

Afghanistan Evacuation Troops Earn Unit Awards

Military services will expedite the review process for individuals and units who met the standards

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Troops who helped the evacuation during the Afghanistan War's final days will be eligible to receive a Meritorious Unit Commendation or the equivalent.

On Aug. 31, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III announced that all troops present at Hamid Karzai International Airport from Aug. 15-30, 2021, are eligible for a meritorious unit ribbon.

Austin also announced that the military services will expedite the review process for individuals and units who met the standards to receive a Presidential Unit Citation or the "appropriate" award.

"No words can properly honor the deeds we recognize with these awards," Austin said in an Aug. 31 statement. "What these awards reflect — and what I hope the units who receive them will feel — is the gratitude and love of our nation. I hope these awards serve as a reminder to each and every service member who wears them of the lives they helped save and the thanks of the nation and Department of Defense they serve so well."

In addition, a September article from the Military Times claimed that Austin wrote a memo that stated that the National Defense Service Medal will not be automatically awarded to troops after the end of the year. The change indicates that the Department of Defense is "preparing to truly transition the military out of a wartime posture," according to the news outlet.

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