



Bravery Awards Committee

Including

**Drowning Prevention Incidents
&
General Recognition Awards**

Operating Procedures

31st August, 2018.

Introduction:

On 30th August, 2015, LSA Director of Lifesaving, Jurie Wessels, wrote to the Convenor of the Bravery Awards Committee, Stanford Slabbert, as follows: "On behalf of the Management Board, I wish to express our gratitude and appreciation for the important work that the **Bravery Awards Committee** has been doing the past number of years. In our view your activities contribute directly to a growing public awareness of the drowning prevention objective of **Lifesaving South Africa**. The annual bravery awards made by LSA, also presents a unique opportunity to create more public awareness and we plan to make better use of this opportunity in future.

In discussion of your recent correspondence, the MB noted that we do not have on record any **bye-laws** or **protocols** that regulate... i) the composition; ii) the criteria for awards; iii) the general functioning of the Bravery Awards Committee. In this regard we will appreciate it if you can put your committee's existing practice and procedures in writing & in the form of a set of **Draft Rules** or **Bye-laws & Protocols**, for consideration by the Management Board. Please feel free to suggest and incorporate any proposals for improvement to the existing practice".

Since taking over from Gabie Botha as Convenor of the Bravery Awards Committee, BAC, in June, 2012, no formal documentation of the BAC could be traced. The initial document, as requested by the LSA Management Board, was presented in June, 2016. This included an expanded set of Award parameters. Several amendments have since been made, this being the latest.

1. Vision statement:

In keeping with the Vision of LSA, the BAC will strive to honour those who promote the ideals of lifesaving and who go beyond the call of duty to save the life of a fellow being, or prevent a possible drowning.

2. Mission statement:

To acknowledge and honour those who assist their fellow beings in distress in a water environment. To gauge the degree of bravery involved and award a suitably worded citation to nominees who are adjudicated by the BAC to be deserving of such an award.

To further the ideals of LSA and to promote the existence of the different awards to the public, and members, thereby gaining positive media coverage for the association.

To assist with ongoing education of the general public related to water safety and to assist with the planning and implementation of drowning prevention initiatives.

To be the acknowledged water-related authority on Bravery Awards for water rescue and CPR efforts.

3. History:

The BAC was formed in the late 1940's, after Gabriel "Gabie" Botha was rescued after his second shark attack at Country Club Beach, Durban. Gabie realised the need to honour his rescuer, Lou Johnson, who put his own life at risk in rescuing Gabie from the ocean. Soon afterwards, in about 1948, Gabie formed the BAC and he convened the committee for over 64 years.

Prominent and experienced surf lifesavers were invited to join the BAC by the founding group, and it became a select panel who oversaw the awarding of the initial Bravery awards. Some earlier members included Lou Johnson, Ray "Fuzzy" Scott, George Plowman, Des Collopy, Tony "Mouse" Kershaw, Fred van der Bergh and Bob Whiting, and the team formulated its own parameters and methodology. It has been said that one could only leave the BAC if one left the country or passed on.....

Unfortunately failing health caught up with Gabie Botha and this prompted LSA to appoint the youngest BAC member at the time, Stanford Slabbert, to take over the leadership of the committee in June, 2012.

4. Composition & Appointment of the BAC committee:

Historically, the BAC members were appointed by Gabie Botha and the panel was kept at about 8 members. They were all experienced surf lifesavers and most were at the end of their competitive and/or voluntary duty lifesaving careers. The BAC remained autonomous from all other committees of LSA.

More recently, inland members of the movement were added to the panel and ideally the following guidelines will apply when appointing new members and/or filling vacancies:

- Must be a current / former registered and qualified Surf / Stillwater lifesaver or official.
- Must be a current member of the LSA movement either via Club, Branch, or Provincial Association.
- New candidates must have performed at least 10 years of active patrol duty, **or** 10 years of official duties at District/Regional and/or National level.
- New members must have a proven track record within LSA and have displayed abilities that will contribute to the workings and deliberations of the BAC
- The BAC is to have a minimum of 7 members, and a maximum of 9 members.
- The BAC must contain members from both disciplines of LSA, namely Surf and Stillwater.
- Ideally, some of the BAC members must be spread around the country, and not all from the same area / region. All members serve on a voluntary basis.
- Ideally, at least one member of the BAC should be a female.
- New members must be approved by the majority of the current incumbent members.

The only members that get elected at the LSA AGM are the Management Board and the Finance Committee

For governance purposes, the BAC is a **sub-committee** of the Drowning Prevention Committee of LSA. However, it is autonomous and reports directly to the LSA President and the Director – Drowning Prevention. The committee also covers non-drowning related incidents through the Recognition Awards. Both the LSA President and the BAC Convenor will sign off all awards to be presented.

Continuity and standardisation of assessing incidents are major considerations and BAC members need to be kept on-board for as long as they are available, capable and happy to serve on the panel. It is not a committee that can be chopped and changed every year, as this will have a negative effect on the standard of the adjudication process. In the past, its major strength has been that of continuity. Chopping and changing reduces objectivity and increases subjectivity. The more subjective a decision is, the more likely it will be wrong. The more data available (including historical) the more objective the decision and the less likely members will take their own personal feelings and opinions into account.

Each year the panel will compare current incidents to those previously adjudicated, and use similar criteria to assess levels being considered. An element of objectivity is therefore maintained and an experienced team of panel members consider all aspects of similar historical incidents in their deliberations.

Once appointed to the BAC, members serve for as long as they are able and prepared to do so. They are appointed "ad infinitum", unless they fail to respond & competently and logically take part in the deliberations.

At the end of May each year, the Convenor, in consultation with the President, will assess the performance of each panel member and, if acceptable, will ascertain if each member is prepared to continue serving on this voluntary committee. If a member has not performed, he/she will be requested by the Convenor of the BAC to step down. If a member resigns or retires, the Convenor will notify the LSA office, if needed, who will call for nominations of suitably qualified lifesavers, and/or officials, using the criteria noted above. The BAC will also identify and approach suitable candidates.

If all existing members are available to continue, they are re-appointed "en-bloc" for another term of office.

Nominations to fill vacancies can be made by any LSA individual or club, but these must be endorsed by both the nominee and their District / Provincial body. As the BAC is a "select committee", once nominations have closed, the BAC itself will discuss and finalise who will be appointed to fill any vacancy on the panel.

Once the BAC members have been finalised for the new term of office, they will deliberate and confirm who will be appointed as the Convenor for the following year, (unless appointed "ad infinitum") and this nomination, if it results in a change, will be considered by the President, and Vice President, who will then have this ratified by the Management Board.

5. Vacancies on the committee:

In the event that a BAC member resigns, retires, or passes away, during their term of office, the BAC will confer and agree on a suitable replacement candidate, who will then be invited by the Convenor to join the panel. This new member will serve until the next AGM, whereby he / she will be available for re-election.

6. Communication:

All communication between LSA and the BAC will be channelled via the Convenor, who will disseminate the info to the committee members. All such information will be via email and all BAC members must have access to email facilities.

BAC members must respond to any email requests / assessments within the time parameters requested and set by the Convenor, and ideally within 3 days. If impossible to meet such deadlines, members must liaise with the Convenor to arrange alternative submission times.

When necessary, telephonic submission of feedback / suggestions will be arranged between the members.

7. Operational structure:

The BAC is a sub-committee of the Drowning Prevention Committee (DPC) of LSA and falls under the President and the Director – Drowning Prevention. Due to the nature and confidentiality of its work, the Convenor of the BAC will have direct access to the President and Vice President of LSA, as well as the Directors of LSA and the General Manager of LSA.

Provinces, Branches, Clubs and members of LSA must contact the BAC via the LSA head-office.

8. Operational procedure:

Nominations are received from interested parties, either via Head-office, or directly to the Convenor, and each nomination is circulated by the convenor to members of the BAC for assessment. Each member responds with their comments / suggestions / proposals and these are collated by the Convenor. Where necessary, additional information will be sourced by whatever appropriate means.

A summary is then circulated and a final decision is taken via consensus or vote, to determine what, if any, award is to be made. Once finalised and agreed, the Convenor notifies LSA head-office and the actual award is then processed by the BAC and made ready for presentation.

The Convenor will alert the LSA President on all awards to be made and the President will sign off each such award certificate. After liaison between the President, General Manager and BAC Convenor, a decision will be taken as to the appropriate way to hand over the award(s). Details will then be circulated to the BAC.

Whenever possible, an award will be made and presented as soon as possible after the actual incident.

During June of each year, the BAC Convenor will compile an Annual Report on all incidents and awards for the previous year. This will be included in the LSA Annual Report magazine and presented at the AGM of the association.

Efforts will be made to also acknowledge each recipient at the LSA AGM, and provincial / branch / club events in the vicinity where the actual incident occurred. Every effort will also be made by LSA and the BAC to publicize all awards in the various forms of media.

9. Jurisdiction of the BAC relating to incidents:

The BAC will consider all nominations / recommendations as follows:

1. Any event in South Africa by any nationality.
2. Any event, anywhere in the world, by a person having South African nationality.
3. Any event (1 & 2) deemed worthy, regardless as to what anyone else has done.
4. For water related rescues, incidents involving members of the public and/or qualified lifesavers.
5. For non-water related incidents, only qualified members of LSA, who utilise their lifesaving skills and training, will be considered. Non-lifesavers will not be eligible for consideration in this category.

Furthermore, the BAC believes that all water related incidents, whether it be inland or coastal, fall under the jurisdiction of LSA, up to 1 kilometre off-shore from the coastal shoreline.

10. Submission of nominations:

Nominations from anyone or any source will be considered by the BAC. Wherever possible, the BAC nomination form, BAC 01, must be submitted along with a nomination. Nominations from the public must be submitted to the LSA head-office, who will forward such nominations to the BAC Convenor.

Members of LSA may submit nominations directly to the BAC convenor.

The BAC is recognised by LSA as an independent committee within its structure, and suitably qualified to accept / reject submissions and to call for additional information. When requested, the LSA head-office staff will assist in obtaining information on incidents and rescuers and/or patients and/or victims.

11. Criteria for awards:

Awards can be considered to any deserving person, of any age, provided that a person cannot nominate themselves. Every incident will be considered on its merits and the BAC can also submit its own recommendations if a member of the BAC learns of a possible incident / nomination.

Members of the public and members of LSA are to be encouraged to submit nominations when they learn of a possible worthy incident.

12. The LSA Awards:

The BAC will be solely responsible for assessing and adjudicating the LSA awards, as set out below, and their decision will be final and binding on LSA and its members and the public at large.

From July, 2015, these LSA awards were considered in two categories, notably Bravery Awards (BA) and Drowning Prevention Awards (DPA). The panel decides on the actual Level of award to be made.

As from June, 2016, a new general Recognition Award category was introduced, to acknowledge those LSA members who go beyond the call of duty and utilise their training and skills to assist in a non-water related environment.

Bravery Awards: List for consideration, dependent on the level of bravery involved, from Level 0 to Level 4:

Level 0 -	No Award to be made	- Considered to be a help-out, with no bravery involved
Level 1 -	Letter of Appreciation	- Acknowledgement of involvement
Level 2 -	Letter of Commendation	- Involved / some bravery
Level 3 -	Certificate of Commendation	- Dangerous situation / brave act
Level 4 -	Silver Medallion (highest award)	- Very dangerous / life threatening / very brave

If a would-be rescuer dies during their attempted rescue, the BAC will determine if a posthumous award will be made, and efforts will be made to hand over such award to the family of the deceased.

Drowning Prevention Awards: List for consideration, where no bravery is involved, from Level 0 to Level 3:

Level 0 -	No Award to be made	- Considered to be not worthy of any recognition
Level 1 -	Letter of Appreciation	- Acknowledgement of involvement in preventing a drowning
Level 2 -	Letter of Commendation	- Involved in CPR and prevented a drowning
Level 3 -	Certificate of Commendation	- Saved a life through administering CPR and related actions

Recognition Award: Incidents in a non-water related environment.

LSA acknowledges that its members are trained to assist victims in any type of situation. Where an incident occurs in a non-water related environment, such as a traffic accident or mountain rescue, etc, and a trained lifeguard utilises their skills to assist and save a life and/or rescue people, such LSA member can be acknowledged with a general Recognition award. There will only be one level / category of this award.

The actual LSA award to be presented to recipients:

Each LSA award will be a unique framed and glass fronted certificate, with a citation specifically mentioning details of the actual incident, and signed by the LSA President and the BAC Convenor. Where possible, a standard type template will be used per award. These templates will be finalised by the BAC and updated / amended when necessary.

The award will be handed over to the recipient(s) at a suitable function / event, which could be at the next National Championships and/or LSA AGM / Provincial AGM / Branch AGM / Club AGM.

13. Adjudication of Awards:

Each nomination will be considered on its merits and the deliberations and internal communications of the BAC will remain confidential to the BAC at all times. No outside interference will be tolerated. Only the final decision will be made public and the Convenor of the BAC, or his/her nominee, will be the sole spokesperson regarding the initial announcement of any and all awards.

The BAC must be left to focus on making fair, unemotional and consistent judgements without interference. It is a known fact that journalistic reports can lead to sensational misleading reports for readers and followers.

These reports are needed to bring events into the public domain, however, they need to be investigated and confirmed by other, reliable sources, for accuracy.

A determining factor to be applied during the adjudication process of the Recognition Award is that whatever has been "done" will only qualify for recognition if the LSA member who does it has definitely used lifesaving qualifications and/or experience in carrying it out, and it can reasonably be concluded that a person not having that qualification and/or experience could not have performed the same thing with the same success.

Where consensus cannot be reached on an award, a majority vote of the BAC will decide the matter, with the Convenor having a casting vote in the event of a tie. On all decisions, at least 50% of the BAC must participate in the adjudication of an award.

Where possible, an award will be adjudicated as soon as a nomination is received / incident reported. Ideally, high profile incidents will be adjudicated and an award finalised / presented within 10 working days after the actual incident. This will assist LSA in gaining much needed publicity and recognition. When a tight timeline is required, the BAC Convenor will call members and request a telephonic vote and then circulate a summary of these votes for ratification by the BAC.

For ease of reference, awards will be summarised as BA level 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4, and DP level 0, 1, 2 or 3, or the general "Recognition" award. Where an incident does not fit into the above definitions, the BAC reserves the right to issue a unique award with the appropriate wording.

At the close of the adjudication process of an award, the deliberations will be sealed and only released under direction of the BAC convenor, in consultation with the President, LSA.

14. Preparation of the actual awards:

Once an award has been finalised, the drafting of the wording of the citation will be undertaken by the BAC Convenor, with final approval by the BAC team. Production of the actual award will be finalised between the BAC Convenor and the LSA office. LSA will cover the costs of each and every award to be made.

15. Media coverage of the awards:

Once the BAC has completed its assessment of an incident, efforts will be made to compile a "press pack" to issue to the media. Each incident should be equally publicised locally. Incidents where a Silver Medallion is awarded should also be publicised both nationally and internationally.

Every "press pack" should be sent to both local, regional and provincial / national media. This includes TV, Radio, Newspapers, top selling magazines and the LSA web page. Where possible, media releases should include details of the actual presentation event and give the media the opportunity to interview the recipient and possibly also the person who had been rescued.

The BAC Convenor and the LSA General Manager will liaise re all BAC media related statements and consideration must be given to placing an embargo time on such statements for their appropriate release to the media. The LSA head-office and/or LSA media officer is to continuously update its local, regional and national lists of media contacts. These lists will be used to obtain publicity for the BAC awards presented.

The ideal is promote and advance the cause of LSA before other agencies, such as NSRI and Netcare, steal our limelight. LSA must do whatever possible to utilise the awards to promote and advance water safety issues and inform Joe Public of the achievements of our voluntary lifesaving movement and its members.

Where possible, incidents and awards will be reported on the LSA social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and the website.

In terms of internationally recognised terminology, the term near-drowning will no longer be used. In future all drowning incidents will be referred to as a "fatal drowning" and/or a "non-fatal drowning".

16. Recording / archiving of all BAC and DPA awards:

LSA will keep a digital and hard-copy record of all Awards made, and this will include a copy of each certificate presented. Lists of each award category will also be kept. These records will be made available to anyone on written request. Where possible, these updated lists will be profiled on the LSA website.

If an award recipient requests a copy / replacement of their award, a nominal fee will be charged to cover the production costs of the actual award.

17. International Awards:

From time to time, organisers of international bravery awards might approach LSA to submit nominations. These requests will be forwarded to the BAC for finalisation and confirmation of the nominees. Two such annual awards are the RLSS Mountbatten and Russell Medals. International Lifesaving, ILS, also have two annual awards. The submission of the South African nominees, if any, will be via the BAC processes and possible candidates will be nominated from the annual list of BAC award recipients.

17.1 RLSS Mountbatten & Russell Medals:

RLSS annually seeks nominations for their prestigious Mountbatten and Russell Medals, which are presented in about September of each year. (It was their 125th Anniversary year in 2016). Any rescue that took place in the previous calendar year, ie. 2015, could be considered if it qualifies according to their criteria. It must be in the specific calendar year under consideration. The specified nomination form has to be completed and submitted to Commonwealth Headquarters, before their closing date of 30th June. Further details are contained on their website: <http://www.rlsscommonwealth.org/rlss-awards/>

17.1.1 Mountbatten Medal:

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

17.1.2 Russell Medal:

The Russell Medal was established in 2000 as a tribute to Pat Russell, a long-time member of the Royal Life Saving Society. Her sudden and unexpected death was a great sadness to RLSS, but something positive came about in the form of an award given annually for the most outstanding resuscitation or attempted resuscitation to a person by someone under 18 years of age during the previous calendar year. The person nominated for the award must be the holder of a lifesaving award delivered by a Royal Life Saving Society Member Branch anywhere in the Commonwealth.

17.2 ILS annual awards:

ILS annually considers nominations for two medals, as noted below, and LSA, through the BAC, will submit nominations if suitable candidates are identified. There is no specific nomination form and the rescue can be either the previous calendar year, or previous lifesaving season, ie July / June.

17.2.1 Rescue Medal of Valour:

Minimum qualification: Any lifesaver or group of lifesavers who is a member of any ILS member federation in good standing who has knowingly and selflessly intervened in an instance of the most extreme peril in the aquatic environment in an effort to save the life of another person. No more than one Medal of Valour shall be issued each year, unless by unanimous decision of the Board of Directors. To be eligible, the lifesaver or group of lifesavers must first receive the highest award for valour, if any, by the lifesaver's national federation and the action must be documented and verified.

17.2.2 Rescue Medal:

Minimum qualification: Any person without formal lifesaving training, who has knowingly and selflessly intervened in an instance of extreme peril in the aquatic environment in an effort to save the life of another person. No more than one ILS Medal shall be issued each year, unless by unanimous decision of the Board of Directors. The action must be documented and verified.

18. Working document:

This is a working document which will be amended by the BAC as the need arises. Any changes must be approved by the BAC panel at the time, and ratified by the LSA Management Board.

Yours in Lifesaving



Stanford Slabbert
BAC Convenor

31st August, 2018.



LSA Award Nomination Form
Bravery / Drowning Prevention / Recognition

BAC 01

Nominator:
Address: Email:
Contact details: Tel: Cell:
Relationship to the actual event? (ie observer, helper)

Brief description of the incident / rescue: Date:..... time:
.....
.....

Incident venue: Surf / river / pool / other
Conditions at time of incident:

If at a beach, name of beach:
Lifesaving club? on patrol / off duty:
Size of surf: Tides: Incoming / outgoing.....

What act of bravery was involved:

Details of rescuer(s): and contact details:
1.....
2.....
3.....
4.....

What did the rescuer(s) do and what equipment was used:
.....

Who is nominated for bravery and why:
.....

Details of the patient(s):
1.....
2.....
3.....

Did any patient or rescuer require medical attention: Yes / No.
Details:

Supporting evidence to be attached: Newspaper articles / photos / affidavits of witnesses / other

Contact details of witnesses:
1.....
2.....
3.....

Please submit this form and all supporting information soonest to the Lifesaving SA head-office.