

Eligibility for the United Nations Medal for service rendered in the Congo:

History and criteria for issuance of a United Nations Medal.

The Medal is ranked in most of the world's militaries as a foreign service medal, meaning that **it is not issued for a specific heroic or meritorious act, but rather for general participation in a broad operation.**

Furthermore, the standard United Nations Medal is awarded in lieu of a campaign specific medal. In the United States Armed Forces, service members are encouraged to only wear the standard United Nations Medal.

It was authorized by the United Nations General Assembly on July 30, 1959 and approved for wear on U.S. military uniforms by Executive Order of March 11, 1964. The medal is awarded to any member of the United States Armed Forces **for not less than six months service in support of a United Nations missions engaged in:**

1. **Military operations such as peacekeeping, humanitarian efforts, and**
2. **Disaster relief.**

A service member who received several United Nations Medals is permitted to display only one such medal on their military uniform, that medal being of the service member's choice.

Multiple United Nations Medals are then denoted by service stars on the United Nations Medal which is being displayed. Since the United Nations Medal is an international decoration, it is ranked in most militaries as a foreign award and displayed after all decorations of a service member's particular military force.

Congo crisis and UN Resolution calling for containment.

Following the Congo's "liberation" from European dominance, the Belgian commander refused to "Africanize" the officers' corps of the *Force Publique*, the official standing army of the emerging Republic. Mutiny and disorder ensued.

While the President and the Prime Minister tried to negotiate with the mutineers, the Belgian government decided to intervene and protect Belgians remaining "in country" at the request of Moïse Tshombé, who had simultaneously advocated a still further measure of independence and break-up of the Congo region for his Katanga Province, one of the richest in the region.

On 10Jul60, Belgian troops were sent to Elisabethville, the capital of Katanga, to control the situation and protect Belgian civilians. Thereafter, with the help of the Belgians, Tshombé proclaimed the Province independent. On 12Jul60, the President and the Prime Minister asked for UN assistance. The Secretary-General addressed the Security Council on 13Jul60 requesting that the Council act "with utmost speed" on the proposal.

The UN Security Council called for the dispatch of an international force to the region in accord with their Resolution 143 of 14Jul60. Because they *zimplee lovvve zee langue Frannchh*, said force was labeled "*Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo*" and provided the acronym ONUC.

It is perhaps ironic that the acronym for the English translation of the mission (United Nations Organization in the Congo) would have been UNOC, pronounced "eunuch" and probably not to the Security Council's liking given the following: 😊

Peacekeeping Fact Sheet as of 31 May 2011

United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) . In operation since June 2010.

Strength:

Uniformed personnel

Troops: 16,986

Military: 729

Police: 1,255

Civilian personnel
International Civilians: 978
Local Civilians: 2,783
UN Volunteers: 607
Fatalities: 26

Approved budget (07/2010 - 06/2011): \$1,369,000,000

Long story short, the insanities that began in June 1960 continue to this day.

SOLANT AMITY I: Its perceived role in the region, its participation in UN Operations and the processes that limited our full involvement.

United States Naval and Marine forces, specifically Company “L,” 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines out of Camp Lejeune, NC and a detachment of helicopters (HMR(1)-264) on board USS Wasp (CVS-18) were deployed to the Belgian Congo.[AKA: Zaire; AKA: Republic of the Congo].

Those same resources, as provided in detail at <http://solantamity.com/Extraneous/OtherSols.htm> of our website, were privy to efforts made by U.S. Navy UDT and 2nd Marine Division Recon personnel to examine underwater and shoreline alike for obstacles and conditions of recognized importance to forces contemplating the landing of Battalion and larger sized Landing Teams of the time.

No deployments or reconnaissance of a similar nature were known to have occurred in that same region, ever. Unlike the debacle of *Tarawa*, the Navy was going to be prepared for any contingency.

Stateside, in August of that same year, volunteers were sought from units of the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment at Lejeune to develop a fully complemented “Table of Organization” unit: “G” Company.

As the Marine Corps was in its infancy development of something entitled “Controlled Input” at the time, the demand of experienced infantrymen from surrounding units effectively diminished the intended designs of Headquarters Marine Corps to eventually have all infantry units consist of personnel with at least fifteen months of combined infantry and shipboard experience.

The establishment of a division-wide resource reinforced “G” Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines literally produced what was probably the largest, most experienced peacetime, massively armed and logistically prepared infantry unit in the history of the Marine Corps. And, for what? Well, we were told it was for a “good time, good will” *cruise* to the west coast of Africa and the South Atlantic region.

Then, at a time when the military was having its financial teeth pulled by Congress, this already experienced Green Machine was given rubber boat training common to Recon forces only, familiarity with “jump training!,” taken to the Kunai grass shrouded hill-and-dale complex of Vieques, PR and provided staggering amounts of expensive ammunition and explosives for live fire training. As well as still more helicopter drop-zone and amphibious tractor landing exercises.

Thereafter flitting about in Caribbean and Brazilian waters for a bit, we arrived in Monrovia, Liberia on 5Jan61 and provided a landing display of America’s massive military might, just as political and insurrectional tensions were approaching a peak in the Congo region...but a hop-skip-and-jump away. By 28Jan61, the Solant Amity fleet consisting of the USS Hermitage, USS Graham County AND MORE found itself enroute and involved with famine relief at Matadi and the evacuation of injured, wounded and diseased troops from the Congo to Conakry, Guinea. Staying pretty much within range of a reasonably quick deployment in Zaire, we “coasted about” the Gulf of Guinea, while the political forces of the Communistic block insisted upon a diminished United States footprint in the region.

And they got it...at least from all obvious appearances. Solant forces continued to sail the oceans blue along the African coast until April of 1961 but well out of sight of observant eyes.

Entitlement to the United Nations Medal

We, the participants of Solant Amities I through IV, are NOT eligible.

You will be surprised to learn that UN documents do NOT reflect our presence. Consider the following evidence found on the United Nations website page providing the identities of the nations furnishing troops in support of UNOC operation: []

Republic of the Congo

UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN THE CONGO - ONUC (July 1960 – June 1964)

ONUC was established in July 1960 to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian forces, to assist the Government in maintaining law and order and to provide technical assistance. The function of ONUC was subsequently modified to include maintaining the territorial integrity and political independence of the Congo, preventing the occurrence of civil war and securing the removal of all foreign military, paramilitary and advisory personnel not under the United Nations Command, and all mercenaries

From <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/onucF.html> we have:

CONTRIBUTORS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL

Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Ceylon, Denmark, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Liberia, Malaya, Federation of Mali, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia. [**Hello! NO MENTION OF U.S. FORCES.**]

[From February 1963 to the end of the operation, a battalion of the Congolese National Army was incorporated in ONUC]

Like a shipload of James Bonds: We were “never there.”

Finally, we have from the Department of Defense its own listing of “Approved UN Missions and Actions” at <http://prhome.defense.gov/mpp/OEPM/docs/DoD%20Approved%20UN%20Medals.pdf>

U.N. Operation or Action	Start Date	End Date
U.N. Truce Supervisory Organization in Palestine	Jun 1, 1948	TBD
U.N. Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	Jan 1, 1949	TBD
U.N. Observation Group in Lebanon	Jun 1, 1958	Dec 9, 1958
NOTHING	July 1960	June 1964
U.N. Security Forces, Hollandia (UNSFH)	Dates Unknown	Dates Unknown
U.N. Iraq/Kuwait Observation Group	Apr 1, 1991	TBD
U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	May 1, 1991	TBD
U.N. Advance Mission in Cambodia	Oct 1, 1991	Mar 31, 1992
U.N. Protection Force in Yugoslavia	Feb 1, 1992	Mar 31, 1995
U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia	Feb 1, 1992	Nov 15, 1993
U.N. Operation Somalia	Apr 24, 1992	Mar 31, 1995
U.N. Mission in Haiti (includes U.S. Quick Reaction Force)	Sep 23, 1994	TBD
U.N. Special Service	Oct 6, 1997	TBD

Though we were clearly involved in the United Nations mission in the Congo both “in country” and offshore, eligibility requires six months of *engagement*.

At issue is whether our being *within range* constitutes “engaged” and whether, first, the United States Department of Defense and then the United Nations care to acknowledge just how much depth and duration there was to our participation...this holds true despite our acknowledged eligibility and receipt of the **Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal [Congo]**, which should suffice.

Secondly, and this is critical, the United Nations would have to list our provided service as bonafide and worthy of its imprimatur, after first acknowledging our having been there!!!

Three letters already sent inquiring about our eligibility remain unanswered. The efforts will continue but are not expected to obtain the desired effect any time soon.

Semper fi;

Ed Shea - Webmaster, solantamity.com