



National Defense Service Medal Wear

Article by: Rudi Williams ~ American Forces Press Service

05/02/02 - WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- All service members, including Coast Guardsmen, who were on active duty on or after Sept. 11, are eligible to wear the National Defense Service Medal, defense officials announced May 1.

"The sacrifices and contributions made by the armed forces in direct response to the terrorism attacks on the United States and to the long-term resolution of terrorism merit special recognition," said Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.

Members of the National Guard and Reserve may also be awarded the medal if they were on federal active duty on or after Sept. 11. Exceptions are if they were on active duty for training, on short tours of active duty to serve on boards, courts, commissions and the like, or on active duty solely to get a physical exam.

Service members previously have worn the National Defense Service Medal for duty in three distinct periods, starting with the Korean War era, defined as June 27, 1950, to July 27, 1954.

Executive Order 11265 authorized the secretary of defense to establish periods of eligibility after Dec. 31, 1960. The second period of eligibility was a loosely termed "Vietnam War era" of Jan. 1, 1961, to Aug. 14, 1974.

The medal was again authorized by a memorandum from the secretary of defense dated Feb. 20, 1991, for active service on or after Aug. 2, 1990 -- the beginning of Operation Desert Shield. The termination date was later set as Nov. 30, 1995.

No closing date has been established for this newest period. Eligible service members can receive and wear the award immediately. Those already awarded the medal for an earlier period will receive a bronze service star device to attach to the ribbon.

Established by President Eisenhower on April 22, 1953, the National Defense Service Medal indicates military service during a time of war or conflict regardless of the service member's station of duty.

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