



COMMONWEALTH  
DROWNING  
PREVENTION

**THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY**

**COMMONWEALTH HONOURS &  
AWARDS HANDBOOK**

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## HONOURS

### INTRODUCTION

The Royal Life Saving Society gratefully acknowledges the invaluable contributions of time, effort and dedication given by its many members around the Commonwealth and takes immense pride in acknowledging these contributions.

To recognise outstanding contributions, Commonwealth Honours are awarded to individuals and organisations.

The Honours system recognises the work of volunteers. Therefore, members of staff are ineligible for consideration during the period of their employment but could, if applicable, receive the Commonwealth Headquarters Commendation or Commonwealth Service Order. Similarly, the Honours system does not recognize paid work, even if that work falls in line with Royal Life Saving Society aims and objectives, such as the work of paid lifeguards, council/government officers or teachers.

### ELIGIBILITY

The Society's awards and honours, except for the Commonwealth Service Order recognise those individuals who voluntarily offer their time and service to the furthering of the Society's mission of drowning prevention.

During their tenure in office, professional staff of the Society or any of its Member Organisations are ineligible to receive any honours, except for the Commonwealth Headquarters Commendation and the Commonwealth Service Order.

Nominees for awards and honours are not required to be members of the Society, except where specifically noted. In all cases nominees must, however, have contributed to the furthering of the Society's mission of drowning prevention.

Similarly, any organisation that supports the Society's mission of drowning prevention is eligible for honours that recognise groups or organisations, regardless of nation of incorporation or origin, so long as the way the organisation supported the Society's mission is clearly explained in the nomination form.

Certain awards and honours may have eligibility criteria that varies from the general rules in place for all awards. Please ensure you review both the general eligibility criteria, and the criteria for the specific honour a nominee is being put forward for, so that nominations are not delayed.

## RECOGNITION OF STAFF/PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS

To avoid any confusion, members of staff/professional officers of the Society or any of its Member Organisations are ineligible to receive any honours during their term of employment, with two exceptions. Staff members who meet the appropriate criteria may be awarded the Commonwealth Headquarters Commendation and/or the Commonwealth Service Order.

Further, time spent as a staff member or professional officer for the Society or any of its Member Organisations cannot be counted towards eligibility for any of the volunteer honours set out in this handbook.

Where an individual has time spent as a volunteer that is distinct from their time as a staff member/professional officer, that distinction must be clearly documented in the nomination. Nominations for former staff members must include a declaration in the nomination form of the start and end dates of their employment so that the Commonwealth Honours Committee may have an accurate picture of their volunteer service versus paid employment.

The Society recognises the valuable contributions made by staff towards our mission. The remuneration that staff members/professional officers receive for their service, however, sets them in a separate category when it comes to recognition.

## NOMINATION PROCEDURE

Each Member Organisation in good standing is eligible to nominate individuals or organisations for relevant Honours following the criteria listed in this document.

Member Organisations should make every effort to ensure that all those who are eligible for honours are recognised, but any nominations must follow the stated criteria listed in this document.

Individuals and organisations are eligible for recognition using the Commonwealth Honours system if they provide any contribution to the furthering of the Society's mission of drowning prevention (at any level - local, regional, national or Commonwealth) that falls within the nomination criteria. Certain Honours require specific levels of contribution (e.g., Commonwealth Vice President) which is specified under the award description and nomination criteria.

No individual or organisation may nominate themselves.

To avoid both the appearance of, and any actual, conflict of interest, officers or staff should not nominate or be involved in the vetting of nominations for members of their immediate families.

Being a competitor in lifesaving and lifeguarding competitions is not considered volunteer service to the Society. In cases where competitors function as volunteer coaches or officials in competitions where they are not personally competing this service may be recognised as voluntary service to the Society provided it is clearly separated from any competing the individual has undertaken. The Society does not recognise that any individual can volunteer in any significant manner for a competition in which they are also a competitor.

Similarly, the Commonwealth Honours are not meant to recognise individuals who have undertaken the rescue of individuals in distress or drowning. In such cases recognition should be in the form of an appropriate national rescue award or via nomination for a Society Bravery Award (see pages 19-23).

Simply accruing lifesaving awards or teaching qualifications does not make a volunteer eligible for an award. Please do not list lifesaving or teaching qualifications earned by an individual in their honour nomination, but instead describe how the individual has used the qualifications to benefit the Member Organisation.

Similarly, simply holding an honorary title or position, without doing any work to further the mission of the Society, does not make an individual eligible to receive an award or honour. In all cases it must be clearly demonstrated in the nomination form what service/work the individual being nominated has undertaken on behalf of the Society.

Nominations are to be made through a Member Organisation on the appropriate nomination form (all nomination forms are available as separate documents). It is the responsibility of the Member Organisation to approve the nominations prior to sending them through to the Commonwealth Headquarters. All nominations for higher Society Honours (Life Member/Life Governor/Vice President) must have the endorsement of the Member Organisation National Board/Executive Committee.

To ensure that all deserving individuals and organisations are recognised, the Deputy Commonwealth President, Portfolio Directors and Commission/Committee/Task Force Chairs are also eligible to nominate individuals for Commonwealth Honours and other forms of recognition as may be appropriate. Member Organisations will be consulted about any local nominations and asked if there is any reason the award cannot be made (conflict of interest, disciplinary issues, etc.).

Completed nomination forms (using bullet points or long form notes where appropriate) detailing the actions and services performed to meet the nomination criteria are required for all awards (sample completed forms are available for clarity). The type of service, years of service and level of service, performance and/or contribution, together with details of any previous Honours received (including the year granted) should be included. These notes will be considered by the Commonwealth Honours Committee when approving awards. Only details of the individuals' contributions and/or service since their last award is required unless otherwise noted in the honour criteria. Member Organisations are highly encouraged to expand upon these nominations for award ceremony presentations, but only the information required for nomination should be sent in on the nomination forms to Commonwealth Headquarters.

## CROSS-BRANCH NOMINATIONS

In cases where an individual's service to the Society crosses borders between different Member Organisations of the Society, clear communication is necessary to ensure that the service is recognised appropriately.

Typically, an individual's Home Organisation (that is, the Member Organisation of RLSS in the nation that the individual holds citizenship in, and that is normally their nation of residence) would be expected to submit any nomination for awards and honours for that individual.

In cases where a second Member Organisation of RLSS that is not the nominee's Home Organisation wishes to nominate an individual for an award or honour they must first contact the individual's Home Organisation to ensure that a nomination is not already being undertaken. This check is also to help ensure that the individual is in good standing and not under disciplinary action or suspension by their Home Organisation, and/or otherwise ineligible to receive an award or honour.

## POSTHUMOUS HONOURS

Any of the honours listed in this handbook may be awarded posthumously, except where otherwise explicitly noted.

Where a nomination is being submitted for the awarding of a posthumous honour this fact should be noted on the form.

Typically, a nomination for a posthumous honour should be submitted within two years of the end of the year in which the individual passed away. So, for an individual who passed away in March 2021, nominations would need to be submitted by December 31, 2023.

In cases where nominations are submitted more than two years after an individual has passed away clear information on the reason for the delay must be included in the nomination form. The Commonwealth Honours Committee will review the reasons for the delay and decide on eligibility. Approval of such honours will not be automatic.

## NOMINATION FORMS

The Commonwealth Honours Nomination Form (available from the RLSS website) must be completed for all nominations and submitted to the National Office of the Member Organisation. Once the Member Organisation has approved all nominations, they must complete the summary spreadsheet (available as a separate document) and forward it to Commonwealth Headquarters along with the Commonwealth Honours Nomination Forms.

## COMMONWEALTH HONOURS COMMITTEE

The Commonwealth Honours Committee will review and recommend all nominations for Honours.

The Committee shall have the authority to approve on behalf of the Board of Trustees all Honours up to and including Commonwealth Honorary Life Governor. All nominations for Commonwealth Vice President Honours must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

The terms of reference for this Committee are attached as Appendix A.

## COMMONWEALTH HONOURS TIMELINE

Nominations will be accepted by the Commonwealth Headquarters twice a year on the following timeline:

Activity	Round 1	Round 2
Nominations received at CW HQ for Admin Review	By 8th February	By 8th August
Nominations sent to Honours Committee	By 16 <sup>th</sup> February	By 16 <sup>th</sup> August
Honours Committee approval to CW HQ	By 02 <sup>nd</sup> March	By 02 <sup>nd</sup> September
Lists sent to printer for production of draft awards	By 09 <sup>th</sup> March	By 09 <sup>th</sup> September
Draft versions of certificates distributed to Member Organisations for approval	By 20th March	By 20 <sup>th</sup> September
Final Member Organisation approval of certificates to be received at CW HQ	By 25th March	By 25th September
Final approved certificates sent to printer	By 28th March	By 28th September
Awards arrive at CW HQ & dispatched to Member Organisations	After 10 <sup>th</sup> April	After 10 <sup>th</sup> October

***If any date falls on a weekend, then it shall be moved to the Monday after. There may be delay to these deadlines should any queries arise about the nominations.***

It will be the responsibility of each Member Organisation to advise the recipients of their award and to arrange suitable presentation. For Commonwealth Vice President awards, the Member Organisation will be responsible for advising the recipient of the award, but Commonwealth Headquarters will invite the recipient to have their award presented at a Commonwealth event. If the recipient is unable to attend, it will be the responsibility of the Member Organisation to arrange a suitable presentation.

## CERTIFICATE REPRINTS

Reprints of certificates will be accepted during the regular submission “rounds” specified in the Commonwealth Honours Timeline. Requests for reprints must be submitted to Commonwealth Headquarters on the Commonwealth Honours Reprint List spreadsheet (available as a separate document).

If the requirement for the reprint is a fault of the printer, then this cost will be met by Commonwealth Headquarters. If the fault is from the Member Organisation and/or the checking process, the Member Organisation will be responsible for the cost.

## SUMMARY OF HONOURS

### HONOURS AVAILABLE FOR INDIVIDUALS - VOLUNTEERS

Certificate of Thanks  
Commonwealth Headquarters Commendation  
Service Commendation  
Service Medal & Bar to Service Medal  
Service Cross & Bar to Service Cross  
Commonwealth Honorary Life Member  
Commonwealth Honorary Life Governor  
Commonwealth Vice President

Research Honour

### HONOURS AVAILABLE FOR ORGANISATIONS

Certificate of Thanks  
Commonwealth President's Award

### HONOURS AVAILABLE FOR STAFF MEMBERS/PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS

Commonwealth Headquarters Commendation  
Commonwealth Service Order

## HONOURS CRITERIA

### CERTIFICATE OF THANKS

- To recognise contributions or service by individuals, clubs, partner organisations, schools, etc.
- For short term service or contributions to Society activities.
- Nominations for this honour may be submitted by any member nation of the Royal Life Saving Society, including Emerging Member Organisations.
- This honour may be awarded more than once to an individual/organisation that does not qualify for higher honours but continues to contribute to the Society.

### COMMONWEALTH PRESIDENT'S AWARD

- To recognise exceptional contributions or service by sub-branches, clubs, partner organisations, schools, etc.
- For continuing and sustained contributions or service to the activities or operations of the Society.
- Typically, organisations nominated for this honour will have previously received a Certificate of Thanks and have provided four or more years of service to the Society.
- Not available to individuals.
- Nominations for this honour may be submitted by any member nation of the Royal Life Saving Society, including Emerging Member Organisations
- This honour may be awarded more than once to organisations that maintain the required level of contribution or service to the Society. Typically, a period of four years is expected between nominations where a second or subsequent honour is to be awarded.

### COMMONWEALTH HEADQUARTERS COMMENDATION

- Awarded to individuals who have provided contributions or service directly to the operations of the RLSS Commonwealth Headquarters or to any of the boards, committees, working groups or task forces that form part of the operations of the RLSS Commonwealth Office.
- May be presented to both volunteers and staff/professional officers.
- May be awarded concurrently with any of the other Commonwealth Honours as set out in this document.
- Performed outstanding\*\* service as a volunteer or a staff member/professional officer.
- This award may be made more than once to those individuals who maintain the required level of outstanding service/involvement in Society operations.

### SERVICE COMMENDATION

- Available only to individuals.
- Minimum of 2 years involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- Performed outstanding\*\* service as an active volunteer.

### SERVICE MEDAL

- Available only to individuals.
- Minimum of 4 years involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- Performed outstanding\*\* service as an active volunteer.

- The nomination form should only cover the period commencing from the date of the individual's last honour.

### BAR TO SERVICE MEDAL

- Available only to individuals who have previously earned the Service Medal.
- Minimum of 8 years involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- Performed outstanding\*\* service as an active volunteer.
- The nomination form should only cover the period commencing from the date of the individual's last honour which must be a minimum of 4 years prior to the date of nomination.

### SERVICE CROSS

- Normally available only to individuals who have previously earned the Service Medal and Bar to Service Medal.
- Minimum of 12 years of involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- Performed outstanding\*\* service as an active volunteer.
- Nominations for this award for individuals who have not previously received a Service Medal and Bar to Service Medal will be reviewed by the Commonwealth Honours Committee and the Board of Trustees and are not subject to automatic ratification.
- The nomination form should only cover the period commencing from the date of the individual's last honour which must be a minimum of 4 years prior to the date of nomination.

### BAR TO SERVICE CROSS

- Available only to individuals who have previously earned the Service Cross.
- Minimum of 16 years of involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- Performed outstanding\*\* service as an active volunteer.
- The nomination form should only cover the period commencing from the date of the individual's last honour which must be a minimum of 4 years prior to the date of nomination.
- The standard progression of Honours will see an individual receive two Bars to Service Cross before being eligible for the next level of Honour.
- Bars to Service Cross will continue to be awarded every four years to those individuals ineligible for the next level of Honour, but who maintain the required level of service/involvement.

### COMMONWEALTH HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

- Nominees must be exemplary representatives of the Society and have contributed in a substantial and measurable way to the Society's mission.
- Available only to individuals who have previously earned the minimum of a Service Cross.
- Minimum of 24 years of involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- Usually reserved for a member of a National or Commonwealth Committee who has given exemplary\*\* service to the Society.
- Nominations for this award for candidates who have not served on a National or Commonwealth Committee will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and are not subject to automatic ratification.
- As this award recognizes life achievement with the Society, a summary of the individuals' entire history of involvement with the Society is required.

### COMMONWEALTH HONORARY LIFE GOVERNOR

- Nominees must be exemplary representatives of the Society and have contributed in a substantial and measurable way to the Society's mission.
- Available only to individuals who have previously been named a Commonwealth Honorary Life Member.

- Minimum of 28 years of involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- Usually reserved for a member of a National or Commonwealth Council who has given exemplary\*\* service to the Society
- Nominations for this award for candidates who have not served on a National or Commonwealth Committee will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and are not subject to automatic ratification.
- As this award recognizes life achievement with the Society a summary of the individuals' entire history of involvement with the Society is required.

## COMMONWEALTH VICE PRESIDENT

- This is the Society's highest honour and is available to individuals who have given outstanding and exemplary service to the Society over a lengthy and sustained period.
- Available to individuals who have previously been named a Commonwealth Honorary Life Governor and have been a member of a National or Commonwealth Council.
- Minimum of 32 years of involvement/service in an active volunteer role. \*
- National Presidents and Honorary Commonwealth position holders (past or present) may be eligible for consideration for this Honour regardless of time served and previous honours received.
- Nominations for this honour for candidates who have not served on a National or Commonwealth Committee will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and are not subject to automatic ratification.
- As this award recognizes life achievement with the Society a summary of the individuals' entire history of involvement with the Society is required.
- For National Presidents and Honorary Commonwealth position holders a full summary of their involvement with the Society must be submitted with their nomination.

## COMMONWEALTH SERVICE ORDER

- A past or present professional officer or a member of staff of a Member Organisation who has supported and assisted the activities of the Commonwealth Headquarters and/or provided development support to lifesaving organisations in other Commonwealth nations
- Minimum of 5 years continuous and outstanding service.
- This Honour is only awarded to staff who have provided support to RLSS Commonwealth Headquarters or to another Member Organisation that is not their home branch.
- This honour may be awarded every 5 years to those individuals who maintain the required level of contribution/outstanding service to the Society.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES ON CRITERIA

### NOMINATION PERIOD:

Service should be calculated up to December 31st of the year prior to a nomination being submitted. So, nominations submitted in 2022 would calculate the number of years of service up to December 31, 2021.

### LENGTH OF SERVICE/TIME:

Length of time for active service/involvement should be continuous, although flexibility may be given where there has been an explained break in service. For example, an individual who has contributed a total of four years of service over a five-year period, where one year was lost due to medical issues/illness, would be eligible for a Service Medal.

**\*ACTIVE VOLUNTEER ROLES:**

Active Volunteer involvement/service can be undertaken as an instructor, examiner, trainer, coach, official, commission or committee member, director, officer, or other representative of the Society.

An individual is a volunteer if they undertake work for the Society for which no compensation (other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses) is received.

During the time-period specified involvement/service could be conducted in several roles. Except for purposes of the Certificate of Thanks, a general guideline is that an active volunteer will be an individual who has contributed 50 hours or more of voluntary service in a given calendar year.

**\*\*OUTSTANDING SERVICE:**

The individual performed ongoing exceptional and meritorious service during the period stated by representing the Society in a professional manner. They promoted the Society in its mission, vision, and values throughout the period of service and/or furthered the work of the Society.

**STARTING AGE FOR SERVICE:**

Individuals will be considered eligible for volunteer recognition starting at the age of 12 years provided that all criteria are met regarding length of service, contributions, or achievement by individuals.

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## **RESEARCH HONOUR**

This honour recognises a leading drowning prevention researcher whose achievements have significantly impacted on the Society and its work and have contributed to our global drowning prevention mission.

### **NOMINATION PROCEDURE**

The 'research honour' is not available for self-nomination but is available for nominations from Commonwealth committees / organisations / groups and individuals. The nomination should be accompanied with a rationale around the nominee's significant contribution to drowning prevention, especially around research.

To be considered for the 'research honour', the person should have shown a significant contribution to drowning prevention (this could be via research, or research and service e.g. organising an international conference, or workshop, or writing white papers etc). The 'research honour' is not intended for someone starting out, they should have spent some time in the drowning prevention area. They should not be a student (including a PhD student). It would also be preferable that they have presented their research at the World Drowning Prevention Conference, or other relevant international conferences. Where possible their research should be accessible, either via open access or a repository such as ResearchGate where people can ask to see the research.

Ideally, the nominee would have previously received a Diploma. However, holding a Diploma award is not a mandatory pre-requisite.

It is preferred the nominee would be from a RLSS member organisation or a commonwealth country. However, the primary awarding criteria would be the significance of their contribution and commitment to drowning prevention research and a record of achievement.

There would be a maximum of three 'research honours' awarded each year, and in some years, it may not be awarded. Where possible a mix of males and females, people from differing geographic regions, and nationalities.

The 'research honour' shall be announced annually on World Drowning Prevention Day – 25 July.

### **RESEARCH HONOUR – AWARDING CRITERIA SUMMARY**

1. a leading drowning prevention researcher whose achievements have significantly impacted on the Society and its work and have contributed to our global drowning prevention mission.
2. the person should have made a significant and sustained contribution to drowning prevention (this could be via research, or research and service e.g. organising an international conference, or workshop, or writing white papers etc).
3. preferred the nominee would be from a RLSS member organisation or a commonwealth country, but not mandatory.
4. nomination should be accompanied with a rationale around the nominees significant contribution to drowning prevention especially around research.
5. research should be accessible, either via open access or a repository such as ResearchGate where people can ask to see the research.

## RESEARCH HONOUR – ADMINISTRATION PROCESS

To nominate an individual for a Research Honour the nominee must complete the Honours Nomination Form and return it to [Commonwealthadmin@rlss.org.uk](mailto:Commonwealthadmin@rlss.org.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> March each year.

RLSS Commonwealth Headquarters will seek verification from the nominated persons Member Organisation where applicable.

All nominations will be reviewed by the Diploma Chair of Reviewers plus two other Reviewers as identified by the Chair and if required consultation will be sought from the Reviewer Panel. A recommendation will be made to June Board of Trustees Meeting for their approval so that the individual(s) can be notified and a formal announcement made on 25<sup>th</sup> July each year.

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## **AWARDS**

### **SERVICE AWARDS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In addition to recognising the outstanding work conducted by its volunteers via its Honours system, the Society has three Service Awards which acknowledge and applaud service in the field of Lifesaving. These Service Awards are:

- King Edward VII Cup
- HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit (Service)
- Commonwealth Young Lifesaver of the Year

#### **NOMINATION PROCEDURE**

Each Member Organisation is eligible to nominate individuals or organisations for relevant Service Awards following the criteria listed below.

In addition, to ensure that all deserving individuals are recognised, the Deputy Commonwealth President, Portfolio Directors and Commission/ Committee/Task Force Chairs are eligible to nominate individuals for Commonwealth Honours, Service Awards and other forms of recognition as may be appropriate. Member Organisations will be advised of any local nominations and asked if there is any reason the award cannot be made (conflict of interest, disciplinary issues, etc.).

Nominations are to be made through the Member Organisation on the appropriate nomination form (available as separate documents). It is the responsibility of the Member Organisation to approve the nominations prior to sending them through to the Commonwealth Headquarters.

#### **COMMONWEALTH SERVICE AWARDS TIMELINE**

Nominations for the King Edward VII Cup will be accepted every two years (in even numbered years).

Nominations for the HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit (Service) will be accepted at any time during the year.

Nominations for the Commonwealth Young Lifesaver of the Year will be accepted on the same timeline as the Round 1 Honours submissions each year.

## KING EDWARD VII CUP

To mark the patronage as our first Royal Patron, King Edward VII presented a Cup to the Society for an international competition. The first such event was held in 1903 and was won by a team from the English Amateur Swimming Association but subsequently the basis of the competition was altered to meet changing patterns of lifesaving activity and organisation.

In 1985 the Commonwealth Council endorsed the recommendation that “The King Edward VII Cup be retained and that the Council invite nominations from National Branches for its award in each Quinquennial Conference year to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to lifesaving and that the winner be presented with the Cup during the Quinquennial Commonwealth Conference”. It was first awarded under these criteria in 1986. It was later agreed that any member of the RLSS throughout the Commonwealth (i.e. individuals and member organisations) could be nominated for the award. It has since been agreed that the King Edward VII Cup shall be awarded every two years (in even numbered years).

### Procedural Notes

Nominees must have made a significant contribution to the Royal Life Saving Society and to lifesaving and drowning prevention in their own country and internationally in upholding the mission, motto and values of the RLSS over an extended period, typically greater than 15 years. Further, the Nominee ideally would have made these significant contributions in a voluntary capacity for a majority of their service.

Nominations are accepted every two years (in even numbered years) and must be submitted to the Commonwealth Headquarters on the King Edward VII Cup Nomination Form (available as a separate document).

Nominations will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees, and they will make a final decision on recipients.

The successful nominee will be awarded with an engraved medallion, Certificate, a framed acknowledgement of the award and a photograph of the Cup, and have their name inscribed on a plaque showing all King Edward VII Cup recipients. The nominee’s citation will be included on the relevant page of the RLSS website.

The successful nominee(s), and their Member Organisation(s), will be notified by Commonwealth Headquarters following the Board of Trustees decision. Commonwealth Headquarters will invite the recipient to have their award presented at a Commonwealth event if one can be held within 12 months of the notification. If the recipient is unable to attend, or a Commonwealth event is unavailable, Commonwealth Headquarters will liaise with the Member Organisation to arrange a suitable presentation event in a timely manner.

### HRH PRINCE MICHAEL OF KENT CERTIFICATE OF MERIT (SERVICE)

The HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit was launched by the Royal Life Saving Society in March 2003 to commemorate the 25 years that His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent GVC O had been the Society's Commonwealth President.

The Commonwealth President awards the certificate for outstanding service to the Society. This award would be recommended for any volunteer who has already received a Commonwealth Vice President Honour and is still contributing to the Society in an outstanding way or to anyone who has represented the Society in an exemplary way but cannot be recognized via the Honours system.

The award is at the discretion of His Royal Highness who has agreed that only 2-3 such Certificates will be awarded annually.

## Procedural Notes

Nominees must have a long history of exemplary and outstanding service to the Royal Life Saving Society, in their own country and to the RLSS internationally.

Nominations will be accepted at any time of year and must be submitted to the Commonwealth Headquarters on the HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit (Service) Nomination Form (available as a separate document).

Nominations will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees prior to being sent to HRH Prince Michael of Kent GVCO for approval.

The successful nominee(s), and their Member Organisation(s), will be notified by Commonwealth Headquarters following approval by HRH Prince Michael of Kent GVCO. Commonwealth Headquarters will invite the recipient to have their award presented at a Commonwealth event if one can be held within 12 months of the notification. If the recipient is unable to attend, or a Commonwealth event is unavailable, Commonwealth Headquarters will liaise with the Member Organisation to arrange a suitable presentation event in a timely manner.

## COMMONWEALTH YOUNG LIFESAVER OF THE YEAR

In 2015 to coincide with the Commonwealth Theme of “A Young Commonwealth” the Society established the Commonwealth Young Lifesaver of the Year award. This award recognizes those young volunteers who are the future of the organisation. Each recipient is an individual whose voluntary contributions and achievements have significantly impacted on the Society and its work and have assisted in our global drowning prevention mission.

## Procedural Notes

Each Member Organisation may select one individual as the Commonwealth Young Lifesaver of the Year for their country each year. This nomination does not require any Commonwealth ratification, but the Commonwealth Headquarters will issue the certificate for the Award.

Nominees must be under the age of 30 on December 31st of the year for which they are being nominated.

Nominees must be a member of the RLSS in their home country and an active volunteer for their Member Organisation.

Nominees must have made a significant contribution to drowning prevention in their Member Organisation through their voluntary work with the Society.

Drowning prevention efforts are “all activities that make someone safe in, on, or near water.”



Nominations are accepted on an annual basis and must be submitted to the Commonwealth Office on the Commonwealth Young Lifesaver of the Year Nomination Form (available as a separate document) along with Round 1 Honours nominations each year (i.e. for service conducted in 2021, nominations are due by February 9, 2022).

Successful nominees will be notified by their Member Organisation following production of the Award certificate. The Member Organisation will also be responsible for arranging a suitable presentation for the award.

## BRAVERY AWARDS

### INTRODUCTION

The Society's Bravery Awards acknowledge and applaud acts of bravery in the field of lifesaving. The Bravery Awards consist of the following:

- HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit (Bravery)
- The Mountbatten Medal
- The Russell Medal

### NOMINATION PROCEDURE

Each Member Organisation is eligible to nominate individuals for relevant Bravery Awards following the criteria listed below.

In addition, to ensure that all deserving individuals are recognised, the Deputy Commonwealth President, Portfolio Directors and Commission/ Committee/Task Force Chairs are eligible to nominate individuals for Commonwealth Bravery Awards and other forms of recognition as may be appropriate. Member Organisations will be advised of any local nominations and asked if there is any reason the award cannot be made (conflict of interest, disciplinary issues, etc.).

Nominations are to be made through the Member Organisation of the individual on the appropriate nomination form. It is the responsibility of the Member Organisation to approve the nominations prior to sending them through to the Commonwealth Headquarters.

### COMMONWEALTH BRAVERY AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Commonwealth Bravery Awards Committee will review and recommend all nominations for the Mountbatten and Russell Medals. The terms of reference for this Committee are attached as Appendix B.

Nominations for the HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit will be forwarded to and approved by HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO.

### COMMONWEALTH BRAVERY AWARDS TIMELINE

Nominations for the HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit (Bravery) will be accepted any time during the year.

Nominations for the Mountbatten and Russell Medals are due by 28th February in the year following the rescue (i.e. for rescues conducted in 2021, nominations are due by 28th February 2022).

## **HRH PRINCE MICHAEL OF KENT CERTIFICATE OF MERIT (BRAVERY)**

The HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit was launched by the Royal Life Saving Society in March 2003 to commemorate the 25 years that His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent GVC O CD had been the Society's Commonwealth President.

The Commonwealth President awards the Certificate for outstanding acts of bravery in an aquatic environment by an individual(s) not eligible for the Mountbatten Medal or Russell Medal.

The award is at the discretion of His Royal Highness who has agreed that only 2-3 such Certificates will be awarded annually.

### **Procedural Notes**

Nominations will be accepted at any time of year and must be submitted to the Commonwealth Headquarters on the HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit (Bravery) Nomination Form (available as a separate document).

Nominations will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees prior to being sent to HRH Prince Michael of Kent GVC O for approval.

Successful nominees will be notified through their Member Organisation after the Board of Trustees has received notification of HRH Prince Michael of Kent's decision. It is the responsibility of the Member Organisation to notify the nominee, but Commonwealth Headquarters will invite the recipient to have their award presented at a Commonwealth event. If the recipient is unable to attend it will be the responsibility of the Member Organisation to arrange a suitable presentation.

## MOUNTBATTEN MEDAL

The Mountbatten Medal was instituted in 1951 by the Society's then Grand President, The Earl of Mountbatten of Burma and its annual award is made for the most gallant rescue or rescue attempt undertaken in the previous year (1st January-31st December) by an individual who has taken Royal Life Saving Society training or holds or has held a lifesaving award delivered by a Royal Life Saving Society Member Organisation. The rescue or rescue attempt must be made by a citizen from a Commonwealth Nation but can be in any country throughout the world.

### Procedural Notes

Only one Mountbatten Medal may be awarded in any calendar year. In exceptional circumstances the Commonwealth Bravery Awards Committee may recommend that a Letter of Commendation be issued to individuals where the award of the Mountbatten Medal cannot be made.

The Mountbatten Medal Nomination Form (available as a separate document) should be returned to the National office of the Member Organisation of the Society in which the incident took place for the Member Organisation to process prior to forwarding to the Commonwealth Headquarters. If there is no RLSS Member Organisation for the country concerned, the nomination form should be sent direct to the Commonwealth Headquarters.

The nomination form should be completed as soon as possible after the incident and forwarded to the Commonwealth Headquarters no later than February 28<sup>th</sup> of the year following the rescue.

Successful nominees will be notified through their Member Organisation following confirmation of the Award by the Board of Trustees. It is the responsibility of the Member Organisation to notify the nominee, but Commonwealth Headquarters will invite the recipient to have their award presented at a Commonwealth event. If the recipient is unable to attend, it will be the responsibility of the local Member Organisation to arrange a suitable presentation.

It is intended that the nomination form should be completed by an independent person of standing in the community who is fully aware of the facts of the incident either at first hand or via reliable reports. All names and addresses must be printed clearly and legibly.

#### Definition of Terms:

- (a) "Rescuer" - the individual who has taken RLSS training or who holds or has held a RLSS award, and who performed the rescue or attempted rescue.
- (b) "Casualty" - the victim or person rescued.
- (c) "Applicant" - the person of standing in the community making the recommendation.

The form should be accompanied, where possible, by signed reports from:

- The Rescuer
- The Casualty
- Witness(es)

## RUSSELL MEDAL

Following the tragic death of Pat Russell in March 2000, her family and the RLSS UK Warwickshire Branch informed the Society that they would like to fund the introduction of a permanent memorial to Pat in the form of an annual Medal. It was suggested that the criteria for the award of the Medal should be that it be given to a person 21 years or younger, who during the previous calendar year had carried out the most outstanding resuscitation or attempted resuscitation of a person. The individual nominated for the award must be a citizen of a Commonwealth Country.

The Commonwealth Council at that time agreed to accept the kind offer from the Russell family and the Warwickshire Branch and recommended that the medal would be known as "The Russell Medal" which was agreed by all parties.

### Procedural Notes

Only one Russell Medal may be awarded in any calendar year. In exceptional circumstances the Commonwealth Bravery Awards Committee may recommend that a Letter of Commendation be issued to individuals where the award of the Russell Medal cannot be made.

The Russell Medal Nomination Form (available as a separate document) should be returned to the National Member Organisation of the Society in which the incident took place for the Branch to process prior to forwarding to the Commonwealth Headquarters. If there is no RLSS Member Organisation for the country concerned, the nomination form should be sent direct to the Commonwealth Headquarters.

The nomination form should be completed as soon as possible after the incident and forwarded to the Commonwealth Headquarters no later than February 28<sup>th</sup> of the year following the rescue.

Successful nominees will be notified through their Member Organisation following confirmation of the Award by the Board of Trustees. It is the responsibility of the Member Organisation to notify the nominee, but Commonwealth Headquarters will invite the recipient to have their award presented at a Commonwealth event. If the recipient is unable to attend, it will be the responsibility of the local Member Organisation to arrange a suitable presentation.

It is intended that the nomination form should be completed by an independent person of standing in the community who is fully aware of the facts of the incident either at first hand or via reliable reports. All names and addresses must be printed clearly and legibly.

#### Definition of Terms:

- (a) "Rescuer" - the individual who has taken RLSS training or who holds or has held a RLSS award, and who performed the rescue or attempted rescue.
- (b) "Casualty" - the victim or person rescued.
- (c) "Applicant" - the person of standing in the community making the recommendation.

The form should be accompanied by, where possible, by signed reports from:

- The rescuer
- The casualty
- Witness(es)

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A – Commonwealth Honours Committee Terms of Reference

<b>Membership:</b>	<p>Appointed by the Board of Trustees</p> <p>Representatives from each region: Asia-Pacific (2) Americas &amp; Caribbean (2) Europe &amp; Africa (3)</p> <p>Operations Assistant, Commonwealth Headquarters (non-voting)</p> <p>Members are appointed for a 2-year period and may be re-appointed without restriction.</p> <p>The quorum shall be 4 Committee Members. There shall be one vote per Committee Member. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have a second, casting (deciding) vote.</p>
<b>Chair:</b>	Appointed by the Board of Trustees.
<b>Clerk:</b>	Operations Assistant
<b>Meeting Frequency:</b>	Honour Nominations will be circulated twice a year (during February and August) via email by Commonwealth Headquarters. Approval of nominations will be via email unless there are any disputes, in which case a teleconference will be arranged for voting and resolution.
<b>Duration:</b>	The Committee is a Permanent Committee of The Royal Life Saving Society
<p><b>Scope/Purpose</b></p> <p>The Commonwealth Honours Committee is responsible for ensuring all Honour nominations meet the criteria set.</p> <p>The Committee should ensure that all persons/organisations eligible for Commonwealth Honours are recognised under this scheme. The Committee, in consultation with Commonwealth Leadership, will follow up on cases in which they feel an individual has been overlooked for a relevant award.</p> <p>The Committee will approve all Honours up to Commonwealth Life Governor and recommend to the Board of Trustees for approval any nominations for Commonwealth Vice President or other nominations as set out in the criteria.</p> <p>The Committee will be responsible for the review and updating of the Honours manual as and when required.</p>	

## APPENDIX B – Commonwealth Bravery Awards Committee Terms of Reference

<p><b>Membership:</b></p>	<p>Deputy Commonwealth President</p> <p>1 representative from each region, appointed by The Board of Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asia-Pacific</li> <li>- Americas &amp; Caribbean</li> <li>- Europe &amp; Africa</li> </ul> <p>An additional member may be appointed for technical expertise if this is not covered by one of the appointments above.</p> <p>Lord Ivar Mountbatten, Patron – Mountbatten Medal (for Mountbatten Medal only)</p> <p>Michael Russell and Nigel Russell, Patrons - Russell Medal (for Russell Medal only)</p> <p>The RLSS Youth Trustee (for Russell Medal only)</p> <p>1 representative from RLSS UK Warwickshire Branch to be recommended by that Branch who has relevant and current technical expertise (for Russell Medal only)</p> <p>Operations Manager, Commonwealth Headquarters (non-voting)</p> <p>Members are appointed for a 2-year period and may be re-appointed without restriction.</p> <p>The quorum shall be 3 Committee Members. There shall be one vote per Committee Member. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have a second, casting (deciding) vote.</p>
<p><b>Chair:</b></p>	<p>Deputy Commonwealth President</p>
<p><b>Clerk:</b></p>	<p>Operations Assistant</p>
<p><b>Meeting Frequency:</b></p>	<p>Award Nominations will be circulated by Commonwealth Headquarters in July of each year. Approval of nominations will be via email unless there are any disputes, in which case a teleconference will be arranged for resolution.</p>
<p><b>Duration:</b></p>	<p>The Committee is a Permanent Committee of The Royal Life Saving Society</p>
<p><b>Scope / Purpose</b></p> <p>The Commonwealth Bravery Awards Committee is responsible for ensuring all nominations for the Mountbatten and Russell Medals meet the criteria set and for recommending the award of Letters of Commendation in appropriate cases.</p> <p>The Committee should ensure that all persons/organisations eligible for Commonwealth Awards are recognised under this scheme. The Committee, in consultation with Commonwealth Leadership, will follow up on cases in which they feel an individual has been overlooked for a relevant award. The Committee will make recommendations for both medals to the Board of Trustees for approval.</p> <p>This Committee may also be requested to provide feedback on the King Edward VII Cup nominations and the HRH Prince Michael of Kent Certificate of Merit.</p>	