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**SECOND MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE GRANT OF HONOURS, DECORATIONS  
AND MEDALS - ADVISORY MILITARY SUB-COMMITTEE  
- THURSDAY 29 AUGUST 2013 – MOD MAIN BUILDING**

Jon Thompsom – Permanent Secretary MOD – Chairman.  
Vice-Admiral Bob Cooling – ex Royal Navy representative.  
Major General Nick Cottam – ex Army representative.  
Air Vice-Marshal Tony Stables – ex RAF representative.

Sir John Holmes – Adviser to the AMSC.

Ian Keith – DS Sec – Hons – In attendance.  
Lt Col Valentine Woyka – DS Sec – Hons – Secretary

(Apologies: Professor Sir Hew Strachan – Military historian.)

Introduction

1. In opening the meeting, the Chairman invited Rear Admiral Williams to provide an update following the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Military Sub-Committee (AMSC) in Dec 12.
2. The AMSC's recommendations on recognition for the Arctic Convoys, Bomber Command and the Yangtze incident had been submitted to the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (the HD Committee). [REDACTED] the HD Committee [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [made] a recommendation to The Queen for the Arctic Star and Bomber Command Clasp. There had been an overwhelming response from veterans for these. Subsequently, a request from the Russian Government, to coincide with a visit by President Putin, had been agreed for the introduction of the Ushakov Medal to Arctic Convoy veterans.

Recognition for Service in Suez

3. Brigadier (Retired) Brian Parritt had undertaken a review of claims for the retrospective issue of a General Service Medal for service in Egypt in the periods before 16 Oct 51 and after 19 Oct 54 to 16 Jun 56. The review found insufficient evidence to justify overturning the original decisions, as modified by recommendation of the Lord Guthrie Committee in 2002. The AMSC concurred with Sir John's recommendation that there were insufficient grounds to change the existing criteria.

Recognition for Service in Korea

4. Brigadier Parritt's review found insufficient compelling evidence to warrant a recommendation to support the claim for medallic recognition for those who served in Korea following the ceasefire in July 1953 up until July 1957 when British forces left Korea. Sir John added that whilst there had undoubtedly been a certain amount of rigour, the level of risk had been insufficient to warrant the award of a medal. The AMSC endorsed this view.

Recognition for Service in Aden

5. Between January 1957 and November 1967 a General Service Medal had been issued for service in Aden except for the period July 1960 to April 1964 when those in authority judged that the situation did not warrant one. Brigadier Parritt had concluded that there was no evidence to

**~~RESTRICTED – HONOURS~~**

**RESTRICTED—HONOURS**

suggest any injustice, or that decisions taken at the time were manifestly wrong or inconsistent with those taken either in the Aden area or elsewhere. Sir John said that it was clear that a case had twice been put forward at the time for medallic recognition and that this had been rejected. Sir John recommended that there was no case for change and the AMSC concurred.

Recognition for Service in the South Atlantic

6. Sir John explained that a number of veterans had made a case for extending the qualification period for the South Atlantic Medal from the existing cut-off date of 12 Jul 82. He said that there was a view that decisions on the medal had been taken quickly for political reasons, possibly with an eye on the 'Victory Parade' which was only a few months after the conflict and when the medal was worn.

7. There were no Argentine attacks following the surrender on the Falkland Islands on 14 Jun but the possibility of this had remained very real. Ships had maintained Defence Watches (the highest level of readiness) until 21 Oct 82 when the airfield at Mount Pleasant was complete and responsibility for air defence passed to the RAF. A number of distinguished senior officers who served in the Falklands around that time had provided their support to an extension. In conclusion, Sir John recommended the extension of the South Atlantic Medal qualifying period to 21 Oct 82.

8. In the sub-committee's discussion, [REDACTED] remarked that there was a higher level of risk and rigour than the other cases discussed. Whilst there had been no attack, Argentine Forces had continued to probe the boundaries of the Exclusion Zone. UK Forces had remained on edge and in a conflict mind-set. Most, if not all, of the list of senior officers who had offered their support would have received the medal and it was clear that they would not begrudge others being added to the list of recipients over 30 years on. On the other hand, [REDACTED] he had not been aware of anyone saying they had missed out on a South Atlantic Medal. On balance, he was in favour of the change but it was a close run thing.

9. [REDACTED] said that he would be surprised if any of the requests for change had come from [REDACTED] as it was not a grievance that he had ever heard. He remained to be convinced by the case but would add his support if it was the will of the sub-committee.

10. [REDACTED] The operational situation as described was not one that he recognised from his experience but he acknowledged that the feeling may have been completely different [REDACTED]. He also offered to support the case if this was the mood of the meeting.

11. [REDACTED] said that, [REDACTED] he could recognise from his own operational experience the perceived threat and response. Every radar contact would have been viewed as a potential threat (a possible final act of defiance?). The review made a reasonable case and he was minded to support it.

12. The Chairman concluded that on balance there was support for the recommendation to extend the current period of qualification for the South Atlantic Medal (without Rosette) to 21 October 1982. However, there was some doubt about the number of estimated additional recipients in the review (around 10,000). The feeling was that this seemed high and further work would be required to refine this.

**RESTRICTED—HONOURS**

**~~RESTRICTED - HONOURS~~**

National Defence Medal

13. In his interim review, Sir John recommended that the merits of a National Defence Medal, as a recognition of general military service, should be looked at by a Cabinet Office-led working group before further consideration within government. Sir John commissioned a paper produced by officials in the Cabinet Office which took an objective look at the subject, including what other countries do.

14. In introducing the paper, Sir John said that what was under consideration here was not a campaign medal but a recognition of service medal and any recommendation would need political consensus. The UK already recognises service via the Long Service and Good Conduct (LS&GC) Medal -15 years good service but only available to other ranks. The Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM) is available to both officers and other ranks in the Reserve Forces and there does seem to be some inequality of treatment here.

15. Australia and New Zealand already have a Defence Medal as do France and the US but Canada do not. Sir John added that there was a feeling that the UK had been rather parsimonious when it came to recognising service. He was not looking for a recommendation but would welcome the sub-committee's views before considering more widely.

16. [REDACTED] agreed that there probably was a need to look at how recognition of service differed between Regulars and Reserves. However, as the paper made clear, there would be a massive cost linked to a National Defence Medal and he did not sense any great appetite that would justify anything on this scale. On balance, he would be against such a medal but could see how it might be politically attractive.

17. [REDACTED] when the VRSM was introduced there was a suggestion of something similar for Regular officers. He agreed that there were anomalies between Regulars and Reserves and that these probably needed to be reviewed. This was particularly important with the 'one force' concept [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] A National Defence Medal may also go some way to resolving other medal grievances.

18. [REDACTED] emphasised that we must not confuse a medal for service with campaign medals and the greater importance that they have to Service personnel. He agreed that we do need to look at anomalies between Regulars and Reserves but the LS &GC and VRSM were medals that worked very well and do what they say. The cost of a National Defence Medal was completely prohibitive and made him feel quite uncomfortable. He questioned whether this really was a campaign with a strong following or a few individuals who have made their voices heard?

19. [REDACTED] said that he had raised the issue with a number of [REDACTED] serving officers and he had not met one who supported the concept of a National Defence Medal. They supported the view that a medal for just being in the Armed Forces for a short period cheapened the value of a campaign medal that had been earned in difficult circumstances.

Acceptance of Foreign Awards

20. Sir John's interim report recommended that the policy on the acceptance of foreign awards should be reviewed by the MOD, FCO and Cabinet Office with a view to establishing more consistent rules about when international medals can be accepted and worn. This had been the subject of another paper by Cabinet Office officials on which Sir John sought the sub-committee's initial views.

**~~RESTRICTED - HONOURS~~**

## ~~RESTRICTED HONOURS~~

21. The paper recommended four potential changes to the existing rules:

- a. Removal/relaxation of the 5 year rule for foreign awards.
- b. Narrowing of the term "servants of the Crown" to exclude staff in arms-length bodies.
- c. Relaxation of rules on former servants of the Crown (including Service veterans).
- d. Amendment of the ban on foreign awards that duplicate national awards (double-medalling) to allow an explicit over-ride in the case of national interest, and to include the possibility of acceptance and wear on the right breast of awards currently only allowed as keepsakes for those not currently in uniformed public service.

22. Sir John said that this was primarily an FCO issue but one which impacted upon members of the Armed Forces and veterans. In particular, the five year rule which prevents veterans from wearing medals offered belatedly by a grateful foreign government seemed to make no sense.

23. ██████████ agreed that the current system did seem to be a muddle and a cause of irritation to veterans and to well meaning allies. He supported the recommendations but was not sure whether medals worn on the right breast was a workable solution.

24. ██████████ was against any form of double medalling where the UK had presented its own medal. Keepsakes from other governments were fine but they should not be worn.

25. ██████████ agreed all four recommendations but agreed that we should avoid double-medalling where at all possible. He did not agree with the right breast as an official option for medal wearing as that had informally become where the medals of a deceased relative were worn.

26. Sir John emphasised that there was no suggestion that serving personnel wear medals on the right and the Chairman acknowledged that the fourth recommendation had been carefully worded with this in mind. On this basis, the Chairman concluded that there seemed to be general support for the four recommendations.

### Further Claims for Medallic Recognition

27. Sir John outlined a paper which drew together a number of cases that had been made for medals (or changes to existing qualifying criteria) and which have not so far been considered in detail by the review. Sir John sought the views of the AMSC on which of these 21 claims they believed would warrant more detailed consideration. The list of cases and the AMSC's recommendation is at Appendix 1. In summary, the sub-committee recommended that a more detailed review be undertaken in the following cases:

- Claim for a limited number of Falkland Islanders to be awarded the South Atlantic Medal with Rosette. (Item 14)
- Claim that those involved in the defence of Malta should be awarded a small Maltese Cross to be attached to the Africa Star. (Item 15)
- Claim for new Cyprus clasps for the GSM 1962. (Item 21)

~~RESTRICTED HONOURS~~

**Further Claims for Medallic Recognition**

The list below puts together those claims which have not yet been looked at by the independent review team in the wake of the Holmes report. With each claim is a very brief comment, and a recommendation on the way forward. The military subcommittee is asked for comments, and in particular whether it agrees with what is recommended for further review.

1. HMT Lancastria Veterans

HMT Lancastria took part in the evacuation of the BEF and was sunk off St Nazaire on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1940. It is estimated that between 3000 and 5800 on board were lost. The sinking represents the Britain's worst maritime disaster.

**Comment**

This was undoubtedly a tragic event, and there is a case for greater public recognition and commemoration of the scale of losses involved. But a campaign medal is not the obvious or logical way of doing this. We therefore do not recommend pursuing it further. However, there remains the possibility of some other memorial, at St Nazaire or elsewhere, for example the National Arboretum.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

2. National Service Medal

The claim is that all those who were National Servicemen should be awarded a medal.

**Comment**

This claim is largely swept up in the separate Cabinet Office-led review of the claim for a National Defence Medal (see below). It is not therefore recommended to look at it separately at this stage.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

3. National Defence Medal

The claim is for the institution of a new medal for all those who served two or more years since September 1939 regardless of where they did so, or the level of "Risk and Rigour" they may have endured.

**Comment**

This broad claim is subject to a separate review. It is in a different category from campaign medal claims and needs broad political consideration.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – being reviewed separately.**

**RESTRICTED — HONOURS**

4. Addition of a Rosette to the NGSM/GSM 1962 with Clasp Malaya

This claim is for a "Rosette" to be attached to the Naval General Service Medal/ General Service Medal for those who served in Malaya between 16 June 1948 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 1957 to distinguish between those who served before Malaysian independence, and those who served after independence.

**Comment**

It is not suggested that a review of this claim should take place at the current time.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

5. EOD Personnel World War II

This claim requests that the time of qualification of 180 days for the "Bomb and Mine Clearing 1945-1949" clasp to the General Service Medal should include time spent on Bomb Disposal work during the war period 1939-1945 when medallic recognition was given in the Defence Medal and or the War Medal.

**Comment**

It is not suggested that a review of this claim should take place at the current time.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

6. Permission to wear a Greek Government Medal

There has been an enquiry as to whether those who served in Greece both in 1941 and 1944-1946 should be allowed to wear the medal awarded by the Greek Government for these campaigns.

**Comment**

This claim will be affected by the outcome of a separate Cabinet Office-led review dealing with the award of Foreign Medals.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

7. Cold War Veterans

This claim is for those who served during the period of the Cold War with special reference to those who served in submarines and those involved in the Berlin Airlift.

**Comment**

This is at least partly swept up in the separate review on the merits of a National Defence Medal, and is not therefore recommended for further consideration at this stage.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

## **RESTRICTED—HONOURS**

### 8. Medallic recognition for those who took part in the D Day Operation

#### **Comment**

This claim is not being actively pursued on a significant scale, and re-opening it would risk setting precedents for many other individual actions of WWII, as opposed to theatres or campaigns. It is not suggested that a review of this claim should take place at the current time.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

### 9. Medallic Recognition for those Killed or Wounded in Action

This claim is to award medallic recognition to those killed or seriously wounded in action.

#### **Comment**

It is not suggested that a review of this claim should take place at the current time, since this is a different sort of recognition from a military campaign medal. There is a case for looking at the idea of something separate for the wounded, in the wake of the success of the Elizabeth Cross for those killed in action. This was looked at when the Elizabeth Cross was established and rejected then, but could usefully be considered by the MOD again.

**AMSC Recommendation: Disagree – not for review. The AMSC felt that it would be hugely difficult and divisive to implement any sort of recognition for wounded or injured personnel. It was more important to ensure that all was being done in a practical sense to support such personnel.**

### 10. A claim that those involved in Bomb and Mine Clearance Duties in the Falklands Campaign should be given medallic recognition

Those who carried out EOD duties up to 12<sup>th</sup> July 1982 will have received the South Atlantic Medal with rosette. A review to be submitted to the Military Subcommittee Committee recommends that those serving in the Falklands up to 21<sup>st</sup> October 1982 should be awarded the South Atlantic Medal without the rosette.

#### **Comment**

There does not seem to be a strong case for such a medal just in the particular case of the Falklands. It is not suggested that a review of this claim should take place at the current time.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

### 11. A claim that the disparity between time qualifications for the General Service Medal should be reconsidered.

This claim points out that the time qualification for the GSM for Malaya and Suez was 30 days but for the Cyprus Campaign was 120 days and asks for this situation to be re-examined.

#### **Comment**

This would have to be a very far-ranging investigation and is arguably beyond the remit of the military campaign medal review. It is not suggested that a review of this claim should take place at the current time.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – Not for review.**

**RESTRICTED—HONOURS**

**RESTRICTED HONOURS**

12. Proposal for Medallic Recognition for those involved in Operation Alacrity

This claim is for those who served in Operation Alacrity, which was an operation in the Azores in 1943 to install naval and air bases in order to provide air cover for the Atlantic Convoys.

**Comment**

See above on D-Day, and individual actions. It is not suggested that a review of this claim should take place at the current time.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – not for review.**

13. Claim from Servicemen who witnessed the Atmospheric Nuclear Tests in the Pacific in late 1950 and early 1960

This claim is for those servicemen who believe they were exposed to the risk of radiation when serving in the Pacific in the 1950s, when they were involved in helping set up and observe nuclear testing, without being advised properly or consulted.

**Comment**

There seems little doubt that the servicemen involved in the nuclear tests were not given a proper account of the risks they were running and therefore have a genuine grievance. However the other aspect of the criteria for medallic recognition i.e. rigour, was not there. It is not clear that medallic recognition is the right way for the Government to recognise this risk and there may be other ways for them to do so. Nevertheless there is a case for the review to take a closer look at this, since it is not clear how the issue will be tackled otherwise.

**AMSC Recommendation: Disagree – not for review. The sub-committee felt that this was not the type of operational duty that would normally be recognised by the award of a medal. The sub-committee was mindful that there were ongoing claims for compensation by some of this group of veterans and it would be inappropriate for any medal review to potentially impact upon that.**

14. A claim that a limited number of Falkland Islanders should be awarded the South Atlantic Medal with Rosette.

This claim represents that a small number of Falkland Islanders known as the "North Campers" who actively supported the British Task Force by voluntarily transporting men and material and guiding reconnaissance patrols, should be considered for the award of the South Atlantic Medal with rosette.

**Comment**

This claim could be considered for a review.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – For review.**

15. A claim that those who were involved in the Defence of Malta in World War 2 should be awarded a small Maltese Cross to be attached to the Ribbon of the Africa Star.

**RESTRICTED HONOURS**

## **~~RESTRICTED HONOURS~~**

This claim points out that members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army and 8<sup>th</sup> Army have the appropriate recognition attached to their Africa Star ribbon, while the actions of Servicemen fighting on Malta have no such distinction, although the island itself was awarded the George Cross.

### **Comment**

This claim could be considered for a review.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – For review.**

### **16. A claim that Royal Naval Ships carrying out the "Armilla Patrols" in the Persian Gulf since 1980 should be awarded Medallic Recognition.**

Armilla patrols have been a major commitment for the Royal Navy since 1980, arising from the tensions in the region, not least between Iran and Iraq during the 1980-88 War, and a significant contribution to the maritime security of merchant shipping, particularly tanker traffic. These patrols operate where there is a risk from mines and hostile action and have a higher than normal level of rigour.

### **Comment**

This claim could be considered for a review, though the case does not seem strong at first sight.

**AMSC Recommendation: Disagree – not for review. There was a strong sense that this was a routine deployment over many years.**

### **17. A claim to reassess the time qualification for the award of the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 1994 for part-time Ulster Defence Regiment Soldiers**

The current regulation states that a full time UDR soldier can receive the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal after 3 years service, but a part time UDR soldier has to have completed 1000 operational duties to receive the award. Training duties are not considered for the purposes of an award. As the average part-time soldier takes part in 2 operational duties per week i.e. an average of 100 duties per year, compliance with this regulation means that many part-time soldiers need at least 10 years service to achieve the required number of operational duties.

The claim is that the criteria for an award should be set at three years accumulated service for full-time soldiers and six years' service for part-time soldiers.

### **Comment**

This claim could be considered for a review, linked to claim 20 below.

**AMSC Recommendation: Disagree – not for review. The sub-committee were not convinced of the need to revisit this issue.**

### **18. Claim that female members of the Ulster Defence Regiment should be awarded additional Medallic Recognition.**

## **RESTRICTED HONOURS**

This claim suggests that the "Greenfinches" (women members of the Ulster Defence Regiment) should be awarded additional medallic recognition as they operated unarmed in dangerous circumstances.

### **Comment**

This claim does not at first sight look particularly strong, but it could be considered for a review linked to claim 20 below.

**AMSC Recommendation: Disagree – not for review. The sub-committee were not convinced of the need to revisit this issue.**

### **19. Proposal that those involved in Operation Banner (the Northern Ireland Emergency) should be awarded a specific medal.**

This claim requests that the GSM with Clasp Northern Ireland and the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal do not represent adequate recognition of the risk and rigour of this long Campaign and additional recognition is required.

### **Comment**

This claim does not look particularly strong in itself, though it could again be looked at as part of a review linked to claim 20 below.

**AMSC Recommendation: Disagree – not for review. The sub-committee were not convinced of the need to revisit this issue.**

### **20. A claim that Servicemen who served in Northern Ireland for 720 days should qualify for the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal**

In January 1994 the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal was awarded to those servicemen who had completed 1080 days in Northern Ireland. On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 the same medal but with a different ribbon began to be awarded for 720 days service in theatres that included Northern Ireland. The claim is that there should be parity of qualifying time, ie the new qualifying time should be applied retrospectively.

### **Comment**

This claim could be considered for a review linked to claims 17, 18 and 19 above.

**AMSC Recommendation: Disagree – not for review. The sub-committee were not convinced of the need to revisit this issue.**

### **21. A claim that medallic recognition should be awarded to those who served in Cyprus in the periods 21 December 1963 to 22 March 1964 (Cyprus Civil War) and 15 July 1974 to August 1974 (Turkish Invasion)**

Service in Cyprus during the EOKA Campaign between 1955 and 1959 is recognised by the CYPRUS clasp to the General Service Medal 1962. However there were two other periods when British personnel were involved in internal conflict on the Island. The proposal is for two new clasps CYPRUS 1963-1964 and CYPRUS 1974.

### **Comment**

**RESTRICTED HONOURS**

**~~RESTRICTED~~ HONOURS**

This claim could be considered for a review, on the lines of the reviews conducted for similar Korea, Aden and Suez claims.

**AMSC Recommendation: Agree – For review.**

**~~RESTRICTED~~ HONOURS**