THE ORDERS, DECORATION AND MEDALS OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, PART 2: NATIONAL AWARDS

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Having dealt with the awards of the individual Emirates (JOMSA, vol. 60, No. 6, pp. 3-12) I now turn to the awards of the Federation. With regard to the award of military decorations and medals by the United Arab Emirates, this matter was first addressed by Union Act No. 9 of 1978. This Act was brief, and appears to only relate to the Ministry of the Interior and this will be attended to in Part 4. The Act also deals with the matters of acceptance of foreign awards and precedence. This Act was signed off on November 28, 1978, however it took almost eighteen months before a subsequent act, No. 3 of 1980, dated April 2nd, detailed the proposed military awards of the United Arab Emirates:

Military Orders

2. Order of the Seven-Rayed Star (two classes) – to defense ministers and military commanders.
4. Order of Military Greatness – to units for bravery in the field of battle.

Military Decorations

1. Bravery (two classes) – to officers and other ranks for bravery in combat.
2. Exceptional Promotion – to personnel meriting higher rank.
3. Military Duty (two classes) – for exceptional or creative service.
4. Excellent Service – to officers and other ranks for eight years excellent service.
5. Training (two classes) – for excellence in planning, regulating and training.

Military Medals

1. Wound Medal - for injury during battle.
2. Medal of the Order of Military Greatness – to individuals and units.
3. Navy / Army / Air Force Day Medal – to serving military on the respective day.
4. General Mobilisation Medal – to all serving at the time of mobilisation.

Military Badges

1. Identification marks for units or staff.

In addition, the above awards would be accompanied by the appropriate certificate. Decorations would be presented by the Commander in Chief or his deputy and medals would be presented by the Minister of Defence and such awards would be noted in the official gazette. In some instances recipients would be entitled to financial awards and other privileges, and these would be defined at a later date.

Two subsequent Acts – No.16 of 1981 and No.14 of 1982 attended to the circumstances under which recipients of any of the aforementioned awards could be deprived of their decorations or medals.

In 1989 a Ministry of Defence Ordinance in respect of military awards, medals and badges drew on the previous decree and on those awards actually manufactured and issued and declared them to be, in order of precedence as follows:

1. Order of Glory.
2. Order of Bravery.
3. The Emirates Military Order.
4. Distinguished Service Medal.
5. Armed Forces Amalgamation Medal.
7. Long and Good Service Medal.
8. War Wounded Medal.
13. Order of Al Qassimi-Mobile Forces Ras Al Khaima.
15. Loyal Service Medal of the Trucial Oman Scouts.
Federal Laws No. 3 of 1990 and No. 31 of 2001 further restated the awards as follows:

**Military Decorations**
1. Order of Glory.
2. Order of Bravery.
3. The Emirates Military Order.

**Military Medals**
1. Distinguished Service Medal.
2. Armed Forces Amalgamation Medal.
4. Long and Good Service Medal.
5. War Wounded Medal.

Further service awards commemorating the 1984 Rapid Movement Force and the 1993 Somalia Peace Keeping Force Medal are also known but not included in this listing. Other commemorative medals include the 1991 National Day Medal (20th Anniversary of the United Arab Emirates), the 2001 National Day Medal (30th Anniversary of the United Arab Emirates) and the 2001 50th Anniversary of the Shaikh Zayed Brigade Medal.

The civil awards of the United Arab Emirates were instituted by Law No. 4 of 1987 and in order of precedence are as follows:

1. Collar and sash of Unity.
2. Order of Independence in three classes.

In addition the Order of Shaikh Zayed was instituted taking precedence over these earlier awards.

**THE ORDER OF SHAIKH ZAYED**

**Collar**
Obverse: A chain of fourteen links, of 18-carat gold, bearing various designs relating to the United Arab Emirates. The central link from which the badge is suspended bears the arms of the United Arab Emirates being a twin masted dhow. The total weight of collar and badge is 800 grams.

**Badge**
Obverse: A circular medallion, 85mm in diameter, of 22-carat gold, bearing the Arabic inscription ZAYED in precious stones. The badge and suspension link are encrusted with a large number of precious stones as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No. of Stones</th>
<th>Carat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marquise cut emeralds – 1.5 carat.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubies – 0.02 carat &amp; 1.6mm diameter</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emeralds forming the name “Zayed” – 0.1 carat.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubies - 0.03carat.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamonds of different sizes.</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>9.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emeralds – 0.3 carat &amp; 4mm diameter.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,013</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.77</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Order, manufactured by Royal Insignia of Singapore, was only relatively recently instituted becoming the state’s highest national honour and primarily for heads of state. The award is presented in a red leather case. One of the first recipients of the Order was United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, who was presented with the award on December 8, 1998 during the 19th Arab Gulf Co-operation Council summit in Abu Dhabi. Later the Order was presented to Nelson Mandela.

![Figure 1: The ruler of Bahrain being presented with the Order of Shaikh Zayed.](image)

A more recent award was made on November 27, 2003 when the order was presented by Shaikh Maktoum of Dubai to Joseph Sepp Blatter, President, of FIFA in recognition of his efforts in serving football. The article notes “the order is considered to be of the highest level and conferred on monarchs and presidents of countries.”
Other awards have been made to the rulers of Bahrain (Figure 1) and Syria (Figure 2). Prior to the institution of this Order the senior award of the United Arab Emirates had been a single class award - the Order of Unity.

**THE ORDER OF UNITY**

The Order of Unity consists of a collar, star and badge (Figure 3).

**Collar**

Obverse: A chain of 18-carat gold consisting of 14 links - at the front a falcon with a diamond for its eye bearing upon its chest the arms of the United Arab Emirates, being a twin masted dhow on red enamel and surrounded by seven diamonds which with the eye diamond total about one carat in weight. The falcon’s talons rest upon a red enamel plinth bearing the inscription, **THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**. Extending from the plinth on either side is a palm frond, which embraces the wings of the falcon. The rear link is a seven-spoked wheel, with each spoke bearing three diamonds at the rim totalling some 2 carats in weight. Superimposed upon the wheel is a circle of seven interlocking hands surrounding the badge of the United Arab Emirates. The seven links adjoining the above two badges are all heptagonal pieces bearing from the front the following designs: a cantering horse, a dagger on a belt, a dhow, a camel on a black-enamel background, a bowl of fruit, three palm trees, and two crossed, enamelled United Arab Emirates flags.

These designs represent different cultural and historical themes of the United Arab Emirates. Each link bears on each point an emerald - a total of 98 emeralds with a total weight of some 10 carats. The total weight of the collar and badge is 750 grams. When worn the collar is not accompanied by the sash and accordingly the sash badge is affixed to the necklace.

**Badge**

Obverse: A circular rayed medallion, 85mm in diameter, edged with 49 diamonds (Figure 4). In the center extending to the edge a seven-rayed green-enamel star. Upon the center of the star upon a circle of red enamel.