Defense and International Missions Veteran - Application Provisions (pdf)

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With the Decree of the Minister of Defense of February 21, 2025, the system of recognitions for military personnel who have served the country, both in Italy and in operational theaters, is expanded and formalized. In particular, the provision:

- extends the title of “Defense Veteran” also to those who have performed meritorious service without becoming disabled due to debilitating injuries;
- establishes the title of “International Missions Veteran”;
- provides for the awarding of respective merit medals;
- defines a uniform administrative procedure for submitting and processing applications.

Who can obtain the title of “Defense Veteran”

The recognition is intended for (active or retired) members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Carabinieri, if they meet at least one of the following conditions:

1. Debilitating physical or psychological injuries in operational/training activities at home or abroad (with specific recognition criteria).
2. Decoration for military valor.
3. Joint possession of these requirements:
    - 25 years of actual service or possession of specific honors/decorations (Military Order of Italy or decorations for valor/merit of the Armed Forces);
    - evaluation not lower than “excellent” in the five years preceding the application (with retroactive recovery if evaluation sheets are missing);
    - absence of state disciplinary sanctions and final convictions for non-negligent crimes (except for rehabilitation/extinction).

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How some requirements are understood (in summary)

The circular clarifies, for example, that:

- for “debilitating injuries,” only injuries/illnesses recognized as service-related according to specific referenced tables are considered;
- the “25 years” are counted as service performed exclusively in the Armed Forces (not in other administrations);
- “participation in operations outside national territory” is valid only in case of actual deployment outside the territory or beyond territorial waters, with exclusions provided by

the decree.

Who can obtain the title of “International Missions Veteran”

For this recognition, it is necessary to:

- already possess one of the conditions provided for “Defense Veteran”; and
- have participated in at least one operation outside the national territory among those identified with a specific determination referenced in the annex.

Merit Medals: when they are awarded

The decree establishes:

- the Merit Medal of “Defense Veteran”;
- the Merit Medal of “International Missions Veteran”.

The circular also specifies a practical point: those who already have the title of “Defense Veteran” and subsequently meet the requirements for “International Missions Veteran” can be authorized to wear the related medal without submitting a new application, through an internal act of the unit commander (within the indicated terms).

How to apply: documents and process flow

In general (with some exceptions for the fallen), investigations start only upon application by the party. The main documentation to be submitted includes:

- application on plain paper using the provided model;
- substitute declaration (absence of final convictions for non-negligent crimes in the indicated cases);
- signed privacy notice.

The “level” path (in simple terms)

The circular describes a structured flow:

1. Office/Instructor Entity (Level 3): verifies documents and requirements, records, can reject incomplete/non-compliant applications, and sends ordered lists by priority.
2. Area Heads / High Commands (Level 2): check the lists, group them, and transmit them in cumulative form; they can activate random checks on self-certifications.
3. Validating Authority (Level 1): verifies annual contingents, prepares validation “mirrors,” and sends them to PERSOMIL, which adopts the granting measures.

After granting: delivery of (digital) diplomas

The diplomas (granting attestations) are transmitted in digital format along the descending flow to the entities that confer them to the individual awardees, with related transcriptions and administrative fulfillments.

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Special cases: grants for deceased personnel

The circular also regulates:

- automatic grants for personnel deceased in service or operations, with verification of entitled relatives according to an order of precedence (surviving spouse without separation with fault; then children; then parents; then siblings) and acquisition of specific declarations and documents;
- applications for surviving relatives of personnel deceased after discharge, clarifying that the “in memoriam” grant is unique and the order of precedence is non-negotiable.

Loss, revocation, and cancellations: when the recognition is at risk

It is foreseen that the recognition may face:

- loss of right upon the occurrence of incapacity conditions provided by the referenced regulations;
- rejection if the incapacity already exists before the start of the investigation;
- impracticability, cancellations, or corrections if obstructive causes arise during or after the procedure;
- restoration in case, for example, of rehabilitation or extinction of the crime, according to the indicated rules.

Transitional regime and priority until December 31, 2025

For the initial phase, until December 31, 2025, the circular establishes a priority: instructor entities send lists only related to:

- personnel deceased in service or operations;
- personnel with debilitating physical/psychological injuries;
- personnel decorated for military valor.

Maximum annual contingents for the various authorities/Armed Forces and specific provisions are also indicated.

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