



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE COMMAND
4710 KNOX STREET
FORT BRAGG NC 28310-5010

AFRC-PRA (600-8-22e2)

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Commanding General Policy #26-01: Military Awards Processing

1. Military Awards management is a commander's responsibility. All commanders will ensure their subordinate leaders execute the enclosed policy guidance.
2. Deserving Soldiers will receive formal recognition for their accomplishments. Their personal achievements must fully justify the level of recognition for the recommended award and adhere to the guidelines within Army Regulation 600-8-22. Awards should be timely and presented to the Soldier in a unit formation when possible. Soldiers who retire from the military after a successful career should receive recognition for their meritorious service to the Nation.
3. Exceptions to policy will not be granted for late award submissions to the Headquarters, United States Army Reserve Command (USARC). Commanders will utilize their authority to approve interim awards to properly recognize Soldiers while awaiting adjudication of final award submissions.
4. For additional information, contact the USARC G-1, Personnel Actions Branch, at usarmy.usarc.usarc-hq.list.awards-branch@army.mil.

Encl

ROBERT D. HARTER
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

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U.S. Army Reserve Military Awards Processing Guidance

1. Purpose. This policy guidance provides the standards and procedures to submit, process, and complete military awards for the Army Reserve. This policy directs the timely submission of military awards in compliance with regulatory requirements, ensuring efficient processing and appropriate recognition of deserving Soldiers.

2. References.

- a. Title 10, United States Code, Section 1130, 3 Jan 12.
- b. Army Regulation (AR) 600-8-22, Military Awards, 30 Aug 25.
- c. AR 600-8-2, Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flag), 5 Apr 21.
- d. Army Directive (AD) 2025-07, Standardization of Investigations and Personnel Action Processes, 22 May 25.
- e. Integrated Pay and Personnel System – Army (IPPS-A) User Manual, 6 Mar 26.
- f. Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1348.33, Military Decorations and Awards Programs, 23 Jul 24.

3. Intent. The intent of this policy is to ensure timely submission of United States Army Reserve (USAR) awards that comply with regulatory requirements for efficient processing and presentation to deserving Soldiers. It is essential to maintain the integrity of the military awards program outlined in AR 600-8-22.

4. General Information.

- a. The goal of the USAR military awards program is to produce awards that comply with AR 600-8-22 while tangibly recognizing acts of valor, exceptional service or achievement, and acts of heroism not involving combat, which distinguishes Soldiers from their contemporaries.
- b. This policy does not assume, infer, or otherwise presuppose that Soldiers are entitled to an award merely through their departure from an assignment, supervisor's departure, or for performing the normal duties inherent in their job and/or position of responsibility.
- c. The recommender must have first-hand knowledge of the achievements. If the recommender is not the commanding officer, the commander, if available, must endorse the recommendation. A Soldier may not recommend himself/herself for an award or decoration.

5. Types/Definitions of Awards.

- a. Achievement. An act that is well above the expected performance of duty. The act should be an exceptional accomplishment with a definite beginning and ending date. The length of time is not a primary consideration; however, the speed of accomplishment of an important

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task can be a factor in determining the value of an act and should not exceed 12 months.

b. Service. Service that is distinguished by a succession of outstanding acts or significant achievements over a sustained period. Individual performance must exceed that expected by virtue of grade and experience and be based on accomplishment during an entire tour of duty.

c. Typical service awards include:

(1) Permanent Change of Station (PCS) and Troop Program Unit (TPU) transfer. In most cases, awards for PCS and TPU transfer are for individuals who performed outstanding service in their assignment for a minimum period of 12 months and will change duty location.

(2) Expiration Term of Service (ETS) Awards. Awards for deserving Soldiers of all grades who reach ETS.

(3) Retirement (RET). Each Soldier will receive consideration for an appropriate decoration as they approach retirement (to include medical retirement) based on their years of service, scope of responsibility, and manner of performance.

(a) Retirement award may span the full length of the Soldier's career. It is permissible to reference the Soldier's overall contributions and achievements from prior assignments or duty periods; however, specific accomplishments previously recognized through earlier awards should not be stated in detail or quantified with metrics. Instead, such references should be general in nature and serve to provide overarching recognition of the Soldiers, career-long service, and dedication to the Army.

(b) A Soldier is only authorized one retirement award.

d. Heroism or Humane Action. It is imperative to process recommendations immediately to ensure timely recognition and to preclude the possibility of diminishing valorous acts through administrative and processing delays.

6. Responsibilities.

a. Commanders, Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs):

(1) The military awards program is ultimately a command responsibility. All commanders will ensure their leaders are familiar with their command's internal awards processing and the guidelines set forth in this policy through the oversight of their respective G-1/S-1(s).

(2) Commanders must ensure approval and endorsement of appropriate level of awards to the next level of command, as applicable. Do not base awards solely on the grade of the intended recipient. The award should reflect both the Soldier's scope of responsibility and manner of performance.

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(3) Commanders will have a plan to ensure timely submission of all awards. Leaders will establish a process to identify Soldiers departing on PCS, TPU transfer, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) transfer, ETS, or retirement orders. Submit awards well in advance to facilitate maximum opportunity for Soldiers to receive their award in-person prior to departure from the unit.

b. Subordinate G-1/S-1 and Army Reserve Administrators:

(1) Ensure leaders are familiar with the procedures and requirements of this policy.

(2) Develop and execute internal awards policies and standard operating procedures incorporating the applicable procedures and requirements of this policy.

c. USARC G-1 Military Awards Branch:

(1) Establish procedures for military award submissions for all subordinate commands and provide administrative overview and guidance regarding the processing of military award submissions.

(2) Review and process award submissions and ensure adherence to regulatory requirements including proper routing for either approval or endorsement. The internal routing process will action awards on a first-in, first-out basis.

(3) Monitor and track awards submitted from all entities to higher headquarters for review and approval.

(4) Return awards for correction if errors exist or if required documentation is missing.

d. OCAR/USARC Staff:

(1) Directorates and staff personnel will adhere to all requirements and procedures set forth within this policy.

(2) HHD/HHC will add the workflow once the Award PAR is submitted, depending on the Soldier's directorate.

(3) Directors will endorse/sign all award recommendations.

7. Approval Authorities.

a. In accordance with (IAW) AR 600-8-22, paragraph 3-6b, all approval authorities must be a General Officer (GO), a commander, or person serving as an HQDA principal official in accordance with table 3-3. Commanding generals may delegate peacetime awards approval authority, in writing, to their Deputy Commanding Generals (DCG) commensurate with the

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DCG's rank. DCGs are further defined as an Army officer in the grade of BG/O-7 (including COL/O-6 promotable (P) in a GO billet) and above. IAW AR 600-8-22, paragraph 3-6, authority to award decorations is automatically delegated as shown in AR 600-8-22, Table 3-3.

(1) Table of Approval Authority.

Award Approval Authority AR 600-8-22 updates effective 30 AUG 2025						
APPROVER	DSM	LM (PCS, ACH, SVC)	LM (RET, POST)	MSM	ARCOM	AAM
Chief of Staff (CSA)	CSA	CSA	CSA	CSA	CSA	CSA
General (GEN/O-10)	N/A	ALL O-10s	ALL O-10s	ALL O-10s	ALL O-10s	ALL O-10s
Lieutenant General (LTG/O-9)	N/A	ALL O-9s	ALL O-9s	ALL O-9s	ALL O-9s	ALL O-9s
Major General (MG/O-8)	N/A	N/A	Only O-8s in CMD	ALL O-8s	ALL O-8s	ALL O-8s
Brigadier General (BG/O-7)	N/A	N/A	N/A	ALL O-7s	ALL O-7s	ALL O-7s
Colonel (COL/O-6) in CMD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	O-6 in CMD	O-6 in CMD
Lieutenant Colonel (LTC/O-5) in CMD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	O-5 in CMD

****Note**** All General Officer awards process through HRC

(2) Downgrade authority for the Legion of Merit (LM) is further delegated for approval of a lesser award to HQ OCAR DCAR, HQ USARC DCG, and MSC Commanders.

(3) In instances where the incumbent commander is not available to act on recommendations (for example, hospitalization, extended TDY, or leave), the acting commander, regardless of rank, may take final action, provided their assumption of command has been officially documented. In such cases, the acting commander will sign documents using the title "Acting Commander." A copy of the assumption of command orders must be filed with the DA Form 638 or attached to the award's Personnel Action Request (PAR) when processed in Integrated Pay and Personnel System- Army (IPPS-A), whichever applies.

(4) Authority is extended to include those individuals occupying vacant command positions of approval authorities listed in AR 600-8-22, Table 3-3, regardless of rank. For example, an LTC/O-5 assigned on orders as a brigade commander (an authorized COL/O-6 position) is authorized to act on recommendations for award of the ARCOM.

(5) In the case of mobilization, rear detachment commanders are not authorized awards approval authority if the command is forward deployed. In this situation, award recommendations will be forwarded to the next higher peacetime command awards approval authority.

b. Legion of Merit Awards Boards.

(1) Legion of Merit recommendations will be reviewed by a formal awards board at the GO command level before being forwarded to the approval authority. This board should consist of senior officers and NCOs (colonels, sergeants major, and command sergeants major serving at the brigade level or higher) to ensure a comprehensive and experienced review.

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(2) The board will document how the LM recommendation meets, or fails to meet, the criteria for Servicemembers of the U.S. Army IAW AR 600-8-22, paragraph 3-13c.

(a) The performance must have been such as to merit recognition of key individuals for service rendered in a clearly exceptional manner. Performance of duties normal to the grade, branch, specialty, assignment, or experience of an individual is not an adequate basis for this award.

(b) For service not related to actual war, the term “key individuals” applies to a narrower range of positions than in time of war, which requires evidence of significant achievement. In peacetime, service should be in the nature of a special requirement or of an extremely difficult duty performed in an unprecedented and clearly exceptional manner. However, justification of the award may accrue by virtue of exceptionally meritorious service in a succession of important positions.

(3) The board’s outcomes must be documented and maintained for future review and inspections. The use of these boards should not add additional processing time that violates processing timeline guidance. This process will ensure the nomination packet is complete and that the narrative justification meets the stringent criteria outlined in AR 600-8-22, paragraph 3-13.

c. The Chief of Staff, Army (CSA), is the approval authority for the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM). Army GOs with LM approval authority are delegated downgrade authority for DSM recommendations for COL/O-6 and below IAW AR 600-8-22 paragraph 3-6h.

d. All GO awards, regardless of recommended award, process through Army Human Resources Command (HRC).

e. Each intermediate commander will recommend either approval, downgrade, or disapproval.

8. Military Award Submission Timelines. Award recommendations forwarded to USARC G-1 for processing must arrive error free, with all required supporting documents, and IAW the following minimum number of days prior to the end period of the award (DA Form 638, Block 11b) and IPPS-A PAR Award Recommendation.

a. MSM and below (all ranks): A minimum of **60 days** prior to the end period of the award.

b. LM (COL(P) and below): A minimum of **75 days** prior to the end period of the award.

c. LM (GOs): A minimum of **120 days** prior to the end period of the award. Retiring GOs cannot receive interim awards. Units must plan accordingly. MSCs must properly plan and submit departing GO awards in a timely manner.

d. DSM and higher (all ranks): A minimum of **120 days** prior to the end period of award.

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9. Late Awards.

a. Award recommendations for GOs, DSMs, and Soldier's Medals that fail to meet the military award submission timelines require a detailed memorandum. The subject line will reflect "Letter of Lateness" and will address the following:

- (1) Why is the award late.
- (2) Who is responsible for the late award submission.
- (3) What control measures are in place to prevent future, late submissions.
- (4) Who is the point of contact for that information.

b. MSC Commanders, Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Commanders, or Executive Officers will endorse the memorandum. No further delegation to subordinate commanders or staff officers is authorized.

c. There is no requirement for a letter of lateness for all other awards.

10. Returned Awards. MSCs have no more than 30 days to take corrective action, otherwise the award will be canceled. Resubmit the award into IPPS-A or the Electronic Personnel Action Tracker (ePAT), and route to the USARC G-1 Awards Branch IPPS-A User Defined List (UDL) or ePAT (if applicable). If the Soldier is no longer assigned to the recommended UIC in IPPS-A, the award will be re-submitted in ePAT. This applies only to IPPS-A returned awards.

11. Time Limitation. Each recommendation for award of a military decoration, except those outlined in AR 600-8-22, para 1-14; Purple Heart, Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, and Distinguished Service Medal, must enter administratively into military channels within two years of the act, achievement, or service. Submission into military channels is defined as the date the award is signed by the initiating official (the recommender) and endorsed by a higher official in the chain of command.

12. Processing DA Form 638 or IPPS-A Recommendation for Award PAR, IAW AR 600-8-22, paragraph 3-21 (all OCAR/USARC.

a. IPPS-A is the primary Human Resource (HR) system of record for awards and awards should be submitted in IPPS-A. Here are the only reasons why an award will be submitted in ePAT: already retired, re-assigned to new unit, posthumous, interim award, individual foreign awards, unit awards, and retroactive awards. If an award that is submitted in ePAT doesn't fall under one of these reasons, it will be returned for submission through IPPS-A.

b. For Wartime Awards (e.g., Purple Heart (PH), Combat Action Badge), refer to the Human Resources Command (HRC) Awards and Decorations Branch website for processing information: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/WARTIME%20Individual%20Award%20Info>.

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c. When submitting awards into official military channels, digitally sign all award recommendations utilizing the fillable version of the DA Form 638 located on the Army Publishing Directorate's website at <http://www.apd.army.mil>. Scanned copies of the DA Form 638 are not acceptable; lost award recommendations and award recommendations outside of the two-year period are the only exceptions to this requirement.

d. The DA Form 638, block 1 (TO Addresses):

The address for Soldiers recommended for DSM and Wartime (Retroactive):
U.S. Army Human Resources Command Fort Knox, KY 40122
The address for all General Officer award recommendations, LM and below:
U.S. Army Human Resources Command Fort Knox, KY 40122

e. Recommenders will verify administrative data and previous awards with unit S-1s.

f. Unit HR professionals/S-1s are responsible for ensuring all administrative data is correct, verifying Soldiers are not flagged, and ensuring awards are error-free.

g. Limit the narrative description of service or achievement for awards of the MSM, ARCOM, and AAM to the space allowed on the DA Form 638 and PAR Award text box.

h. Type the LM narrative and proposed citation on the Narrative/Citation page provided in DA Form 638 by selecting the enclosure feature on the DA Form 638, or if in IPPS-A, use the narrative block and make sure to keep narrative within 878 words. If the narrative in IPPS-A is more than 878 words, it will need to be shortened to meet the 878-word requirement in IPPS-A, as separate Word document or PDF documents for the LM are not authorized. A separate document can only be used for DSM award narratives with a maximum of two pages. Narratives for Retirement Awards will not duplicate award narratives and citations for previously approved awards submitted to the Soldier's Army Human Resource Record. Additionally, the narrative and citation will not mention any achievement or accomplishment from previous approved awards.

i. Forward all award recommendations through command channels to the designated commander authorized to approve or disapprove the award.

j. Complete military award packets requiring USARC approval or endorsement will be routed to the USARC G-1, PAB through the Reserve Component Manpower System (RCMS), ePAT module using action type Z-5-A-XX. For Active Component (AC) Soldiers assigned to Army Reserve units, email the complete award elements to the USARC G-1 Team mailbox. Award recommendations for USAR Soldiers emailed to the team members will not be actioned.

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For AC recommendations, the subject of email will include the component, level of award, Soldier rank, Soldier name, and MSC (e.g., AC, LM, COL DOE JOHN, 377th TSC).

k. USARC G-1, PAB will process awards in the order received. Awards that arrive at the USARC outside of the submission timelines will not receive priority.

13. Required documents. An award packet submission consists of the following documents. These documents are applicable to both USARC staff and all other USARC submissions.

- a. DA Form 638 (when applicable).
- b. Soldier Talent Profile (STP) for verification of previous awards and previous assignment data as indicated in narrative awards when applicable.
- c. Army Fitness Test (AFT) data from the STP will be used to validate the Soldier's AFT date. For Active Guard and Reserve, the AFT must be within six months of award submission date and for TPU within 12 months of award submission date. If a Soldier's current AFT is not updated in IPPS-A, a hardcopy of DA 705 or screen shot from ATIS or RCMS must be submitted.
- d. If a Soldier's AFT date is outside of the award timeframe, a memorandum for record signed by the first O-6 in the Soldier's chain of command explaining why the Soldier did not take one during the award time is required.
- e. AFT and height/weight date need to be on different dates and are not authorized to be on the same date IAW ATP 7-22.01 and AR 600-9.
- f. IAW AR 600-9, paragraph 3-2, height/weight screening must be within six months of the submission date, unless the Soldier is exempt from height/weight testing.
- g. DA Form 5500/5501 will only be required if Soldier exceeds the height/weight standards of AR 600-9.
- h. An approved waiver of any flag (excluding HQDA initiated flags) may be requested for Soldiers flagged under AR 600-8-2. In accordance with AD 2025-07, a commander with at least Special Court-Martial Convening Authority (usually a brigade/garrison commander) may override the prohibition on receiving an award except in a case that involves an investigation of a Soldier who is the subject of a "covered offense" as defined in AR 27-10.
- i. Letter of Lateness as outlined in paragraph 9a.
- j. Exception to Policy will be required for missing documents and signed by the first GO in the Soldier's chain of command.

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14. Required Reports.

a. Purple Heart Report. All commands will report the following. Reports are due to USARC G-1, PAB no later than the 10th of each month to: usarmy.usarc.usarc-hq.list.awards-branch@army.mil.

b. Purple Hearts reports will include:

(1) PH concussion related injury award recommendations endorsed by the chain of command for approval (submitted to HRC for further processing).

(2) Disapproved PH concussion related award recommendations.

(3) PH award recommendations returned without action.

15. Quarterly Awards Report. All commands, including HQs OCAR/USARC, will prepare a DA Form 4612 (Number and Type of Decorations Approved) of approved awards each quarter, dividing each award by grade of recipient and indicate whether the award is for retirement, service, or achievement. The report is due to USARC G-1, PAB quarterly at usarmy.usarc.usarc-hq.list.awards-branch@army.mil.

16. Templates. Checklists and example documents are located on the USARC G-1, PAB website at <https://armyeitaas.sharepoint-mil.us/teams/usar-g1-pag/Lists/ActionsList/AppxDCategoryAwards.aspx>.

17. Points of Contact. For additional information, contact USARC G-1, Personnel Actions Branch, at usarmy.usarc.usarc-hq.list.awards-branch@army.mil.