



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Maritime
Administration**

MANUAL OF ORDERS

MARITIME ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

REVOKES

MAO 550-3, dtd.
7-18-74

NO.

550-3

EFFECTIVE DATE

April 25, 1983

SUBJECT

MERCHANT MARINE AWARDS COMMITTEE

Section 1. Purpose:

1.01 This order prescribes the procedures under which medals, decorations, and citations authorized by Public Law 84-759 and 46 CFR Part 350 may be issued.

Section 2. Establishment and Membership:

2.01 There is hereby established a Merchant Marine Awards Committee, with regular membership composed of:

- 1 Director, Office of Maritime Labor and Training, who shall serve as Chairperson.
- 2 Director, Office of Ship Operations.
- 3 Director, Office of Ship Construction.

2.02 There shall be an alternate member designated by each Office Director specified, subject to the provisions of Maritime Administrative Order 230-5.

2.03 The Secretary of Transportation has designated a representative of the Coast Guard to work with the Committee. The Coast Guard representative will serve in an advisory and liaison capacity, but will not be a voting member of the Committee.

Section 3. Procedure and Responsibilities:

3.01 The Merchant Marine Awards Committee shall:

- 1 Develop and recommend to the Maritime Administrator rules and regulations governing the award of merchant marine medals and decorations, and replacements thereof as authorized by law.
- 2 Review recommendations submitted by offices of the Maritime Administration or by other Government agencies, ship operators, and other interested parties, and make recommendations to the Maritime Administrator with respect to the award of the following types of medals and decorations under the provisions of Public Law 84-759 and 46 CFR Part 350:
 - (1) Merchant marine distinguished service medals and merchant marine meritorious service medals,
 - (2) Distinctive Service ribbon bars, and
 - (3) Ship citations.

3.02 Criteria for awards and medals:

- 1 Gallant Ship Award may be awarded to any United States ship or to any foreign ship (merchant, Coast Guard, Navy, or other) participating in outstanding or gallant action in marine disasters or other emergencies for the purpose of saving life or property when the following circumstances are present:
 - (1) The ship itself should move to the rescue and not be simply the platform from which crew members perform a rescue operation.
 - (2) The operation should encompass the maneuvers of the ship and a substantial part of the personnel.
 - (3) The operation should involve either the use of the lifeboats; or the crew taking to the water to effect a rescue with the ship in some danger; or the ship itself, by reason of perilous circumstances, should be in considerable danger.
 - (4) The conditions should be such that considerable danger to the ship or the lifeboat or the crew members is present.
 - (5) The operation of the ship, its equipment, and personnel should favorably reflect efficiency, discipline, and expertness.
- 2 Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medal may be awarded to any person serving in the U.S. merchant marine for meritorious act, conduct, or service in line of duty when the following circumstances are present:
 - (1) A master of a U.S. merchant ship (automatically) when that ship is granted the Gallant Ship Award.
 - (2) An act of heroism, bravery, devotion to duty involving extreme danger (actual or in the mind).
 - (3) The act, if it involves lifesaving, should be generally one performed while the ship is at sea and not in a harbor, at the dock, or otherwise idle.
 - (4) The act may be at sea or in port if it involves an effort directed toward saving the ship or the cargo.
 - (5) The act should be one not directly entitling the individual to other medals such as the Carnegie Medal, the Coast Guard Medal for lifesaving, etc.
- 3 Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal may be awarded to any person serving in the U.S. merchant marine who distinguished himself or herself by outstanding act, conduct, or valor beyond the line of duty when the following circumstances are present:
 - (1) Extreme peril to the life or safety of the individual attempting the rescue action.


- (2) It must be considered as going beyond the call of duty.
- (3) It must involve the activity of the merchant marine so that it is distinguished from a saving of life or property where the ship is solely a platform from which the individual moved or upon which the individual acted.
- (4) The accomplishment or the attempt must involve human lives or something of considerable worth either actual or considered so in the mind of the individual performing the action.

3.03 Upon approval by the Maritime Administrator, recommendations for the award of merchant marine distinguished service medals, merchant marine meritorious service medals, and ship citations shall be submitted to the Secretary of Transportation for approval. In any case of a proposed award or citation to a foreign ship or to a master or person serving aboard such ship, such award or citation shall be subject to the concurrence of the Secretary of State.

3.04 The Office of Maritime Labor and Training shall:

- 1 Serve in a support capacity to the Merchant Marine Awards Committee; furnish secretarial and clerical assistance; maintain records and files of awards and related materials; assist in the investigation of incidents; and serve as the focal point for the collection and summarization of information on deeds of gallantry and heroism in the U.S. merchant marine.
- 2 Procure and issue, when properly authorized, medals and decorations approved by the Secretary of Transportation and the Maritime Administrator.
- 3 Arrange for the replacement of awards, medals, decorations, and other articles.

3.05 Offices and officials of the Maritime Administration shall report to the Office of Maritime Labor and Training, for its analysis and review, cases of heroism and gallantry that come to their attention which might be considered as deserving of recognition.


H. E. SHEAR
Maritime Administrator