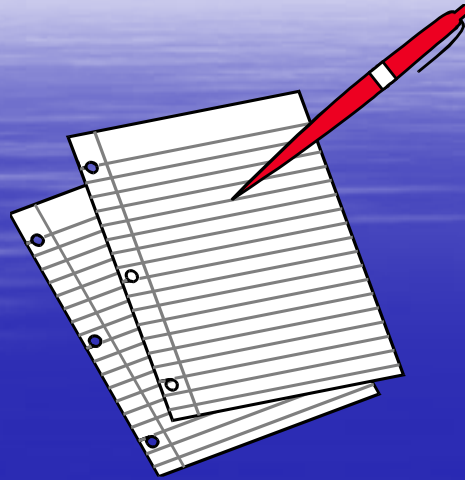


Award Writing Made Easy



A guide for writing Coast Guard Award Recommendations

This was created using "[Award Writing Made Easy Handbook](#)" developed by U.S. Coast Guard Leadership and Quality Institute

Step One

Gather Performance Data On the Member:

- ◆ Look for PDR entries (i.e. Page 7)
- ◆ Look for informal documentation
- ◆ Conduct interviews with:
 1. Chain of command
 2. Peers/subordinates
 3. Other Witnesses

Step Two

Develop bullets by doing each of the following:

- ◆ State the impact on the department/division/unit or Coast Guard.
- ◆ Wordsmith the statement to create one concise yet simple sentence. State what was done and how it was done (stated in the past tense).

Step Three

Decide On The Level Of The Award:

- ◆ The higher the impact, the higher the award
- ◆ Summary of action not required for CG Achievement and CG Commendation Medals. One page summary of action required for Meritorious Service Medal.

Step Four

Draft The Citation:

- ◆ Use standard opening and closing jargon.
- ◆ Use the sentence developed in Step 2 for the body.
- ◆ ALWAYS capitalize the member's LAST NAME and spell out the rate or rank.
- ◆ Spell out abbreviations the first time in the citation.
- ◆ Read the citation out loud to another to check the "flow".

Step Five

Edit the citation (Use the 4-step process):

- ◆ Read it once...

Match the points with the support

- ◆ Read it a second time...

Organize into powerful well-connected thoughts

- ◆ Read it a third time...

Delete dead words

- ◆ Read it a fourth time...

Check grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Step Six

Complete CG-1650 In USCG Adobe Forms:

- ◆ Complete blocks 1 through 19.
- ◆ Team awards need to include all team members and social security numbers.
- ◆ [Hyperlink to the CG-1650](#)

Step Seven

Submit the award package to the appropriate Awards Board through the chain of command

Note: Follow local award submission policies



Performance Bullets

Performance bullets are the raw material that is needed to produce the statement of actions for which the individual is being cited.

Effective Performance Bullets Always Consists of 3 Parts.

- ◆ What they did
- ◆ How they did it
- ◆ The impact or results of their action (Why it was significant)

What do I Write About

Pick 3 to 5 items that the member did best or which had the greatest impact on the service or unit. Each bullet should have a number-quantified (if possible) action and a following result. For example, "...100 hours of troubleshooting refrigeration casualty assistance; enhanced quality of life and enabled the cutter to keep operational schedules," has the action and the result.

So for each item, be specific and ask yourself "What was done?", "How did they do it?", and "What was the Result?"

Once you've completed this part of the award, the rest is simply wordsmithing.

Hints For Using Statistics

Using numbers to quantify actions is encouraged and carries more oomph! For example, “Seaman Garza volunteered many hours of personal time to invent a beacon which save the Coast Guard a lot of money...” Doesn’t tell the story as well as, “SEAMAN Garza invested 100 hours of personal time to invent the Aids to Navigation Beacon which saved the Coast Guard \$175,000.00.”

Remember not to criticize an individual’s predecessor. Also focus on items that are high profile or extend beyond a member’s command.

Jargon And Content

The citation is an account “...which will be cherished by them and a source of pride to their families”. The Rewards and Recognition Handbook says “...we are telling a story to everyone about what the person receiving the award has done.

Jargon And Content (cont)

For the citation, refer to the proper award manual for the opening and closing jargon for each award and copy that part exactly. The information is found in:

- ◆ COMDTINST M1650.25 for military personnel
- ◆ COMDTINST M12451.1 for civilian personnel
- ◆ COMDTINST M16790.1 for auxiliarist personnel
- ◆ The Rewards and Recognition Handbook
(COMDTINST P1650.27 has heaps of ideas too.

The statement is written in a single paragraph and sandwiched between the standard opening and closing sentences.

Wording and the “Guts”

A citation is supposed to be formalized, concise and straightforward. Formalized means that it is written in the third person (“...he created...”), often using the rank and surname (“... Chief Petty Officer Jones created...”).

Here are recommendations for choosing some words and phrases:

After the standard opening, each bullet should start with an action word like these:

- ◆ Displaying
- ◆ Exhibiting
- ◆ Demonstrating
- ◆ Showing
- ◆ Using
- ◆ Making
- ◆ Through

Wording and the “Guts” (cont)

The next words should be an adjective-noun combination something like these:

- ◆ Superior leadership, he...
- ◆ Exceptional competence and professionalism, she...
- ◆ Expert technical skills, he...
- ◆ Highest degree of proficiency, she...
- ◆ Accomplished organizational abilities, she...
- ◆ Finely honed
- ◆ Keen insight

Wording and the “Guts” (cont)

Adverbs work well for the next word(s) such as:

- ◆ Quickly
- ◆ Capably
- ◆ Professionally
- ◆ Skillfully
- ◆ Proficiently
- ◆ Adeptly
- ◆ Effectively
- ◆ Efficiently

Wording and the “Guts” (cont)

Steer away from using specific jargon or acronyms or name of equipment that are not commonly used in the English language. A good rule is to use simple, everyday words that convey powerful thoughts.

Also avoid being gushy or using “puffed up” words that seem phony or pompous.

Wording and the “Guts” (cont)

Now, simply mix and match the words and phrases to ensure each bullet is a flowing sentence or two. Start with the accomplishment you consider to be the most significant. The body of the citation is simply 3 to 5 bullets turned into powerful, concise sentences, one after another.

Voila!!! You've completed the citation.

Well, Almost!

Wording and the “Guts” (cont)

Before you turn it in, take the citation, stand up in front of a mirror, another person, or a microphone connected to a tape recorder and READ what you have written -- OUT LOUD! This is the most effective way to check grammar and see if what you have written really is concise, flowing, and powerful.

Formats

There are two type of formats for an award citation, and they are:

- ◆ Citation format
- ◆ Letter format

Citation Format

Citations are printed sideways (landscape), across standard 8 1/2 X 11 paper. The margins are 1 inch for the top and sides and 2.3 inches on the bottom. (this leave room for the gold seal) We recommend using 12 point Helvetica style font. Citations consist of 5 lines of heading and the body consisting of the standard opening sentence, action/impact items, and the standard closing sentence (all discussed earlier). We recommend that the body be between 15 and 19 lines long, justified. Be a relentless editor and choose your words carefully.

Heading

The heading should look like this:

**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE (type of medal goes here)
TO
(spelled out rank and full name goes here)
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

The heading is always centered on the page and capitalized

Letter Format

The Commandant's Letter of Commendation (CLOC) is a typical LETTER FORMAT award. It is printed on the Commandant's letter stationary. They are always from the "Commandant" to the individual. The subject is "LETTER OF COMMENDATION," and they always have 3 paragraphs.

Letter Format (cont)

All CLOCs are printed on 8-1/2 X 11 Stationary lengthwise (portrait style). In keeping with the Correspondence Manual, they are printed using 12 point Courier font. The Meritorious Team Award is also done in letter format with different standard phrases. Be sure to refer to the Medals and Awards Manual for proper wording and Phrasing.

Both the letter of Commendation and Meritorious Team Award are closed with the phrase:

“For the Commandant”

Coast Guard Commandant's Letter of Commendation

From: Commandant
To: BM1 Jack J. Frost, 123 45 6789, USCG

SUBJ: LETTER OF COMMENDATION

1. I note with pride and am pleased to commend you for your performance of duty while assigned as Head Rigger at U. S. Coast Guard Station Heritage from 1 October 1996 to 30 March 1997 (**Action Items**)

2. You are commended for your outstanding performance of duty. By your meritorious service you have upheld the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard

3. You are authorized to wear the Commandant's Letter of Commendation Ribbon Bar (gold star in lieu of second).

For the Commandant,

JACK J. JOYS
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commander, Group

Please note that the margins are not correct in this example and the following examples. This is to be used as a guide only.

Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation

The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard
Takes pleasure in presenting the
COAST GUARD MERITORIOUS TEAM
COMMENDATION to

NAME
TEAM NAME

For services as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For meritorious service from April 1993 to December 1995, while serving on the (Team Name). During this period... (ACTION ITEMS) The dedication, pride and professionalism displayed by the member of the ...reflect credit upon themselves, their team, and the United States Coast Guard."

For the Commandant,

GEORGE TEMPLE
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer MSO Portland, Oregon

Coast Guard Achievement Medal

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE COAST GUARD ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL
TO
COMMANDER GEORGE R. WILLIAMS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Commander WILLIAMS is cited for superior performance of duty while serving as... at U. S. Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, California, from January 1995 to July 1997. (Action Items) Commander WILLIAM's diligence, perseverance, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

T. F. HARTLRY
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer, Training Center Petaluma

Coast Guard Commendation Medal

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE COAST GUARD COMMENDATION MEDAL
TO
HENRY L. RUTH
CHIEF BOATSWAIN'S MATE
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Chief Petty Officer RUTH is cited for outstanding achievement in the performance of duty while serving as..., aboard U.S. Coast Guard Cutter..., Kodiak, Alaska, from February 1994 to May 1997. (ACTION ITEMS) Chief Petty Officer RUTH's dedication, judgment and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

T. F. HARTLRY
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer, Training Center Petaluma

Coast Guard Meritorious Service Medal

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL
TO
HENRY L. RUTH
CHIEF BOATSWAIN'S MATE
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Chief Petty Officer RUTH is cited for meritorious service in the performance of duty while serving as..., aboard U.S. Coast Guard Cutter..., Kodiak, Alaska, from February 1994 to May 1997. (ACTION ITEMS) Chief Petty Officer RUTH's dedication and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

T. F. HARTLRY
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer, Training Center Petaluma

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