

Command Coins

Key references: 31 U.S.C. 1301; 10 U.S.C. 1125; DODI 7250.13; SECNAVINST 3590.4A; SECNAVINST 7042.7K; 5 U.S.C. 4503; 5.C.F.R. 2635.203(b)(2).

Key concepts:

- Appropriated funds (APF) may only be used for authorized purposes. 31 U.S.C. 1301(a). Absent specific authority, an expenditure using APF is prohibited. Consequently, a command may expend APF to purchase command coins only as a means to recognize outstanding performance and as a component of the command's provision of official courtesies.

- Awards. Expenditure of APF to purchase command coins to award meritorious service is permissible. 10 U.S.C. 1125 and 5 U.S.C. 4503 authorize DoD to award medals, trophies, badges, and similar devices for excellence in accomplishments. Presentation of a coin qualifies as an award when given for outstanding performance, specific achievement, or a unique achievement that contributes to command effectiveness. SECNAVINST 3590.4A. Because command coins provided in this context should bear the characteristics of other command awards, the coins should be limited in number, accounted for in a written record, and not personalized with the commander's name.

- Official Representation Funds (ORF). SECNAVINST 7042.7K (ORF Guidelines) provides that ORF may be used to purchase mementos that have a command or official theme. Coins having a command or official theme qualify as appropriate mementos. Generally, a command may offer mementos not exceeding \$335 to foreign dignitaries or other prominent citizens (non-DOD personnel).¹ A command also may offer mementos not exceeding \$40 to prominent visiting DoD officials.²

- Private Funds. Coins given as gifts, tokens of appreciation, recognition of routine performance of duty, or to instill unit pride are not awards. Coins used this way cannot be purchased with APF, but rather should be purchased using private funds. Coins purchased with private funds may be personalized with the donor's name and there are no restrictions on the use of such coins. In using these funds, a commander is not bound by the restrictions discussed above (other than that of good taste).

¹ See paragraph 8b, SECNAVINST 7042.7K. See 73 Fed. Reg. 7475 for adjustment of threshold from \$305 to \$335. See paragraph 6 and enclosure (1) for a description of foreign dignitaries and other prominent citizens authorized to receive official courtesies under the instruction.

² See paragraph 8b(7), SECNAVINST 7042.7K. See paragraph 6a(5) and enclosure (1) for a list of prominent DoD officials authorized to receive official courtesies under the instruction.

ENCLOSURE (7)