

FACT SHEET

VICTORIA CROSS FOR AUSTRALIA

The Victoria Cross (VC) was instituted in 1856 as a decoration to recognise gallantry in action by all ranks of the services. The VC was retained after the instigation of the Australian honours and awards system and is the pre-eminent gallantry award in the Australian system. The VC for Australia was approved on 15 January 1991.

The VC is awarded for the most conspicuous gallantry, or a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the face of the enemy.

The award of a VC is personally approved by HM The King on recommendation of an instrument signed by the Governor General and Prime Minister. VC awards are processed as immediate awards outside of the half-yearly Honours Lists.

Medal Design: The Victoria Cross for Australia is identical to the original. It is a bronze cross with the obverse having a Crowned Lion standing on the Royal Crown with the words 'FOR VALOUR' inscribed on a semicircular scroll below the Crown. The reverse has the date of the act for which the Cross is awarded engraved within a circle in the centre. The Cross is suspended by a ring from a seriffed 'V' attached to a suspension bar decorated with laurel leaves.

Insignia ribbon: The ribbon is crimson and 38 millimetres wide. When the ribbon is worn alone a ribbon bar emblem in the form of a replica of the Cross is worn on the ribbon.

Post nominal: Recipients are entitled to the post-nominal letters 'VC'. Recipients of a bar add 'and Bar' to the post-nominal.

The VC is the highest gallantry award.

- Next lower level of award: N/A. Consider Star for Gallantry (SG)



IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS/INFORMATION

Definitions: The following definitions are not defined in policy, but are recommended for consideration:

- Gallantry: exceptional courage or courageous endurance above expectations while in action.
- Valour: great bravery, especially in battle.
- Pre-eminent: surpassing all others; very distinguished in some way.

Eligibility: Persons eligible to be awarded Distinguished Service Decorations are:

- members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).
- other persons determined by the Minister.

Further award. A further award is denoted by a bronze bar.



Quotas: Quotas do not apply.

REGULATIONS

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette

No. S 25, Monday, 4 February 1991



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Elizabeth II', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God Queen of Australia and Her Other Realms and Territories,
Head of the Commonwealth:

TO ALL to whom these Presents shall come,

GREETING.

KNOW YOU that it is Our will and pleasure that the Victoria Cross for Australia be the highest decoration for according recognition to persons who, in the presence of the enemy, perform acts of the most conspicuous gallantry, or daring or pre-eminent acts of valour or self-sacrifice or display extreme devotion to duty:

AND WE DO ordain that the award of the Victoria Cross shall be governed by the Regulations set out in the Schedule.

IN WITNESS whereof We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent.

GIVEN under the Great Seal
of Australia at Our Court at
St James's on 15 January
1991

A circular mark containing the letters 'L.S.' in a serif font, likely representing the Latin phrase 'Locus Signatus'.

By Her Majesty's Command.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Bob Hawke'.

Prime Minister

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SCHEDULE

VICTORIA CROSS REGULATIONS

Short title

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Victoria Cross Regulations.

Interpretation

2. In the Regulations –
“decoration” means –
 - (a) the Victoria Cross: or
 - (b) a bar to the Victoria Cross:“Defence Force” has the same meaning as In the Defence Act 1903:
“Minister” means the Minister of State for Defence.

Conditions for award of the decoration

3. The decoration shall only be awarded for the most conspicuous gallantry, or a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy.
4. Each decoration may be awarded posthumously
5. The persons to whom the decoration may be awarded are-
 - (a) members of the Defence Force: and
 - (b) other persons determined by the Minister or the purposes of this regulation.
6. Any subsequent award of the Victoria Cross to the same person shall be made in the form of a bar to the Cross.

Making of awards

7. Awards of the decoration shall be made, with the approval of the Sovereign, by instrument signed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Minister.

Designations

8. (1) A person to whom the Victoria Cross has been awarded is entitled to have the letter “VC” placed after the person's name on all occasions when the use of such letters is customary.

(2) Where a person has been awarded a bar to the Victoria Cross, the person is entitled to have placed after the letter prescribed by sub-regulation (1) the words “and Bar” or the words “and Bars”, as the case may be.

Design of the decoration

9. The design of the decoration shall be as prescribed.

Wearing of the decoration

10. The manner of wearing the decoration shall be as determined by the Governor-General.

Registrar of Awards

11. (1) There shall be a Registrar of Awards appointed by the Governor-General who shall maintain a Register of the names of persons to whom the decoration has been awarded.

(2) The Registrar shall keep such other records relating to the award of the decoration as the Governor-General directs.

Cancellation and reinstatement

12. (1) The Governor-General may cancel an award of the decoration and may reinstate an award so cancelled.

(2) Where an award of the decoration is cancelled, the name of the person to whom the award was made shall be erased from the Register and the person shall return the decoration to the Registrar.

(3) Where an award that has been cancelled pursuant to sub-regulation (1) is reinstated, the Registrar shall restore the entry or entries in the Register that had been erased.