

COMMAND COINS

Key references: 10 U.S.C. § 1125; 31 U.S.C.A. § 1301(a); 5 C.F.R. 2635.203(b)(2); DODDIR 1348.19; SECNAVINST 3590.4A; SECNAVINST 7042.7J

Key Concepts:

- **Background:** Appropriated funds may only be used for authorized purposes. 31 U.S.C.A. § 1301(a). Absent specific authority, an expenditure using APF is prohibited. HOWEVER, 10 U.S.C. 1125 authorizes DoD to award medals, trophies, badges and similar devices for excellence in accomplishments. That being said, APF is proper to purchase command coins so long as they are used as awards for specific achievement or outstanding accomplishments by military and civilian personnel.
- Coins purchased with appropriated funds may only be given as awards.
- Presentation of a coin qualifies as an award when given for outstanding performance, specific achievement, or a unique achievement that contributes to command effectiveness. Recommend that coins given as awards be limited in number, accounted for in a written record, and not personalized with the Commander's name.
- Can ORF be used? SECNAVINST 7042.7J (ORF Guidelines) provides that ORF may be used to purchase gifts and mementos having a command or official theme. Aggregate cost of gifts given to anyone guest should not exceed \$305. Mementos may be presented to specific classes of individuals such as foreign dignitaries or prominent citizens (except DOD personnel).¹ ORF may therefore be used to purchase command coins having a command or official theme for presentation to foreign dignitaries and prominent citizens. Commands should ensure they pay a reasonable price for command coins using ORF.²
- Use of personal 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 therefore be purchased with APF, but rather should be purchased using private funds. There are no restrictions on

¹ ORF funded mementos may be given to distinguished citizens, military officers and government officials of foreign countries; prominent federal, state, local government officials; distinguished and prominent citizens who've made a substantial contribution to the Nation, or are recognized leaders in their fields (Paragraph 6, SECNAVINST 7042.7J).

² The ORF instruction is currently undergoing revision. We anticipate \$ limits of approximately \$40.00 on expenditures for mementos. Since a command coin is a memento, commands should limit their cost. Normally command coins can be purchased for \$5.00 to \$10.00.

the use of privately bought coins. In using personal funds, a commander is not bound by the restrictions discussed above (other than good taste).

- Summary: Coins purchased with appropriated funds may only be given as awards. Presentation of a coin qualifies as an award when given for outstanding performance, specific achievement, or a unique achievement that contributes to command effectiveness. ORF may only be used to purchase mementos for specific classes of individuals such as foreign dignitaries or prominent citizens. 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 should be purchased using private funds.