or supplies other forces in combat.

Team—A team is a group of thirty or less people, organized for a common purpose (for example, Operational Planning Team) or an operation (for example, a bomber crew, security forces contingent, etc.) that is not constituted as a DAF organization or unit. Excluded from this definition are Headquarters Air Force Test and Evaluation awards.

Valor—An act or acts of heroism by an individual above what is normally expected while engaged in direct combat with an enemy of the US, or an opposing foreign or armed force, with exposure to enemy hostilities and personal risk.