



GEORGIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, LAND COMPONENT
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NGGA-CG

8 October 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Commanding General Peacetime Awards Philosophy

1. References:

- a. AR 600-8-22 (*Military Awards*), 19 February 2024.
- b. AR 672-20 (*Incentive Awards*), Administrative Revision 6 March 2025.
- c. CNGBI 1400.25, Vol 451 (*National Guard Technician Incentive Awards Program*), 5 October 2018.
- d. GADODR 600-1 (*The Georgia Military Awards Program: Decorations, Service Medals and Ribbons, and Other Awards and Recognition*), 5 January 2022.
- e. GADOD Pam 600-1-1 (*Visual Guide to the Georgia Military Awards Program: For Manufacture and Wear*), 5 January 2022.

2. The awards program recognizes meritorious service, action, or achievement as a commander's responsibility. Leaders will submit deserving Soldiers for all earned and authorized awards. Award nominations will be based solely on the merit of accomplishments or service, not position or rank. While communicating this philosophy will help focus submissions on truly deserving individuals, I remain committed to ensuring all members of this organization receive appropriate recognition. The program fosters mission accomplishment by acknowledging excellence in both military and civilian personnel, motivating continued high performance and dedicated service.

3. Award submissions are not a requirement for every Soldier who transfers to a new duty position or new unit, including permanent change of station (PCS) moves for full-time support (FTS) staff, nor for every Soldier who separates without retiring. However, these transitions provide commanders and supervisors an opportunity to recognize the contributions of Soldiers and civilians in their charge.

a. When considering the appropriate recognition for departing Soldiers, commanders and supervisors will consider the length of service performed combined with the scope of responsibility during their period of service.

4. When considering the appropriate recognition for Soldiers who are transferring or retiring, commanders and supervisors will take the following guidelines into consideration:

a. The Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM) or Georgia Commendation Medal (GACOM) serve as the foundational recognition for exceptional performance. The Meritorious Service

Medal (MSM) or Georgia Meritorious Service Medal (GA MSM) should be reserved for individuals whose achievements demonstrably exceed ARCOM/GACOM standards. Recommendations for the Legion of Merit (LM), Oglethorpe Distinguished Service Medal (ODSM), or Army Achievement Medal (AAM) are generally not appropriate at this level.

b. The Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) or Georgia Meritorious Service Medal (GA MSM) serves as the foundational recognition for sustained exceptional performance in positions of responsibility over large formations. Recommendations for the Legion of Merit (LM) or Oglethorpe Distinguished Service Medal (ODSM) should be reserved for 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. Award of the LM and ODSM require a clear record of substantial impact on the organization at the statewide or strategic level; these awards will not be considered except in the most deserving cases.

5. Impact/Achievement Awards.

a. Commanders will ensure their subordinates submit appropriate award recommendations for Soldiers in their organization who perform a meritorious act or achievement. Timeliness is important. The closer the award presentation date is to the meritorious act or achievement, the greater the impact of that award on the recipient.

b. The ARCOM, the GACOM, AAM and the GAAAM are often the most appropriate impact/achievement awards at all levels.

6. Retirement Awards. Commanders will ensure that all retiring Soldiers and their spouses receive appropriate retirement recognition from our organization, and must be prepared to explain, in writing, why they will not recommend a retiring Soldier for recognition.

7. Posthumous Awards.

a. Guidelines for posthumous awards are consistent with those for retirement awards. Commanders and supervisors will consider the totality of the Soldier's service when preparing award recommendations.

b. The loss of a Soldier to suicide is a tragedy with profound effects on their Family and friends. MSC Commanders may approve posthumous awards in accordance with established guidance and regulations.

8. National Guard Civilians and Technicians. Commanders and supervisors will recognize meritorious service and achievement of their assigned NG Civilians, dual-status military technicians, and non-dual-status technicians, not on military orders, through the incentive and awards programs outlined in the references above.

9. Contractor Employees. Contractor employees are not authorized individual military decorations in the performance of their duty under contract with Federal or state governments. The one exception is the Georgia Medal for Heroism; see reference d, appendix h. Each Contracting Officer's Representative is encouraged to recommend awards and incentives through the contractor for contractor employees who have demonstrated superior performance. See reference d, chapter 3 for additional ways to recognize contractor employees.

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10. Spouses. Commanders and supervisors will recognize the spouses of Soldiers at retirement ceremonies and are encouraged to consider award of the GACOM. For those spouses who have rendered distinguished service that made an impact at a statewide level, commanders and supervisors may consider recommending the Order of the Cherokee Rose Award (OCRA).

11. Retirement recognition is appropriate for all Soldiers, regardless of their career path. All retirement award recommendations will be reviewed and approved by me. Commanders and supervisors are encouraged to consider the MSM or GMSM as a suitable award for these occasions. While the ARCOM may be presented for routine performance, it is generally not appropriate as a primary retirement award.

12. I have designed the guidance outlined above to be applicable to both M-Day Soldiers and FTS staff, and to shape the options available to commanders and supervisors so they can make informed decisions. Neither rank, nor duty position, nor duty status alone determines the most appropriate award for a team member's meritorious service, action, or achievement.

13. The point of contact for this memorandum is COL Matt Johnston, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, at (678) 569-5535 or stephen.m.johnston.mil@army.mil.



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