

MARAD Authorizes Medals for U.S. Merchant Mariners who Served in Somalia

In keeping with its tradition of honoring the men and women of the U.S. Merchant Marine, the Maritime Administration (MARAD) has authorized award of the [Merchant Marine Expeditionary Medal \(MMEM\)](#) for service aboard U.S. flag vessels in support of Operations Restore Hope and United Shield and related operations in Somalia from 5 December 1992 to 31 March 1995.

Under the authority of 46 U.S.C. 51901, the Secretary of Transportation has the authority to establish and award " ... a decoration or medal to an individual for service ... during operations by the Armed Forces of the United States outside the continental United States under conditions of danger to life and property." The MMEM was created under this authority as a multi-purpose award to recognize the contributions of U.S. Merchant Mariners under conditions, and in times of, national conflict or emergency. The medal has been previously awarded for merchant marine service in Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm, as well as service in support of Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom.

To be eligible for award of the MMEM for Somalia service, civilian U.S. Merchant Mariners would have to have been employed on U.S.-flag vessels actually engaged in direct support of Operations Restore Hope and United Shield and related operations. "Direct support" includes, but is not limited to, delivery of cargo and supplies for use by deployed United States military, Allied and United Nations (UN) forces during the above operations in Somalia, as well as support for any associated humanitarian cargo and personnel movements, to and from the Port of Mogadishu and/or other Somalia port facilities utilized for support of operations during the period cited. It also includes any re-supply of U.S. Navy and Allied ships in Somalia's national and proximate waters engaged in direct support of the above operations during the stated period.

For purposes of awarding the MMEM to mariners, MARAD designated the Area of Operations cited for award to U.S. military personnel of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for direct support of UN operations during Operations Restore Hope and United Shield. This area, to be used as a point of reference in awarding the MMEM, extends from approximately 02° Latitude North, to 3-30° Latitude North, and from approximately 45° Longitude East to 63° Longitude East. However, this definition is intended to cover some, but not all of the instances of, direct support to United States and United Nations operations in Somalia.

Civilian U. S. Merchant Marine applicants who seek the medal but have not performed the work described above must explain in their applications the merchant mariner work they performed and why it constituted "direct support." Such applications will be evaluated as to whether the work described provides an alternate basis for direct support. Personnel aboard U.S.-flag commercial vessels sailing in the designated area of hostilities but not rendering "direct support" would not be eligible for this award.

In order to validate their service, Mariners seeking award of the MMEM for Somalia must submit a copy of their Certificate of Discharge in foreign ocean going waters to MARAD. The Certificate of Discharge time period must be between 5 December 1992 and 31 March 1995. The application form for a Certificate of Discharge (Form CG-718A), may be downloaded from the US Coast Guard website at <https://www.uscg.mil/forms>

For more information or to submit a copy of their Certification of Discharge applicants can contact Ms. Deveeda Midgette at Deveeda.Midgette@dot.gov; or 202-366-2354.