



UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS®

Fall 2019

Dear Commander:¹

As you well know, a merit mark is the only pay we as members get for the contributions we make to USPS. Of all the awards conveyed by the organization, the merit mark is the most prestigious. *You, as a supervisor, have the responsibility of assuring that every member who has contributed substantially to your staff's mission is rewarded with a merit mark.* But you must be sure that each recommendation is factual and worthy.

The process begins in October as you prepare to send your merit mark recommendations through our proprietary computer program, "DB2000". That's covered in tutorials under "[Working with DB2000](#)" in the [Guidance matrix](#) you clicked on earlier. Caution: You must use a computer with Windows 7 or later or a Mac with PC emulation software. You'll need to download the "D60" roster utilizing the Import > Download Roster option in DB2000. The passcode is "HQ9960". Questions regarding problems encountered while installing DB2000 or MQSeries should be e-mailed to DB2000@usps.org.

By 15 November, your first set of recommendations must have been submitted. This could be your only submission, but if efforts by other members come to light at a later date one or more "supplemental" submissions may be made. There can be only one "original" submission; all subsequent new recommendations must be "supplemental".

Recommendations from vice commanders and chairmen of general, standing and *ad hoc* committees are sent by DB2000 directly to the Chief ; those from departmental committee chairmen are routed to the respective department head.

Although it's your responsibility to make merit mark recommendations, leaders of large committees and departments often find it helpful to appoint one individual to compile data on their constituents' activities and compose the actual DB2000 submission for your okay. *You should share this letter with that person.* It's most helpful if he or she remain in that position for multiple years.

Ideally, your predecessor will have given you the passcode you'll need for accessing the merit mark system on DB2000, or you'll have it from last year's experience. If you don't have it, you must contact [Lynnda Stevens](#) at Headquarters to get it (888-367-8777). The passcode should be disclosed to any merit mark coordinator you may appoint to facilitate formulating your recommendations.

You must not recommend yourself; that's the prerogative of your superior.

¹ This letter is intended for national department heads (V/Cs) and chairmen of general, standing, departmental and *ad hoc* national committees.

Your original submission and any supplemental submissions or resubmissions are for work performed over the period of the current calendar year, although supplemental recommendations may be submitted through 15 April of the ensuing year. If it becomes known that a member's contributions for up to three years earlier were not suitably recognized at the time, a separate "retroactive" submission may be made. That's covered in the accompanying article on working with DB2000.

Here are a few tips on what to say—or not to say—in your recommendations:

- Ranks and titles (including "chairman") do not in themselves entitle a member to a merit mark. State what was done in that capacity.
- Consider recommending your predecessor if he or she was in office early in the year.
- Except in rare circumstances, providing equipment, food or space does not qualify as significant effort.
- Don't use words like "worked at", "assisted with", "participated in", "served as", etc. without explaining what those efforts involved.
- If a member's contributions don't quite rise to merit mark minimums, refer your observations to his or her squadron commander for inclusion in local recommendations.

Finally, it's recommended that you review the provisions of Operations Manual chapter 16, Merit Marks, accessible on the national website at <http://www.usps.org/images/secretary/opman/opsman16.pdf>.

The concept of merit marks was conceived by Chief Commander A. B. Bennett, who presented the first awards in 1920. His vision has proved to be one of the most revered customs of USPS. It's up to us as supervisors to preserve and perpetuate this longstanding tradition.

All the best,

P/V/C Spencer P. Anderson, SN
Chairman, Area Monitors

