



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2024-4997

20 May 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 17 April 2024 to the Ministry of Defence requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

...all written advice produced to inform a visit to New Zealand by the Commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command, John C. Aquilino, from 5-7 April 2024.

Your request was transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) in accordance with section 14 of the OIA, as the information that you requested is more closely connected with the functions of this agency.

The only advice produced by the NZDF regarding the April 2024 visit by Admiral John C Aquilino is a note to the Minister of Defence which is provided at Enclosure 1. The signature has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the OIA to avoid the malicious or inappropriate use of staff information, such as phishing, scams or unsolicited advertising.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Visit by Commander United States Indo-Pacific Command and Award of Legion of Merit to the Chief of Defence Force, 6 April 2024.



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Wellington 6011

NTM 2024-103

06 April 2024

Minister of Defence

VISIT BY COMMANDER UNITED STATES INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND AND AWARD OF LEGION OF MERIT TO THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE

Purpose

1. The purpose of this note is to advise you that I am to be awarded a United States Armed Forces Legion of Merit and that the award will be made in person by Admiral Aquilino, Commander United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), on 6 April 2024.

Background

2. In March the Defence Attachè to the United States of America advised of Admiral Aquilino's intent to travel to New Zealand to award me a United States Armed Forces Legion of Merit.

3. The Legion of Merit was established by an act of Congress in 1942 and is the first United States Armed Forces decoration to be awarded to citizens of other nations. It is awarded for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements. The Legion of Merit has three degrees as follows: Chief Commander, Commander and Officer. The Commander award is made to foreign citizens who hold the rank of a US military chief of staff or higher but are not a head of state.

4. It is my intention to host Admiral Aquilino, a small number of my family members and members of the NZDF leadership team to recognise the visit and award on 6 April. Admiral Aquilino departs the following day.

Rules Relating to the Acceptance and Wearing of Foreign Awards by New Zealand Citizens

5. The King has delegated authority to the Governor General of New Zealand to approve the acceptance and wear of a foreign non-Commonwealth honour by a New Zealand citizen.¹

6. A request for approval to wear is in process.

¹ "Rules relating to the acceptance and wearing of Commonwealth, foreign and international Honours by New Zealand Citizens", 23 July 2007, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that you:
- a. **NOTE** that the Chief of Defence Force will be awarded a United States Armed Forces Legion of Merit on 6 April 2024 and that the award will be made in person by Admiral Aquilino, Commander United States Indo-Pacific Command.
 - b. **NOTE** that a request to approve the acceptance and wear of the award is in process.

s.9(2)(k)



KR SHORT

Air Marshal

Chief of Defence