

Australian Defence Medal Frequently Asked Questions

Q - Who is eligible to apply for the Australian Defence Medal?

A - This medal seeks to recognise the service of members of the Australian Defence Force, past and present, who have made a commitment to our nation's security.

Accordingly, the Australian Defence Medal will be awarded to Regular, Reserve Force members who have completed their initial enlistment period or four years service, whichever was the lesser, since World War II with service backdated from 3 September, 1945. This time frame reflects the Government's commitment to recognising the significance of serving our nation.

Many people serve their country and do so with conviction and devotion, whether they serve in an operational arena or not. Especially during these days of the War on Terror, the 'front line' is difficult to define, as many tasks undertaken are invisible to the wider community, and thus cannot be recognised by a specific award.

Eligibility for the medal extends to those personnel who:

- die in service; or
- have been discharged medically unfit due to a compensable impairment, thus rendering them unable to serve the required four years; or
- were discharged due to some Defence workplace and enlistment policies of the time (as determined by the Chief of the Defence Force), and were unable to serve the required four years.

Q - How far back will the medal be backdated for eligibility?

A - The time frame for eligibility for the ADM will be backdated until the end of World War Two (3 September 1945). Any four years service completed between then and now will be considered eligible service. The ADM will also be awarded posthumously to the families of eligible deceased members.

Q - How many people will be eligible to apply?

A - It is estimated that approximately 1 000 000 current and ex-serving members will be eligible to apply for the ADM.

Q - How do I apply?

Applications are now being invited from eligible personnel. These should be made direct to the Department of Defence, Directorate of Honours and Awards or through an applicant's Federal Member of Parliament or Senator.

Application forms for the ADM are available from the Defence website at http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe_site/honours_awards/ and from the RSL.

It is important that applicants provide proof of service with their application. This can include a certified true copy (no originals please) of their Certificate of Service or

Discharge Certificate or any other official documents which confirm the length of their service. Providing these documents will greatly speed up the assessment process for the medal. Failure to supply these documents will not stop the process however will result in significant delays.

Individuals who have already applied and whose applications have been acknowledged do not need to reapply.

Current serving full-time members will be assessed automatically in line with the new process for assessing long service awards through PMKeys. However, as it cannot capture all members, some permanent members will need to apply. Reserve members, who have previously been awarded a long service award for fifteen or more years service will still need to apply, however, their eligibility will be determined without further delay.

Q - How do I apply as Next of Kin?

A - An application form can be downloaded from the Defence website at http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe_site/honours_awards/. A Statutory Declaration must be completed by the Executor of the will, the Administrator in case of intestacy, or a person who can provide legal status as sole beneficiary to this claim.

If the member's service is assessed as eligible, you may receive the medal through the post via Registered Mail. You may also elect to have the member's service recognised at a biannual presentation arranged by Defence in your region.

Q - When will the medal be available?

A - The ADM has only recently been approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. It is anticipated that the first medals will be awarded mid-2006.

Q- How will I receive the medal?

A - The application form includes an invitation for ex-serving members to participate in a formal presentation ceremony organised by Defence. These will occur regionally on a biannual basis. The appropriate involvement of a senior military officer and federal parliamentarian will be sought for these events. You may also elect to receive the medal through the post by Registered Mail.

Q - Are National Servicemen eligible to receive the medal?

A - Yes. The revised criteria are now extended to include National servicemen. The completion of their National Service obligation will be considered as completion of an initial enlistment period of service.

Q - What do the colours of the ADM ribbon represent?

A - The black and red colour of the Flanders poppy represents the Anzac spirit of the Australian Defence Force. The white stripes divide the red into three, denoting the three Services. The white stripes also denote service in the peace of Australia.