**Honours, Decorations and Medals – The NATO Meritorious Service Medal**

**Introduction**

1. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) established the NATO Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) in 2002 to recognise exceptional or remarkable service in the interests of the Alliance by military and civilian personnel. The award of this medal lies outside the conditions for the award of NATO medals established specifically for campaigns and operations.

2. In 2012, Her Late Majesty The Queen gave approval for members of the UK Armed Forces and MOD Civilians, awarded the NATO MSM for meritorious operational service in a recognised operational theatre, to accept and wear the medal (2012DIN09-012 refers).

3. His Majesty The King has now been graciously pleased to approve, with immediate effect, that members of the UK Armed Forces, and MOD Civilians, awarded the NATO MSM for any type of meritorious service since 2002 may now wear the award.

**Eligibility**

4. The NATO MSM may be awarded to military and civilian personnel serving permanently or temporarily under NATO Command or control in recognition of exceptional or remarkable service to the Alliance. The UK eligibility is:

1. Awards for all types of service; and,
2. Those not in receipt of a UK State Level award for substantially the same period of service.

**Qualifying Criteria**

5. UK personnel must be commended personally by either the operational Theatre Commander or the Head of NATO Body for their meritorious service in one or more of the following categories:

1. Performing acts of courage in difficult or dangerous circumstances.
2. Showing exceptional leadership or personal example.
3. Making an outstanding individual contribution to any activity or programme.
4. Enduring particular hardship or deprivation in the interest of NATO.

6. A specified period of service is not required either as qualifying service or for the posthumous award of the NATO MSM to personnel killed, presumed killed or repatriated consequent to wounding or serious injury while on assignment.

**Multiple Awards**

7. Individuals may not be awarded more than one honour or medal in recognition of the same period of service. There is, however, no limit to the number of times an individual may be awarded the NATO MSM. In all instances, if the recipient has received national recognition for the same period of service, approval to ‘accept’ but not permission to ‘wear’ will be granted in order to prevent double medalling.

8. Multiple awards approved for wear will be recognised by the use of an Arabic numeral on the medal ribbon and the tunic ribbon. The award of the NATO MSM may be made conjointly with a UK or NATO campaign medal if the qualifying conditions for such an award have been met.

**Implementation**

9. The award of the NATO MSM can only be approved by the Secretary General. Certificates signed by the Secretary General will be produced to accompany all medals awarded in accordance with these regulations. The responsibility to ensure that nominations meet the eligibility criteria for the NATO MSM is delegated to the Theatre Commanders, Strategic Commanders and those Heads of NATO Bodies who submit nominations. The responsibility to ensure that nominations meet the UK rules and agreed qualifying eligibility criteria is delegated to the Defence Services Secretary (DS Sec).

10. DS Sec is the authority for confirming UK permission to wear the medal for all awards made from the date of this DIN. The twice-yearly NATO list of UK MSM recipients will be submitted to DS Sec who will, in conjunction with MS Honours and the single Services, review the list to ensure that an individual is not being nominated for a UK State award, on the half-yearly list (including operational awards), for the same period of service for which the NATO MSM is being awarded. In those cases, where an individual is to receive a UK State award for the same period of service, the national award will take precedence and permission to wear the NATO MSM will not be granted. Recipients will not be informed by DS Sec until after the UK award has been published.

11. Recipients of the NATO MSM from 2002 who meet the criteria of paragraph 4.b. should request their Unit admin office to update their JPA record to show the medal has unrestricted permission to wear. The JPA records of those who do not meet the criteria of paragraph 4.b must record the medal as a keepsake only. All recipients of the NATO MSM from the date of this DIN should request that their JPA record is updated by their Unit admin office to reflect the award of the medal, and when confirmed, that permission to wear has been given.

12. The list of those awards approved for wear will be formally announced in the London Gazette.

13. **Medal Certificate**. A certificate will be provided for each NATO medal awarded. The certificate is bordered by the flags of all Alliance nations and signed by the Secretary General.

14. **Miniatures**. A miniature replica of the medal is presented with the medal for formal dinner dress.

**Order of Wear**

15. The NATO MSM is to be mounted after efficiency and long service decoration and medals and Commonwealth Orders alongside other Foreign Orders, Decorations and Medals in date order of award.

16. Recipients should wait to mount their NATO MSM until permission to wear has been confirmed.