



Ministry of Defence

Defence Business Services
Secretariat
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Ref: FOI2024/04276

8 April 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 8 March 2024 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

"It has been some time since I have asked you to clarify the policy of your department regarding the award of Second World War campaign medals to war correspondents and what accompanying proof I must present.

I have over 600 news articles from the British Library, a state institution, proving that he was under British authority. You then mentioned that there is no evidence that he was under British authority which, as far as I understand, can only come from attachment to a British field headquarters. I then sent you a newspaper article from the British Library that was quite literally written at British Headquarters in France, which you rejected. You have, since then, refused to provide any sort of material guidance as to what documents your office will accept to prove war correspondent service with the British Armed Forces.

You appear to have indicated in the past that the Imperial War Museum is an acceptable source of information. When I conducted my own search of the Imperial War Museum digital archives, I was able to find an artifact physically showing my grandfather in British uniform and identifying him as a British War Correspondent. You have decided to ignore this in all subsequent correspondence.

Please answer the following questions:

- 1. Given that no British War Correspondents were under military command due to their non-combatant status, what documents will you accept to establish that an individual served as a British War Correspondent?*
- 2. In the event that records must be modified to demonstrate attachment to British authority, what documents constitute an acceptable burden of proof that an individual served as a British War Correspondent if such documents are missing from Ministry of Defence records?*
- 3. Please identify both the office and individual in charge of investigating complaints and decisions of the Medals Office."*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and I can confirm that some of the information in scope of your request is held. However, I must advise you that Section 40(2) has been applied to some information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there are no requirements to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

In response to request one: The Ministry of Defence Medal Office (MODMO) require a war office accreditation card (the official war office press pass) and posting orders from the employer to confirm the status as a uniformed civilian.

Under section 16 (Advice and Guidance), you may be interested to know that journalists who were not authorised by the War Office were considered independent from the British Armed Forces. Independent journalists are not eligible for British Second World War Medals.

In response to request two: The MODMO require official records which demonstrate service within the required locations, within the required timeframes, for the duration specified by the qualifying criteria.

In response to request three: The office for policy and how it is applied is the Defence Service Secretary's (DS Sec) Medallion Recognition Policy Office and they can be contacted at the following address:

MOD Main Building
Floor 6, Zone C
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

We are unable to release the identity of the individual in charge of investigating complaints and decisions under Section 40(2) explained above.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Defence Business Services (Secretariat)