

**BY ORDER OF THE COMMANDER
HQ AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER**

AFPC INSTRUCTION 36-114

14 APRIL 2025

Personnel

PURPLE HEART REVIEW BOARD



COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) Instruction has been approved by the AFPC Commander (AFPC/CC) and provides guidance and outlines internal operating procedures for execution of the Purple Heart Review Board in accordance with Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-2803, *Military Decorations and Awards Programs* and Department of the Air Force Manual 36-2806, *Military Awards; Criteria and Procedures*.

This publication applies to uniformed members of the Regular Air Force, Regular Space Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and Civilian employees (regarding the Defense of Freedom Medal). Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to AFPC.DPPSP.Workflow@us.af.mil using the Department of the Air Force Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*. This publication may not be supplemented or further implemented/extended. 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.

Promotions, Evaluations, and Recognition Branch (AFPC/DPPSP), Directorate of Personnel Programs (AFPC/DPP), Directorate of Personnel Operations (AFPC/DPM), Directorate of Personnel Support (AFPC/DPS), and AFPC, Staff Judge Advocate (AFPC/JA) have reviewed and accepted the roles and responsibilities assigned to them by this instruction. No waivers may be granted for any part of this publication. Refer to [attachment 1](#) for Glossary of References and Supporting Information.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This publication has been revised with the following: administrative changes to improve readability, updated office symbols, changes made to the roles and responsibilities section, added the office symbols section to [attachment 1](#), updated board membership, added applicability for Air Force Reserve, Guard, Civilian Employees and United States Space Force, added roles and responsibilities for the Directorate of Airmen and Family Matters, and updated revocation process from AF/AIS and AF/AIP.

1. Purpose. This instruction establishes the Purple Heart Review Board under the authority of the Secretary of the Air Force in accordance with Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-2803, states its functions, and delegates responsibilities for reviewing and rendering decisions by the Board.

2. Objective. The Purple Heart Review Board reviews, evaluates, makes recommendations on applications and awards the Purple Heart Medal to Air Force military members and the Defense of Freedom Medal to Air Force civilians.

3. Roles and Responsibilities.

3.1. Administrator of Recognition and Evaluation Programs, Director of Personnel Programs (AFPC/DPPSP) will:

3.1.1. Serve as the Office of Primary Responsibility for this instruction.

3.2. The Director of Personnel Programs (AFPC/DPP) will:

3.2.1. Ensure this instruction is in compliance with existing laws and Department of Defense Instructions.

3.2.2. Appoint a minimum of three board members and a board president/reviewing authority.

3.2.3. Appoint primary and alternate board president/reviewing authorities in the rank of Colonel (O-6).

3.2.4. Appoint individuals to serve as board members in the minimum grade of Major (O-4) or SMSgt (E-8) or civilian equivalents or above.

3.2.5. Ensure Directorate of Personnel Operations (AFPC/DPM) Director Personnel Support (AFPC/DPS) are notified of appointment of board members in writing and replacements are identified as necessary within 15 days of departing individuals.

3.3. The Directorate of Personnel Operations (AFPC/DPM) will:

3.3.1. Ensure a representative from the Recognition Operation Section (AFPC/DPPSP) is appointed as a technical advisor (non-voting) to the board.

3.3.1.1. Ensure the Promotions, Evaluations and Recognition Branch (AFPC/DPPSP) and the Sustainment and Transition Division (AFPC/DPST) is notified in writing of this appointment.

3.3.2. Ensure replacements are identified as necessary within 15 days of departing individuals.

3.4. The Directorate of Personnel Support (AFPC/DPS) will:

3.4.1. Ensure a representative from the Recognitions Section of the Military Promotion, Evaluation, and Recognitions Branch (AFPC/DPSTTC) is appointed to serve as a recorder (non-voting).

3.4.1.1. Ensure the Promotion, Evaluation, and Recognition Branch (AFPC/DPPSP) and the Recognition Operation Section (AFPC/DPMS) is notified in writing of this appointment.

3.4.2. Ensure replacements are identified as necessary within 15 days of departing individuals.

3.5. Staff Judge Advocate (AFPC/JA) will:

3.5.1. Provide legal guidance and analysis to ensure compliance with federal statutes, Department of Defense Instructions, and/or Department of the Air Force Instructions.

3.5.2. Clarify guidance with higher headquarters legal offices, including Air Force Judge Advocate (AF/JA) and The General Counsel of the Department of the Air Force (SAF/GC), advocating AFPC's position as necessary.

3.5.3. Recommend changes to proposed guidance, procedures, and information to ensure conformity with existing regulations and laws.

3.5.4. Discuss potential changes in existing regulations and laws, if required, to allow proposed guidance, procedures and information into conformity with existing regulations and laws.

3.6. Directorate of Airman and Family Care will:

3.6.1. Appoint a medical doctor as an advisor.

3.6.2. Provide medical guidance and analysis to ensure compliance with federal statutes, Department of Defense Instructions, and/or Department of the Air Force Instructions.

3.6.3. Clarify medical guidance, if necessary, with higher headquarters.

4. Evaluation Procedures.

4.1. A key aspect of an awards and decorations program is its consistent application. Accordingly, board members will evaluate applications on the basis of criteria and policy effective when the applicant was wounded or injured.

4.1.1. Awarded for wounds received as a direct result of enemy actions (e.g., gunshot or shrapnel wounds, hand-to-hand combat wounds, forced aircraft bailout injuries, etc.). In addition, it is necessary the wound required or received treatment by medical personnel. Indirect injuries do not meet the criteria for award of the Purple Heart. These include, but are not limited to, injuries received while *seeking shelter* during mortar or rocket attacks, aircraft bombings, grenades, and injuries incurred while serving as an aircrew member or in a passenger status because of the aircraft's evasive measures against hostile fire. For example, if an Airman hits his head causing a laceration while entering the shelter, the laceration is a result of indirect injury as it was not caused by the mortar or rocket attack.

4.1.2. Each request is considered based on the policies and criteria in use at the time the veteran was injured, and the determination is dependent on the documentary evidence presented.

4.2. Each request **MUST** consist of the following: A detailed personal account of the circumstances surrounding the injury to include specifics as to how the injury occurred, exact date of injury, unit of assignment, and rank held at the time of the injury. Additionally:

4.2.1. Medical documentation from the time of the incident to substantiate medical treatment was received.

4.2.1.1. If medical documentation is not available, a statement from a medical officer (military or civilian) attesting that an examination revealed that an injury of the type incurred would or should have received medical treatment at the time of the incident may be submitted.

4.2.1.2. Statements from individuals not substantiated by either medical or official records will not be considered sufficient evidence of wounds. In this respect, entries on Reports of Separation are not considered official. Concerning service-related conditions noted by the Veterans Administration, the injury must have been a direct result of the enemy and meet the Purple Heart criteria. Not all service-connected conditions, as determined by the Veterans Administration, were caused by the enemy.

4.2.2. Eyewitness account from an individual who witnessed the injury and can attest to the circumstances surrounding the personal account.

4.2.2.1. In the event eyewitness account from individuals is unable to be obtained, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide other creditable inputs.

4.3. The board may request input from the AF Historical Research Agency.

5. Board Process.

5.1. Board will consist of two members and a board president/reviewing authority.

5.2. Board President will be a minimum of a O-6/GS-15.

5.3. Board members will be a minimum of O-4/GS-12/E-8 (Enlisted member only when evaluating enlisted) or above.

5.4. Board will be an in-person or virtual board and convene on a monthly basis (if needed).

5.5. Recorder will ensure minutes of board results are typed and maintained (see [attachment 2](#)).

5.6. Board responsibilities:

5.6.1. Review each case on an individual basis to ensure compliance with criteria for award of the Purple Heart Medal/Defense of Freedom Medal.

5.7. Criteria:

5.7.1. Event: Hostile enemy act/while in action in the face of an enemy (includes friendly fire), international terrorist attack, or as a result of military peacekeeping force.

5.7.2. Wound: Injury (magnitude undefined) to any part of the body from an outside force, element, or agent.

5.7.3. Medical Treatment: Documentation by competent, medical authority. Casualty reports are the primary means of documenting entitlements and describe the event, nature of injury, and whether the member was treated and released, hospitalized, or deceased. For

a casualty report, the board must require a signed statement of circumstances (member and witness to collaborate circumstances) and medical documentation from official medical records.

6. Revocation.

6.1. The board will, at their discretion, revoke the Purple Heart/Defense of Freedom Medal which was previously approved if new information is discovered which brings doubt that the actions of the awardee met the established criteria for award of the medal.

6.2. In the event the board revokes the Purple Heart/Defense of Freedom Medal, a notification will be staffed to Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services (AF/A1) thru Air Force Directorate of Military Force Management Policy (AF/A1P), Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council (SAF/MRB) and Air Force Personnel Center Commander (AFPC/CC).

6.2.1. AF/A1P, upon notification, will notify the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) of the board decisions to revoke the Purple Heart/Defense of Freedom Medals.

JEFFERSON J. O'DONNELL
Major General, USAF
Commander

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

DODI 1400.25V451_DAFI36-1004, *Department of the AF Civilian Recognition Program*, 18 December 2023

DAFI 36-2603, *AF Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*, 4 October 2022

DAFI 36-2803, *Military Decorations and Awards Program*, 10 July 2023

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 28 July 2021

Adopted Forms

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

Office Symbols

AF/JA—Air Force Judge Advocate

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFPC/CC—Air Force Personnel Center Commander

AFPC/DPM—Directorate of Personnel Operations

AFPC/DPP—Directorate of Personnel Programs

AFPC/DPPSP—Recognitions Section Department of the Air Force Recognition Programs

AFPC/DPS—Directorate of Personnel Support

AFPC/DPST—Sustainment and Transition Division

AFPC/JA—AFPC, Staff Judge Advocate

SAF/GC—The General Counsel of the Department of the Air Force

SAF/MRB—Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council

SECAF—Secretary of the Air Force

Attachment 2**BOARD PROCEEDINGS (EXAMPLE) PURPLE HEART REVIEW BOARD MINUTES**

PURPOSE: To review and determine if the Purple Heart or Defense of Freedom Medal should be awarded to an Airman for wounds received as a direct result of enemy actions (e.g., gunshot or shrapnel wounds, hand-to-hand combat wounds, forced aircraft bailout injuries, etc.).

BOARD PROCEEDINGS: The Purple Heart Review Board met on XXXXX and the results of the board are as follows:

The board approved the (list which medal, Purple Heart or Defense of Freedom) for the following individual(s) whom the board determined met the criteria:

1Lt Beetle Bailey

The board disapproved the (list which medal, Purple Heart or Defense of Freedom) for the following individual(s) whom the board determined did not meet the criteria:

SSgt Snuffy Smith

Rational for disapproval:

(Typed Name here), Colonel, USAF Date
Board President/Reviewing Authority

(Signature) Date
Recorder