

## **Agreed guidelines on the conditions and the criteria surrounding the award of Military Campaign Medals, and related issues**

1. Following an overall review of military campaign medals and related issues conducted by Sir John Holmes, at the request of the Prime Minister, and published in July 2012, and subsequent separate reviews of individual medal and other issues conducted by Sir John, Brigadier Brian Parritt and others, the general guidance below has been agreed by the HD Committee and endorsed by HM The Queen for the award of future medals, and consideration of potential controversies arising from such awards.

2. The British approach to the award of military campaign medals has long been characterised by the view that they should be awarded sparingly, on the basis of genuine risk and rigour. This should continue to be the case, while taking into account also the motivational value of such medals for serving personnel, and the pride and sense of recognition of service they give to both serving personnel and veterans. There is at the same time a need to maintain a degree of consistency between British practices and those of allies and friends, with whom military deployments have been and will continue to be made, to avoid a sense of injustice on the part of British service personnel and veterans compared to others with whom they have served in the same campaigns.

3. The processes for initial consideration of military campaign medals should continue to be in the hands of the military authorities, within the normal administrative procedures of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), with recommendations coming forward from the Service Chiefs to the Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of State for Defence, for subsequent endorsement, if agreed, by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (the HD Committee), and by the Sovereign.

4. The key criteria for the award of a campaign medal should remain the exposure of deployed personnel to a significant degree of risk to life and limb, and to arduous conditions, in excess of what might be expected as part of normal service duties, whether deployed or in the home base. The main factors to be considered include the following:

- The risk and danger to life
- The style and force of the enemy
- The physical and mental stress and rigours experienced by individuals
- The numbers of individuals and/or units committed to the operation
- The restrictions, limitations and difficulty in implementing the operation, including climate, weather and terrain

- The number of days in theatre, or for example where appropriate numbers of air sorties, needed to qualify for the medal concerned
- The geographical boundaries within which eligibility will count

5. Notwithstanding the above, there may be circumstances where it is considered that the award of a support medal is appropriate, to reflect particular vital service in support of those on the front line. Future medal decisions will also have to take into account the changing nature of warfare, including the remote operation of weapons systems.

6. As part of the consideration of the case for a new campaign medal, and the conditions for eligibility for it, and while recognising that all campaigns have individual specificities, due account shall be taken of the need for consistency in criteria between such a medal and past medals for similar operations, including length of eligible service and geographical limits of eligibility, and for fairness between different groups. In this context, and for this purpose, each proposal from the MOD shall be put to the Advisory Military Subcommittee (AMSC) of the HD Committee, before recommendations are put to the full HD Committee. Once agreed, a brief account of the reasons behind the award of the campaign medal, and behind the eligibility criteria, should be available to the armed services and to the public. Similarly, where proposals for campaign medals are not taken forward to HD Committee by the MOD, or are not accepted by HD Committee, the reasons for this should be explained publicly as appropriate and necessary.

7. The AMSC shall also look carefully at whether each campaign medal has given rise to claims of inconsistency or other kinds of injustice no more than five years after the medal has been first awarded, in order to review the conditions and criteria, and to make recommendations accordingly. The presumption should be that after this review, and once five years have passed, there should be no more changes to the criteria. If there are further claims after this five year period, they should be eligible to be looked into if the circumstances can be shown to be in some way exceptional, for example if there is evidence that the issues raised were not properly considered at the time or at the time of the five year review; if significant new information has become available; if facts relied on during the original decision-making process or the review can be shown to be unsound; if the original decision or the review appears to be manifestly inconsistent with decisions on other relevant/similar campaign medals; or if the decision or the review appears to have been based on reasons which were not solely related to risk and rigour. It is accepted that setting the geographical and length of service criteria of any campaign medal involves drawing lines which are bound to leave some people on the wrong side of them. Any redrawing of such lines should respect the principle of fairness for as many as possible, and between different groups, and the need for clarity and precision in all such criteria.

8. A proposal for a new campaign medal relating to past campaigns shall not be ruled out *a priori* even if it is made more than five years after the events in question, but it should only be considered if one of the conditions specified in the previous paragraph is met.

9. It is assumed that, following the reviews undertaken by Sir John Holmes and Brigadier Parritt, decisions on medals which are already more than five years old at the time of publication of this guidance will not be revisited, unless the exceptional circumstances spelled out in the paragraph above can be shown to be present.

10. The fact that there is pressure to reopen a past decision is not by itself sufficient grounds to do so, but the existence of such pressure should be taken into account, as well as the need for, and value of, transparency of decision-making in such a sensitive area. The decision whether to take another look at past decisions about particular medals, including any proposal for a new medal relating to past events, should rest with the HD Committee, on the advice of the AMSC, not with the MOD. Due care should be taken in any new decisions not to create new inconsistencies, including between time periods of qualification. In some cases, the difficulty of defining eligibility criteria which are both precise and fair will make an award impossible, even when the case for a medal can be made.

### **Double medalling and foreign medals**

11. There is a long-standing assumption/principle that the same individual should not be able to receive two campaign medals for the same element of military service. In the national context, this is relatively straightforward, and military double medalling should be generally avoided. However, there have over the years been many occasions when either international organisations or third countries have wished to award British servicemen or other citizens their own medals, even when a British medal already exists for the same element of service. These issues are often complex and need careful consideration, with the possibility of flexibility where appropriate in particular cases.

12. The acceptance and wear of a foreign award by a British citizen are subject to approval by the Sovereign. The rules are particularly restrictive for Crown servants and other categories of public servant. In this context, the definition of Crown servants and public servants does not include those who are members of arms-length non-departmental public bodies such as the BBC, who should be treated as private individuals. These restrictive rules also do not apply to former servants of the Crown, when they are offered foreign medals more than five years after their service to the Crown has ended. There is no time limit on when medals may be offered and accepted in such circumstances. However, there may be circumstances where the acceptance of foreign awards by British citizens, including private individuals, is not in the national interest, and may be forbidden. Recommendations and decisions of

this kind are for the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in the first place.

13. Foreign awards which duplicate British medals have not normally been allowed to be accepted for wear. However, exceptions can be made, even for Crown servants, when this would be in the national interest, on the basis of a decision or recommendation by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Where private individuals are concerned, the presumption should be in favour of allowing acceptance and wear of the award concerned.

14. Where foreign awards have been allowed to be accepted as so-called "keepsakes only" by current servicemen, those who subsequently retire from Crown service may seek permission from the FCO to wear them on the left breast.

15. More detailed guidance on the acceptance and wear of foreign awards is maintained by the FCO. Applications by foreign governments to present awards to British citizens should continue to be made to them.