

## ARRL Awards Committee

The Standard Operating Procedure of the ARRL Awards Committee is codified by Minute 75 of the 1987 Annual Meeting of the Board.

### ARRL Awards Committee History

Headquarters involvement in establishing and interpreting rules for the ARRL's competitive activities dates back to the early days. The pre-war DX contest announcements refer to a "Contest Committee" and, later, to an "Award Committee." The ARRL Award Committee is mentioned in the announcement of the postwar DXCC in 1947. At some point the official name became the "Headquarters Contest and Awards Committee," but usually it was just called the "Awards Committee." Its function was to advise the management on virtually all aspects of the ARRL contests and awards programs.

Awards Committee controversy reached its zenith in the late 1960's, over the DXpeditions by Don Miller, W9WNV. The October 1968 *QST* editorial and article reporting the outcome of a suit instituted by Dr. Miller against ARRL makes interesting reading.

In the context of determining the status of areas as separate DXCC countries, the history of the Awards Committee cannot be considered separately from that of the Advisory Committees. The DX Advisory Committee was created at the 1970 Annual Meeting of the Board. At the time, Advisory Committee authority was "...limited to the preparation of recommendations within its specialty area, based upon consultation with segments of the membership and upon Committee studies; these are to be presented to the staff and/or Board as appropriate to the situation". It was not until the 1976 Annual Meeting of the Board, Minute 94, in the aftermath of the Okino Tori-Shima controversy, that the Board of Directors directed "...that the DX Advisory Committee be consulted when the country status of any area is to be determined".

At the 1978 Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors directed the Membership Affairs Committee to "...study the function and composition of the Headquarters Awards Committee and to report its findings at the July meeting of the Board" (Minute 27). When the report was rendered, at Minute 14 of the 1978 Second Meeting, the only change adopted by the Board (at Minute 80) was a change in the name, to the ARRL Awards Committee, presumably to remove the suggestion that the Committee was acting only on behalf of HQ.

To this point, the Awards Committee had functioned as an advisory body. In reorganizing the Committee following the Board of Directors action in 1978, then-Communications Manager Lindholm accepted Committee decisions on disqualifications and DXCC country status as binding rather than advisory. Thus, decisions are no longer made by a single individual, except in cases where there may be political overtones (at the government, not ARRL, level) the matter is referred to the Chief Executive Officer, who may choose to block Committee consideration.

Historically, the Awards Committee has always been responsible for interpreting rules and rendering disqualification decisions - two essential tasks that must be performed by someone. No other group or individual presently is equipped to perform them. Particularly concerning disqualifications, often it is necessary to review originals of QSL cards and to decide; circulating such material to far-flung volunteers would be a nightmarish process. And, all other things being equal, in-person discussion of a complex situation results in a better decision.

Finally, it has been a long standing policy for the chairman of the DXAC and the CAC to forward recommendations for DXCC rules changes and country status to the Chairman of the ARRL Awards Committee (and contest recommendations from the CAC). From 1976, it was the practice of the ARRL Awards Committee that DXCC country status could not even be considered without a favorable recommendation of the DXAC. This was due to an interpretation of Minute 94 of the 1976 Annual Meeting, where “the DX Advisory Committee be consulted when the country status of any area is to be determined”. From 1976 to 1996, no change of DXCC country status was considered without first being recommended by the DXAC.

Minute 84 of the Second meeting of the Board in 1995 created an Ad Hoc Committee to revise Advisory Committee procedures. At the Annual Meeting of 1996, new rules and terms of reference for Advisory Committees were adopted. Standard operating procedures were adopted at the Second meeting in 1996. Under these new guidelines, the Awards Committee and Advisory Committees may consider issues assigned by the appropriate Board Standing Committee in parallel.

### **ARRL Awards Committee Standard Operating Procedure**

For complete operating procedures, please refer to: <http://www.arrl.org/awards-committee>