



COMMANDER'S CALL TOPICS

NOTE: This product has embedded hyperlinks and is best viewed online.

26—30 June 2017

Priority Topic of the Week

Valor, Combat and Remote Devices

Why new devices and criteria

- Following a comprehensive Military Decorations and Awards Review in 2015, the Secretary of Defense implemented several changes to ensure the Department of Defense's (DOD) military decoration and awards program continues to appropriately recognize the service, sacrifices and actions of all service members.
- As the impact of remote operations on combat increases, it has become important to recognize those actions. To meet this need, the Secretary of Defense modified requirements of the existing Valor "V" device and created two new devices—Combat "C" and Remote "R."
- These devices provide a clearly visible way to recognize the dedication and professionalism of our Airmen in the remotely piloted aircraft, cyber, space or Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance career fields.
- The Air Force recognizes Airmen for their outstanding performance and this recognition is not given lightly.
- The Combat "C" and Remote "R" devices may be awarded retroactively to Jan. 7, 2016, the day the Secretary of Defense established the devices.

Devices and their criteria

- The "V" device is worn on decorations to denote valor, an act or acts of heroism while engaged in direct combat.
- The "C" device designates an award was earned for exceptionally meritorious service or achievement performed under combat conditions. To further emphasize the value placed on meritorious service under combat conditions, the "C" device may be affixed to several performance awards earned while serving under combat conditions. Unlike the "R" device, the "C" device may be authorized for sustained performance or service, provided the criteria of personal exposure to hostile action or significant risk of hostile action are met.
- The "R" device, which may be affixed to non-combat performance awards, was established to show an award was earned for direct hands-on employment of a weapon system that had a direct and immediate impact on a combat or military operation. It also appropriately recognizes the special challenges these Airmen faced while professionally executing those remote missions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1. How will the Air Force recognize combat participation?

A.1. Each Military Service will continue to maintain separate authority to recognize combat participation through the use of the Combat Action Medal, Combat Action Ribbon or Combat Action Badge based on service cultures and historical legacies.

Q.2. Who is eligible for the "R" device?

A.2. The "R" device may be awarded to Airmen who, during the period of the act, served in the remotely piloted aircraft, cyber, space or Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance career fields.

See more frequently asked questions on page 2.

Valor, Combat and Remote Devices (Con't)

Q.3. Do all RPA operators qualify for the “R” device?

A.3. The “R” device is only authorized on individual military decorations awarded for specific meritorious achievement. The “R” device is not authorized on medals awarded for sustained meritorious service (e.g., end-of-tour or retirement decorations).

Q.4. May I wear all three devices together?

A.4. Yes. They will be worn in order of precedence (“V,” “C” and then “R”) from the wearer’s right of the oak leaf clusters.

Q.5. What is “direct impact?”

A.5. Direct impact is defined as “hands-on” employment of a weapon system having direct, immediate and on-site effects to the outcome of an engagement or other operation having an effect on a designated target.

Q.6. Why did we need a Combat “C” device when we already have a Valor “V” device?

A.6. It is important Airmen receive appropriate recognition for qualifying meritorious service or achievement performed under combat conditions. Although such performance does not rise to the level of valor, it deserves to be distinguished from performance in peacetime or other situations where they are not directly exposed to hostile action or the significant risk of hostile action. To make personal recognition of meritorious service in combat appropriately distinctive and to ensure the heritage and legacy of combat medals, DOD established a common definition of “Meritorious Service Under Combat Conditions” to determine eligibility for specific combat awards. The definition will encompass meritorious service while personally exposed to hostile action or while under significant risk of hostile action.

Q.7. How do active duty veterans receive their awards?

A.7. Write to: Headquarters Air Force Personnel Center, AFPC/DP1SP, 550 C Street West, Suite 12, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4714.

Q.8. How do Guard and Reserve veterans receive their awards?

A.8. Write to: Air Reserve Personnel Center, HQ ARPC/DPTSAE, 18420 E Silver Creek Ave, Bldg. 390 MS 68, Buckley AFB, CO 80011.

See [AF.MIL](http://www.af.mil) for more information.

Personnel Topics of Interest

- Application window opens for Air Force undergraduate flying training ([AFPC](http://www.afpc.af.mil))
- Blended Retirement System Calculator now available ([AF.MIL](http://www.af.mil))
- 2018 Health Profession Education Program call for candidates available ([AFPC](http://www.afpc.af.mil))

Other Topics of Interest

- Connection saves lives: Be there to help prevent suicide ([AF.MIL](http://www.af.mil))

July Observances

- Independence Day ([SAF/PA](http://www.af.mil))

Commander’s Call Topic Archive: <http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/CommandersCallTopics.aspx>

Commander’s Call Topics is published weekly by SAF/PA to ensure leaders at all levels remain current on issues concerning Airmen and families. Requests for information to be included in future editions should be sent to SAF/PAX via [email](mailto:saftpax@af.mil).

Submissions should include:

- 1) 1-2 sentence synopsis of the issue
- 2) hyperlink to further details
- 3) a POC name and contact information.

*Only submissions pertaining to the majority of Airmen or specifically to command leadership teams will be considered. Local or limited-interest items will not be included.