

INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 1)

Senator Dave Sharma asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 7 February 2025:

1. The Defence submission says Defence may consider whether an honorary award or recognition can be applied where a foreign national is attached or embedded with the ADF. What instructions are given to our commanders about ADF personnel who may be in theatre but not as part of the ADF's deployed force (ie: Defence attaches deployed at the instruction or orders of the ADF with DFAT in a theatre where the ADF is not present). In theatre where they are engaging with other ADF elements on a regular basis, what responsibility does the ADF have to make sure that person is suitably recognised for their service?
2. Has the Defence Force ever disciplined or investigated someone for replacing a nominator in a chain of command or narrative?
3. Have they ever investigated where things have been changed without permission or knowledge?
4. Has there ever been disciplinary action taken over the handling internally of a nomination?
5. If there is no definition for "in action" why do we have two terms for those who die in active service; "killed in action", and "killed on active service"?

Defence provides the following answer:

1. It is a key responsibility of command to identify and nominate individuals and groups for recognition when it is deemed appropriate. Defence Attachés are not eligible for operational service awards as they are not force assigned specifically to conduct operational duties. All ADF personnel are eligible for consideration for recognition in the broader suite of awards, including awards in the Defence Commendation Scheme, or honours where an individual demonstrates significant personal contributions in their role.
2. Defence is not aware of any disciplinary action regarding amendments to nominations.
3. No.
4. No.
5. Defence defines the term 'Killed in Action' to refer to incidents where a member is killed by the enemy or third-party threat group, while participating in a recognised conflict. The term 'Killed on Active Service' refers to incidents where a member is killed for reasons other than engagement with the enemy, while on a named warlike operation.