

Army Sea Duty Ribbon - "ASDR"

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It's taken many years of dreaming and over four (4) years of staff work but the Army Transportation Corps has finally received approval of the Army Sea Duty Ribbon (ASDR). This is the first Non-Campaign Ribbon approved by the Army in over 20 years. This ribbon is being retroactively awarded to those having served as far back as 1952, the standing up of the first heavy boat company in the Army. At that time, the Army Transportation Corp was preparing the first for deployment to Korea.

Army Mariners have participated in every major US conflict. From the Civil War through two World Wars into Korea, Vietnam and today's War on Terror, whether during war time or peace, waterborne troops of the U.S. Army's Transportation Corp have been engaged in a myriad of "waterborne" transportation operations.

According to Trina Studer, Sea Pay Manager, Human Resources Command (HRC), "Today's Army mariners spend an average of nine years on sea duty [in a twenty year career]. These numbers continue to rise with Soldier-Mariners sailing more often and for longer periods of time". Awarding this ribbon will compensate those individuals with creditable sea time for the hardships inherent in such duty. Time at sea equates to lengthy duty away from family in unpredictable and dangerous conditions. Establishment of the ASDR is geared to recognize Soldiers for the distinct duty of service aboard US Army Vessels. It also serves to align sea-going Soldiers with members of the US Navy and US Coast Guard, who have already implemented a Sea Service Ribbon.

Current requirements, for today's enlistments set out by Awards Branch, HRC requires active duty Soldiers to have two (2) years cumulative sea duty time and those who were ARNG or USAR to have two creditable drill years with two annual trainings "underway" with a minimum of 25 days underway for each qualifying year. Provisions for a posthumous award also exist for those killed in the line of duty.

The Office of the Chief of Transportation (OCOT) recognized an omission shortly after the approval was given and signed. How do we compensate for those who served in Combat Theaters? "When we sat down and wrote this, we were not seeing the whole picture of what we were creating. As such, we missed an entire segment of veterans. The veteran who served aboard Army watercraft in combat, the veteran who got drafted, the veteran who did not serve for a career or term longer than his draft requirement", says CW5 Mike Wichterman, Chief, Warrant Officer Proponency, OCOT. In discussions with other service elements, it was determined that recognition was needed for those who had served in combat theaters aboard Army Watercraft. A waiver was submitted to the Chief, Marine Qualifications Division, approval authority for awarding of the ASDR, by the 458th Transportation Company (PBR). After careful review, the OCOT made the following decisions:

- Waive the two year cumulative years requirement for those who served a minimum of 30 days aboard US Army Vessels in combat theatre of operation; those Soldiers engaged in actual combat, during an operation with armed opposition, regardless of time in the area of operation; or when while participating in such an operation or on official duties aboard in a combat zone, is wounded or injured and requires medical evacuation from the area of eligibility..
- An effort is underway by the OCOT to include "Combat Zone" or wording there of, to amend the current Army regulation governing awards to eliminate the need to grant waivers for this purpose.
- Service members, regardless of MOS, who served upon Patrol Boat River (PBR's) as crew are included in this consideration.
- Issued awards, albeit waived, will be submitted for full award and the award will be added to soldiers DD Fm 214 / 215.

The enthusiasm and selfless service of those who serve today in our Sail Army's home base at Ft Eustis, Virginia are to be congratulated. To those in the Office of the Chief of Transportation and those on patrol

today, a hearty "Tango Yankee" for the freedom you provide us, the loyalty to our soldiers who were once sailors.