



Australian Government

Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal

Van Den Boogaard and the Department of Defence [2026] DHAAT 9 (9 June 2026)

File Number(s)	2025/037
Re	Corporal Lonn Van Den Boogaard Applicant
And	The Department of Defence Respondent
Tribunal	Commodore Vicki McConachie CSC RAN (Retd) (Presiding Member) Brigadier Dianne Gallasch AM CSC (Retd)
Hearing Date	14 April 2026
Attendances	Corporal Lonn Van Den Boogaard Applicant Mrs Allison Augustine (For the Respondent)

DECISION

On 9 June 2026, the Tribunal decided:

- a. to affirm the decision that Corporal Van Den Boogaard not be recommended for the Defence Long Service Medal; and
- b. not to recommend to the Minister that the eligibility criteria for the Defence Long Service Medal be amended.

CATCHWORDS

DEFENCE AWARD – Defence Long Service Medal – eligibility criteria - qualifying service - period of at least 15 years – efficient service – requirements of Chief of Defence Force Determinations – definition of days served

LEGISLATION

Defence Act 1903 – Part VIIIIC – Sections 110T, 110V(1), 110VB(2), 110VB(6)

Defence Regulation 2016, Regulation 36

Defence Long Service Medal Regulations 1998, Letters Patent, Commonwealth of Australia Gazette S352, dated 10 July 1998

Defence Long Service Medal Regulations 1998, Amendments of Letters Patent and Regulations Commonwealth of Australian Gazette S160, of 30 March 2000

Defence Long Service Medal Regulations, Directions by the Chief of the Defence Force dated 13 April 2000

Defence Long Service Medal Regulations, Letters Patent and Amending Regulations, Commonwealth of Australia Gazette S2, dated 3 January 2002

Defence Long Service Medal Regulations - Determination by the Chief of the Defence Force dated 6 February 2013

Defence Long Service Medal Regulations Determination 2021 by the Chief of the Defence Force, 2021, dated 16 March 2021

Introduction

1. The Applicant, Corporal Lonn Van Den Boogaard, seeks review of a decision dated 28 November 2025 of the Department of Defence to refuse to recommend him for the Defence Long Service Medal for his service in the Permanent Air Force and the Air Force Active Reserve.

Decision under review

2. On 2 July 2025, Corporal Van Den Boogaard applied to the Department of Defence for an assessment of his eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal. On 28 November 2025, Defence wrote to Corporal Van Den Boogaard to advise that he was not eligible for the Defence Long Service Medal as there was no evidence that he had completed fifteen years qualifying remunerated service in the Australian Defence Force.

3. On 28 November 2025, Corporal Van Den Boogaard made application to the Tribunal seeking review of the above decision.¹

Tribunal jurisdiction

4. Pursuant to s110VB(2) of the *Defence Act 1903* the Tribunal has jurisdiction to review a reviewable decision if an application is properly made to the Tribunal. The term *reviewable decision* is defined in s110V(1) and includes a decision made by a person within the Department of Defence to refuse to recommend a person for a defence award in response to an application. Regulation 36 of the *Defence Regulation 2016* lists the defence awards that may be the subject of a reviewable decision. Included in the defence awards listed in Regulation 36 is the Defence Long Service Medal. Therefore, the Tribunal has jurisdiction to review decisions in relation to this award.

Corporal Van Den Boogaard's service

5. Corporal Van Den Boogaard enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force on 7 October 2009. On 8 October 2022 Corporal Van Den Boogaard transferred to the Air Force Active Reserve. At the date of his application to the Tribunal he was still serving.²

6. Corporal Van Den Boogaard has been issued with the following awards for his service with the Royal Australian Air Force.

- a. Australian Operational Service Medal – Greater Middle East Operation;
- b. Australian Defence Medal;
- c. Operational Service Badge;
- d. Queensland Police Service Commonwealth Games Citation.³

¹ Application for review, Corporal Van Den Boogaard, dated 28 November 2025.

² Letter, Defence to the Tribunal, 21 January 2026.

³ Ibid.

Eligibility Criteria for the Defence Long Service Medal

Letters Patent and Regulations

7. The Defence Long Service Medal was instituted by Letters Patent issued on 26 May 1998 for the purpose of ‘*according recognition to persons who render long and efficient service as members of the Defence Force*⁴’ Regulations 3 and 5, as amended, made under the Letters Patent relevantly provide:

Award of the Medal

Regulation 3 The Medal may be awarded to a member, or former member, of the Defence Force (the member) who:

(a) has given:

(i) qualifying service for a period of at least 15 years or periods that, in total, amount to at least 15 years;

Qualifying service

Regulation 5 Service in the Defence Force is qualifying service if:

(a) where the service was given as a member of the Permanent Forces or the Reserve Forces – the Member:

(i) fulfilled the requirements specified in directions given by the Chief of the Defence Force; and

*(ii) gave efficient service; or*⁵

[...]

Amendments to the Regulations in 2000 inserted the following definition of ‘efficient service’ into Regulation 2:

*‘efficient service means service determined to be efficient service by the Chief of the Defence Force’.*⁶

Defence Long Service Medal Chief of the Defence Force Determinations

2021 Chief of the Defence Force Determination

8. On 16 March 2021 the Chief of the Defence Force issued a Determination relevant to Corporal Van Den Boogaard’s application which stipulated that in order to qualify for the Defence Long Service Medal, the minimum period of annual qualifying service for all members of the ADF from 20 April 2000 would be 20 days.⁷

⁴ *Defence Force Long Service Medal Letters Patent and Regulations, Commonwealth of Australia Gazette S352, of 10 July 1998.*

⁵ *Ibid, as amended by Defence Long Service Medal, Letters Patent and Amending Regulations, Commonwealth of Australia Gazette S160, of 30 March 2000, and Defence Long Service Medal Letters Patent and Amending Regulations, Commonwealth of Australia Gazette S2 of 3 January 2002. Folio 29*

⁶ *Defence Long Service Medal, Letters Patent and Amending Regulations, Commonwealth of Australia Gazette S160, of 30 March 2000.*

⁷ *Defence Long Service Medal Regulations Determination 2021 by the Chief of the Defence Force, 2021, dated 16 March 2021.*

9. The 2021 Determination stipulates:

The following table specifies the minimum annual periods of service to be completed by a member for a year of qualifying service. The period of service may consist of one, or a combination, of the following:

- a. *Days remunerated at Defence rates of salary or sessional fees.*
- b. *Days on which the member is eligible for a Reserve service payment under Chapter 4 Part 9 Division 4 of the Defence Determination 2016/19, Conditions of service, as in force from time to time.*
- c. *Days of approved voluntary unpaid Reserve service.*

2000 Chief of the Defence Force Determination

10. On 13 April 2000, the *Chief of the Defence Force* issued a Determination, which provided:

...1b. On and after 20 April 2000 a member will undertake qualifying service for the purpose of the Defence Long Service Medal if the member undertakes a minimum of 20 days service per year calculated at the anniversary of the enlistment or appointment of the member [emphasis added].⁸

The word ‘days’ is not further defined in the Determination. The 2021 *Chief of the Defence Force Determination* expressly revoked a previous *Chief of the Defence Force Determination* dated 6 February 2013.⁹

Corporal Van Den Boogaard’s application to the Tribunal

11. In his application to the Tribunal, Corporal Van Den Boogaard stated that upon discharge he was reclassified to SERCAT 3 (Air Force Reserve).¹⁰ He went on to state that due to the time of the year he was not awarded any Reserve days for the remainder of the financial year 2022/23, and that he later applied for and was allotted 20 reserve days for financial year 2023/24, which he completed prior to the end of that financial year. He stated that he did the same thing again in financial year 2024/25.

12. Corporal Van Den Boogaard submitted that he sought information regarding his eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal from the Defence website, but that it was not clear for his circumstances, and that following a phone call to the Directorate of Honours and Awards he was informed that he needed to complete 20 reserve days per financial year to be eligible for effective years’ service.¹¹

⁸ Defence Long Service Medal Regulations, Directions by the Chief of the Defence Force dated 13 April 2000.

⁹ Defence Long Service Medal Regulations Determination 2021 by the Chief of the Defence Force, 2021, dated 16 March 2021.

¹⁰ Note-Corporal Van Den Boogaard transferred to the Air Force Reserve on 7 October 2022.

¹¹ Application to Tribunal dated 28 November 2025.

13. Corporal Van Den Boogaard stated that during the time of his service, he was not aware that his eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal would be calculated on his enlistment year, and he understood that his 13 years of Permanent Air Force Service and two consecutive financial years of reserve service would be sufficient to qualify for the Medal.¹²

14. Corporal Van Den Boogaard stated that the below determination spreadsheet was sent to him to show the breakdown of his service history.

1	Surname	Given Names	Date of Birth	Pmkeys/Service No						
2	Van Den Boogaard	Lonn		8558683						
3										
4										
5	Start of 12 Month	END DATE	REHIRE DATE	Break	End of 12 mth	Status	Days required	Days served	Q as year?	Aggregate year
6	6/10/2009			0	5/10/2010	PAF	20	>20	Y	1
7	6/10/2010			0	5/10/2011	PAF	20	>20	Y	2
8	6/10/2011			0	5/10/2012	PAF	20	>20	Y	3
9	6/10/2012			0	5/10/2013	PAF	20	>20	Y	4
10	6/10/2013			0	5/10/2014	PAF	20	>20	Y	5
11	6/10/2014			0	5/10/2015	PAF	20	>20	Y	6
12	6/10/2015			0	5/10/2016	PAF	20	>20	Y	7
13	6/10/2016			0	5/10/2017	PAF	20	>20	Y	8
14	6/10/2017			0	5/10/2018	PAF	20	>20	Y	9
15	6/10/2018			0	5/10/2019	PAF	20	>20	Y	10
16	6/10/2019			0	5/10/2020	PAF	20	>20	Y	11
17	6/10/2020			0	5/10/2021	PAF	20	>20	Y	12
18	6/10/2021			0	5/10/2022	PAF	20	>20	Y	13
19	6/10/2022	07/10/2022	08/10/2022	0	5/10/2023	PAF/RAR	20	8	N	13
20	6/10/2023			0	5/10/2024	RAR	20	19	N	13
21	6/10/2024			0	5/10/2025	RAR	20	15	N	13
22	6/10/2025			0	5/10/2026	RAR	20		N	13

15. Corporal Van Den Boogaard stated that:

Row 19 (of the spreadsheet) shows a total of 8 days (2 PAF and 6 RSD), followed by 19 days (5 days were carried out in FY24/25 but prior to 06OCT), followed by 15 days. I wish to apply for a review of my determination with the consideration that I have completed 2 financial years of the required reserve service on top of 13 years of PAF.¹³

Defence Report

16. In its report to the Tribunal, Defence stated that following Corporal Van Den Boogaard's application for review, Defence conducted a re-assessment of his eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal and affirmed its decision not to recommend him for the medal.

17. Defence stated that it was unable to confirm the verbal advice that was provided to Corporal Van Den Boogaard, and stated that it assesses all Defence Long Service Medal applications in accordance with the conditions outlined in the relevant medal Regulations and Determinations.¹⁴

¹² Application to Tribunal dated 28 November 2025.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Corporal Van Den Boogaard's telephone call to DH&A referred to in paragraph 12 above.

18. Defence confirmed that the Chief of the Defence Force Determination under the Defence Long Service Regulations, dated 13 April 2000 states that ‘*on and after 20 April 2000 a member will undertake qualifying service for the purpose of the Defence Long Service Medal if the member undertakes a minimum of 20 days service per year calculated at the anniversary of the enlistment or appointment of the member*’.¹⁵

19. Defence submitted that in an effort to benefit Corporal Van Den Boogaard, it had re-assessed his application using two separate methods.

- a. The first method used the anniversary date of Corporal Van Den Boogaard’s enlistment as a permanent member of the Royal Australian Air Force across his entire service history, including for the time after he transitioned to the Air Force Reserves.¹⁶
- b. The second method used Corporal Van Den Boogaard’s permanent Royal Australian Air Force enlistment anniversary date up until he transferred to the Air Force Reserves. After that point, the anniversary date was changed to one year after his reserve enlistment date.¹⁷

20. Defence submitted that both methods produced the same effective outcome, as the latter method only adjusted Corporal Van Den Boogaard’s anniversary date by two days. Defence submitted that the re-assessment confirmed that Corporal Van Den Boogaard had rendered 13 years of qualifying service toward the award of the Defence Long Service Medal and on that basis Defence recommended that the decision to not recommend him for the award be affirmed.¹⁸

Corporal Van Den Boogaard’s comments on the Defence report

21. Corporal Van Den Boogaard was provided with a copy of the Defence report via email on 22 January 2026 and on 19 February 2026 he provided his comments on the Defence report. He stated that

Unfortunately, I do not have any further supporting information to my eligibility as I understand that the legislation supports the decision. My counter argument for the Defence Long Service Medal is based on other entitlements that a reservist also receives for a year’s effective service which is based off a financial year in lieu of an enlistment year, such as DHOAS and the Health Support Allowance. Since Reserve days are granted per financial year it will often be difficult to manage availability to carry out these reserve days to align with my enlistment date to maintain qualifying service.

¹⁵ Defence report dated 21 January 2026.

¹⁶ Ibid, Attachment H.

¹⁷ Ibid, Attachment I.

¹⁸ Ibid.

22. However, Corporal Van Den Boogaard referred to the Defence Report and Defence's use of two methods to assess his service. He submitted:

*if the Tribunal is comfortable steering away from the legislation to assess my eligibility by using my discharge date, then I implore them to assess it again based off financial year or **effective service** like the other entitlements I qualified for. Since I am no longer able to carry out any further reserve days due to health, this is my last effort to apply for recognition for my total time in uniform. I would love to be able to show that milestone for the years to come.*¹⁹

Tribunal hearing

23. The Tribunal noted that it is bound by the eligibility criteria applicable to the award at the time the decision under review was made. There is no discretion available.

24. Corporal Van Den Boogaard acknowledged the decision on his application was based on the legislation and that his service does not meet the requirements for the Defence Long Service Medal. He submitted that his service as a reservist nonetheless met the intent behind the medal.

25. Defence acknowledged that Corporal Van Den Boogaard had undertaken 20 days service each financial year since he transferred to the Reserve. Defence noted however, financial years could not be used to calculate qualifying service. Defence did calculate his qualifying service by taking his original enlistment date, then treating him as though he had discharged before enlisting in the reserves to see whether that would mean he had sufficient qualifying service. Unfortunately it did not.

26. Defence's position was that Corporal Van Den Boogaard has 13 years qualifying service in respect of the Defence Long Service Medal.

27. The Tribunal noted that Corporal Van Den Boogaard's service was not terminated when he transferred to reserve service. The pertinent date to calculate his qualifying service from is 6 October 2009.

28. The Tribunal asked Corporal Van Den Boogaard about his days served, noting that he was working unusual hours. Corporal Van Den Boogaard confirmed that those were his days worked. The Tribunal asked Corporal Van Den Boogaard whether there were any days he had not claimed payment for, but had paraded on. Corporal Van Den Boogaard confirmed that there were not.

29. Corporal Van Den Boogaard did submit that he may have carried out mandatory training remotely. Defence encouraged him to advise it if he had proof of any training undertaken without pay. The Tribunal noted that the evidence did not have to be only that he had been paid for that day, it might be in the form of a Statutory Declaration by the person conducting the training. The Tribunal noted that online mandatory training would likely be included in Corporal Van Den Boogaard's training history. The Tribunal further noted that it was not just days paid at Defence rates of salary that might be qualifying service. Approved days of approved voluntary unpaid service may also be qualifying service.

¹⁹ Corporal Van Den Boogaard, comments on Defence report dated 19 February 2026.

30. The Tribunal then turned to Corporal Van Den Boogaard's submission that the number of days of qualifying service be counted per financial year. The Tribunal noted the decision in the matter of *Roper and the Department of Defence [2024] DHAAT 6*, where the applicant had also submitted that days of service be calculated on a financial year basis. The Tribunal noted, in that decision, calculation of qualifying service based on financial years was considered, but rejected. While it is appropriate that some financial benefits be calculated using financial years, the eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal is unrelated to budget appropriations. Indeed adopting a financial year basis for the Defence Long Service Medal could mean that, unless a member enlisted on 1 July, all service in their first year of enlistment up to 30 June would have to be disregarded.

31. The Tribunal noted the Defence Long Service Medal requires a person to give qualifying service for a period of at least 15 years or periods that amount to 15 years with the initial period beginning on the person's date of enlistment. This means that a person must have served for a period of at least 15 years and given minimum periods of annual qualifying service for each of 15 years. Any year in which the person does not give the minimum period of annual qualifying service does not count as a year for the purposes of the Defence Long Service Medal. The Tribunal noted that the Minister had been approached previously to allow discretion where someone is discharged for reasons such as medical reasons - similar to the Australian Defence Medal - and had rejected that.

32. The Tribunal allowed Corporal Van Den Boogaard five days to provide further material evidencing days of qualifying service he may not have already claimed.

Post Hearing Advice

33. Corporal Van Den Boogaard advised the Tribunal after the hearing that he had two further days of qualifying service that he had not claimed.

34. The Tribunal advised Defence of this and Defence reassessed Corporal Van Den Boogaard's length of qualifying service. Defence noted:

21 July 2023: For the enlistment year 6 October 2022 to 5 October 2023, the number of eligible service days increased from 8 to 9. This enlistment year remains non-efficient, as it does not meet the minimum requirement of 20 eligible days.

4 March 2024: For the enlistment year 6 October 2023 to 5 October 2024, the number of eligible service days increased from 19 to 20. This change now qualifies this enlistment year as efficient.

As a result of the reassessment, Corporal Van Den Boogaard now has 14 qualifying years of service toward eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal.²⁰

Tribunal consideration

35. In determining Corporal Van Den Boogaard's eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal, the Tribunal is required to apply the criteria in the Defence Long Service Medal Regulations as amended on 5 December 2001. Sub regulation 3(1) of the regulations provides that the medal may be awarded to a member of the Defence Force

²⁰ Letter, Defence to the Tribunal, 17 April 2026.

who has given qualifying service for a period of at least 15 years or periods that in total amount to at least 15 years.

36. Service in the Defence Force is qualifying service where it fulfils the requirements specified in directions given by the Chief of the Defence Force and is efficient service. The requirement for qualifying service specified in the Chief of the Defence Force, *Defence Long Service Medal Determination 2021* of 16 March 2021 is that the minimum annual period of service to be completed for a year of qualifying service is *20 days remunerated at Defence rates of salary...* The Regulations and the Determination do not provide for any exception to be made to these criteria. Each year is *calculated at the anniversary of the enlistment or appointment of the member* in accordance with the Australian Defence Medal Determination of 13 April 2021.

37. Corporal Van Den Boogaard's Service Record shows that he joined the RAAF on 6 October 2009 and is still serving. After 13 years full-time service he transferred to the Active Reserve on 8 October 2022. After transferring he was not allotted any reserve days from 8 October 2022 until the financial year commencing 1 July 2023.

38. He next undertook reserve days of service on 14 July 2023. Between 6 October 2022 and 5 October 2023 he completed nine days of qualifying service, noting the Defence advice of 17 April 2026. From 6 October 2023 until 5 October 2024, he performed 20 days of qualifying service, again noting the Defence advice of 17 April 2026. Between 6 October 2024 and 5 October 2025 Corporal Van Den Boogaard completed 15 days of qualifying service. Corporal Van Den Boogaard has not completed any further qualifying service since 23 May 2025.

39. This means that, while Corporal Van Den Boogaard has served for over 15 years, he has not met the requirement of giving qualifying service for periods that amount to 15 years. He currently has 14 years of qualifying service. This means he has not fulfilled the criteria for the Defence Long Service Medal.

40. Corporal Van Den Boogaard submitted his 13 years of Permanent Air Force Service and two consecutive financial years of 20 days reserve service should be sufficient to qualify for the Defence Long Service Medal.²¹ Corporal Van Den Boogaard noted that various benefits arising from service were calculated using financial years.

41. This issue of whether it is appropriate to calculate qualifying service using financial years or calendar years, has been considered in a number of matters before the Tribunal, including *Clarke and the Department of Defence [2022] DHAAT 06* and *Roper*. Notwithstanding various Defence benefits may be calculated based on financial years, it is clear from the Chief of the Defence Force Determination of 13 April 2000 that service should be calculated at the anniversary of enlistment.

42. In *Roper* the Tribunal considered the matter of whether it was appropriate to calculate the eligibility for the DSLM using financial years. The Tribunal said:

36. Corporal Roper noted that various other aspects of relevant Defence service are based on financial years. His annual allocation of Reserve service days is made on a financial year basis. And benefits under the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme are also based on a financial year. However, as each of those aspects are dependent upon the availability of Parliamentary appropriations

²¹ Application to Tribunal, dated 28 November 2025.

and as such are provided on a financial year basis, aligning each with a financial year appears to the Tribunal to be fully appropriate.

37. In contrast, eligibility for the Defence Long Service Medal and Clasps is totally unrelated to budget appropriations and thus there is no reason why a financial year basis of calculation would be correspondingly appropriate in that context.

38. Indeed, in the Tribunal's view, adopting a financial year basis would be quite inappropriate. Doing so would mean that, unless a member enlisted on 1 July, all service in their first year of enlistment up to 30 June would have to be disregarded. Similarly, if a member discharged other than on 30 June, all service in their final year between 1 July and their date of discharge would have to be disregarded. Similar results would occur if a calendar year basis were adopted in preference to an anniversary year basis. As the purpose of the Defence Long Service Medal is clearly to recognise service, it would be most anomalous to adopt an eligibility criterion that ignored potentially significant periods of service that had in fact been rendered.

43. This Tribunal agrees with the view in *Roper*. Further the Tribunal agrees with the decision in *Roper* that the anniversary year basis affords the most appropriate method of calculating service actually rendered. Therefore it is not appropriate to recommend to the Minister that the eligibility criterion be amended to align the calculation of years of service to financial years.

‘Efficient service’

44. For the sake of completeness, the Tribunal endorsed the following observations in relation to the issue of ‘efficient service’ which were highlighted in the Tribunal decision in *Clarke and the Department of Defence [2022] DHAAT 06*:

‘Regulation 5(a)(ii) provides that service can only be qualifying service if during that time the member gave efficient service, defined as service determined to be efficient service by the Chief of the Defence Force. It is an essential separate criterion, in addition to meeting the number of qualifying years of service.

There does not appear to be any current operative Determination by the Chief of the Defence Force of efficient service, the 6 February 2013 Determination having been revoked by the 2021 Chief of the Defence Force Determination, and the previous 13 April 2000 Determination only referring to service prior to 20 April 2000 as efficient service.

The various Chief of the Defence Force Determinations sets out minimum annual periods of service to be completed for a year of qualifying service. They make no mention of what amounts to efficient service.

Defence appears to assume that if a member serves for the requisite number of qualifying years, that member has given efficient service. This is a conflation of two discrete criteria. It is inconsistent with the Regulations which require a separate assessment of efficient service in accordance with a Determination by the Chief of the Defence Force.’

45. In Corporal Van Den Boogaard's case it was unnecessary to consider whether he gave efficient service as he did not satisfy the 15 qualifying years' of service criterion.

46. Defence did also assess Corporal Van Den Boogaard service by treating his transfer from the permanent Air Force to the Reserve Force as a discharge and reengagement. While this did not assist Corporal Van Den Boogaard to meet the criteria, the Tribunal notes that Corporal Van Den Boogaard was not discharged and re-engaged. The relevant date to calculate the anniversary of his enlistment is 6 October 2009, not the date on which he transferred to the Reserve Force.

47. The Tribunal noted Corporal Van Den Boogaard has served for over 15 years. He has 14 years in which he served for the minimum annual period of service required to be completed for a year of qualifying service. He does not have 15 years of qualifying service.

Tribunal findings

48. The Tribunal finds Corporal Van Den Boogaard has served in the RAAF for over 15 years. He however has not given qualifying service for a period or periods that in total amount to 15 years. He therefore is not eligible for the award of the Defence Long Service Medal.

Tribunal decision

49. For the above reasons, the Tribunal decided:

- a. to affirm the decision that Corporal Van Den Boogaard not be recommended for the Defence Long Service Medal; and
- b. not to recommend to the Minister that the eligibility criteria for the Defence Long Service Medal be amended.