

ADVISORY MILITARY SUB COMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE GRANT OF HONOURS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (“HD Committee”) is the principal body with responsibility for making recommendations on honours, awards and medals. The HD Committee provides the mechanism for consideration of all matters relating to UK honours, awards and medals and is the only channel through which proposals for additions to, or changes in, the honours system (including proposals affecting Armed Forces awards specifically) may be submitted to The Sovereign.

Role

2. The Advisory Military Sub-Committee (AMSC) is advisory to the HD Committee, which may consider other sources of advice when considering the recommendations made by the Sub-Committee. The AMSC is to consider arrangements relating to historic¹ military medals within the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserves, Cadets and Retired Service personnel). It is not responsible for reviewing State honours and awards (including national gallantry awards; introduction of medals in recognition of current operations, for which there is a well-tested process²; or Long Service and Good Conduct Medals). Its focus is historic medals claims, which may not have been previously considered or where new evidence has emerged.

Composition

3. The Sub-Committee is chaired by an independent member and has independently appointed membership. The official member is the Defence Services Secretary from the MOD, who sits *ex-officio* to *provide the perspective of the serving* Armed Forces. The secretariat is provided by the Defence Services Secretariat, part of the Ministry of Defence.

Criteria

4. The Sub-Committee will, as laid out in the independent Military Medal Review (2012)³, consider whether there are exceptional circumstances which should result in

¹ For working purposes, “historic” will be defined as any case arising more than five years after the agreed end date of a campaign or operation. Anything less than five years remains the remit of the MOD, per the definition in the current Joint Service Publication (JSP 761 – Honours and Awards in the Armed Forces).

² This involves recommendations from the chain of command being submitted to the MOD where they are approved by the Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of State prior to approval being sought from the HD Committee and ultimately HM The Queen. The MOD retains responsibility for proposing new medals for current/recent recognition or proposing amendments to existing medals.

³Para 30: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/military-medals-review-report-by-sir-john-holmes>

the review of the case for a medal. As articulated in the Review, these are principally where:

- a. There is evidence that the issue was never properly considered at the time;
- b. Significant new evidence has become available that had not been considered previously;
- c. Facts relied upon during the original decision-making process are shown to be unsound;
- d. The original decision appears to be manifestly inconsistent with those for other similar campaigns;
- e. The decision appears to have been taken for reasons which have nothing to do with risk and rigour.

5. Following an initial view based on the principles outlined in paragraph 4, the AMSC will consider whether or not there was a significant inconsistency or unfair approach affecting a substantial group of individuals; whether or not the requirements of risk and rigour were genuinely met; and whether or not recognition might create new inconsistencies. The AMSC may commission an independent adviser to assist in this process, where it considers such advice appropriate and necessary.

6. The AMSC is independent and may determine for itself which medals claims should be reviewed. The AMSC retains the right to review any historic medals claim, subject to the criteria outlined in paragraph 4. The AMSC also has discretion to review a claim for which they have already made a recommendation on to the HD Committee, should new information be submitted to the AMSC which it deems fundamentally alters the basis on which the original recommendation was made. However, there is no obligation on the AMSC to consider a claim further in such circumstances. The Sub-Committee may be called upon to consider other relevant issues at the exceptional request of the HD Committee.

7. These terms of reference have been approved by the HD Committee and are publicly available on gov.uk. They will be reviewed one year from the date below, with subsequent submission of any proposed changes to the HD Committee.

**Honours and Memorialisation Secretariats (Secretariat to the HD Committee)
Cabinet Office**

**On behalf of the Advisory Military Sub-Committee
November 2024**