



Retrospective Medal Campaigns

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The retrospective honouring of veterans for service in a variety of campaigns dating back to the Second World War has been an issue for many years. It gained further prominence in June 2003 after the Government announced that a new medal clasp for service in the Suez Canal Zone between 1951 and 1954 would be awarded to veterans.

Information on the decision to award the Suez Canal Zone Medal, the eligibility criteria for the award and the application procedure are outlined in [Library Standard Note SN/IA/2202](#).

This note examines the process by which medals are instituted, the rules governing the acceptance and wearing of foreign medals, and some of the retrospective medal campaigns that are currently underway, including the recognition for RAF Bomber Command.

Information on the recent decisions to award the Arctic Emblem, the Bevin Boys Badge and the Women's Land Army/ Women's Timber Corps Badge is set out in the following Library notes: [SN/IA/3943, Arctic Emblem](#); [SN/IA/4564, Women's Land Army/ Women's Timber Corps Badge](#); [SN/IA/4384, Bevin Boys Badge](#). Information on the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal is available in [Library Standard Note SN/IA/3914](#).

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Contents

- 1 Background 2**
- 2 Rules Governing the Acceptance and Wearing of Foreign Orders, Decorations and Medals 3**
 - 2.1 Examples of Conferred Foreign Medals 5
- 3 Retrospective Medal Campaigns 6**
 - 3.1 Bomber Command 6
 - Medal Recognition 7
 - Memorial Campaign 10
 - 3.2 Russian Arctic Defence Medal 11
 - 3.3 National Service Medal 12
 - 3.4 Dunkirk Medal 13
 - 3.5 The Aden Campaigns 13
 - 3.6 Munitions Workers during World War Two 15
 - Background – First World War 15
 - Munitions Workers during World War Two 17
 - Recognition 18
 - 3.7 Submarine Service Medal (Cold War) 18
 - The US Position 20

1 Background

The process by which a British medal is instituted has been in place for many years. In the case of a campaign medal, the Commander-in-Chief of a particular campaign may make a recommendation for an award if they consider that service in that theatre, or under particularly rigorous circumstances, justifies the institution of a medal. That recommendation is passed to senior military officers who, if they are in agreement, submit the case to the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS). If CDS approves the proposal the Secretary of State for Defence submits the case to the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals, which is often referred to as the HD committee, through the Ceremonial Officer at the Cabinet Office. Following agreement by the HD committee, the case is then submitted to The Sovereign for approval. This process can take up to two years.

Medals recognising service in World War Two were instituted in 1946 by the HD Committee, with approval from King George VI. These included a range of campaign stars and medals for operational service in a number of campaigns including Burma, Africa, Italy, North West Europe, the Pacific and the Atlantic. In addition, the Committee also recommended the institution of three awards for general operational or non-operational service. At the time the

King also ruled that no further awards should be instituted for service in World War Two. It was also agreed among the allied countries at the time that campaign medals would not be exchanged.

Since the end of the Second World War the HD committee has also maintained a policy whereby it will not consider the institution of awards and medals for service given many years earlier or the institution of awards and medals for a theatre of operation which has already been recognised, what is commonly referred to as “double medalling”. On the issue of non-retrospection, the HD Committee considered that it could not put itself in the place of the Committee making the original decision who would have been able to take into account the views of the Government and other interested parties at the time.¹

In February 2002 the HD committee met to discuss this policy of non-retrospection. The committee concluded that its policy would remain in force and that consideration would not be given to cases where service had taken place more than five years previously.

In a Written Answer on 24 July 2002 the then Parliamentary under Secretary of State, Dr Lewis Moonie, stated:

The Government considers it important to respect the principle that where there is a clear, demonstrable decision taken within five years of a campaign that a General Service Medal should not be awarded, that decision should not be reopened.²

Reference to the ‘five year rule’ is also made in the *Foreign and Commonwealth Orders Regulations 1969* which deal with the acceptance and wear of foreign medals (see below).

The Orders state:

In no case can applications be considered in respect of Orders conferred more than five years previously, or offered in connection with events so long prior to the proposal to award them.³

2 Rules Governing the Acceptance and Wearing of Foreign Orders, Decorations and Medals

The Rules Governing the Acceptance and Wearing of Foreign Orders, Decorations and Medals were originally contained in the *Foreign and Commonwealth Orders Regulations 1969*. They have since been re-issued, in more detail, and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House (ref: MGP 05/2687).

In summary, those rules set out the following principles and guidelines:

- No UK citizen may accept and wear a foreign award without The Sovereign’s express permission.
- Permission for a UK citizen to accept an award offered by a foreign state will only be considered if the award recognises specified services rendered to the interests of that foreign state.

¹ <http://www.veterans-uk.info/medals/instituted.html>

² HC Deb 24 July 2002 c1106W

³ *Foreign and Commonwealth Orders Regulations 1969*

- Permission to accept a foreign award will not be given if a UK award for the same service has been, or is expected to be, awarded.
- Requests made in respect of services rendered more than five years previously, or in connection with events in the distant past (e.g. commemorative awards), will not be considered.
- Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval of a similar application in the past does not imply that permission will automatically be granted.
- Approval will only be considered for awards given by Heads of State or Government recognised as such by The Sovereign. It will not be considered for foreign awards conferred by private societies or institutions, with the exception of international organisations such as the UN, NATO or the EU.

Permission to accept and wear a foreign award will be granted on either:

- An unrestricted basis – allowing the award to be worn on any occasion.
- A restricted basis – allowing the award to be worn only on particular occasions associated with the foreign state that conferred it.

However, unrestricted permission will only be considered for foreign awards conferred for services under the following circumstances:

- Relating to saving, or attempting to save, a life.⁴
- By any member of the UK Armed Forces or other UK official on exchange, loan or attachment to a foreign state who is involved in a military operation or emergency on behalf of that state.
- By any member of the UK Armed Forces serving in a UK unit within a bi-lateral force under the command of another country who renders special service to the country's forces in a military operation or emergency.
- In military operations under the auspices of an international organisation such as the UN or NATO.

The granting of restricted permission will also only be considered in the case of foreign awards conferred in the following circumstances:

1. On the occasion of, and in connection with a State or official visit by a Head of State or Government.
2. In connection with a State visit by The Sovereign.
3. To members of Special Missions when The Sovereign is represented at a coronation, wedding or funeral or other similar occasion; or on any Diplomatic Representative when specially accredited to represent The Sovereign on such occasions.

⁴ This includes medals issued by life saving societies and institutions, although any medals conferred must be worn on the right breast and not the left.

In all other circumstances permission (unrestricted or restricted) will not be granted to Crown servants generally; to Heads or other members of HM Diplomatic or Consular establishments abroad; and senior officials, whether military or civilian, visiting foreign states.

Applications by a foreign government to confer a medal must be sought in the first instance from the Honours Secretariat at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Secretariat, in conjunction with the Ceremonial Secretariat of the Cabinet Office through the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals will then take the decision on whether to seek approval from The Queen.

On the whole approval for the conferral of a foreign medal is rarely given and any foreign medals that are conferred are generally acknowledged to be regarded as 'keepsakes' and are not intended to be worn.

2.1 Examples of Conferred Foreign Medals

There are a number of examples since the Second World War where countries have been given approval to confer medals on British Service personnel or ex-Service personnel. In a letter placed in the Library of the House in July 1990 the MOD set out those countries which, by that time, had been granted permission to confer an award, although it did not provide any detail on the particular medals concerned. Those countries were as follows:

Brunei

Ceylon

Ghana

India

Jamaica

Kenya

Malawi

Malaya

Malaysia

Nigeria

Oman

Pakistan

Sierra Leone

Singapore

Uganda

United Arab Emirates

Vanuatu

Zimbabwe.⁵

In 1994 permission was also granted for the Russian 40th Anniversary of Victory Medal to be awarded to veterans of the allied Arctic convoys.⁶

It is also not without precedent for foreign medals to be awarded but permission to wear them to be denied. Following the Gulf War in 1991 the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal was awarded to British Service personnel by the Government of Kuwait. To date, permission to wear that medal has been denied.

In addition, permission to wear the Saudi Arabian Medal for the Liberation of Kuwait, which was subsequently awarded in 1992 to all British personnel who had served in the Gulf conflict, was only granted to a small handful of those personnel in receipt of that award.

In January 2006 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office also announced that permission for eligible veterans to receive the Malaysian Government's Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal for Service in Malaysia between August 1957 and August 1966 had been granted by HM The Queen. However, permission to wear that award was not granted. This issue is examined in more detail in [Library Standard Note SN/IA/3914](#).

3 Retrospective Medal Campaigns

The retrospective honouring of veterans for service in a variety of campaigns dating back to the Second World War has been an issue for many years. In a Written Answer on 16 June 2004 the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, confirmed that:

The Government are keeping medals for various groups of veterans under review.⁷

3.1 Bomber Command

After the Allied retreat at Dunkirk in 1940 until D-Day in June 1944, Britain and her allies had to rely on long-range bombing in order to attack the military and industrial strength of the German war effort. That task fell to RAF Bomber Command. However, air crews of Bomber Command also carried out other roles, including low-level daylight bombing raids against shipping targets; the laying of thousands of mines at sea; supporting the Allied armies before and after D-Day; the 'dambusters' raid and the sinking of the German battleship the *Tirpitz*.

Over 10,000 aircraft were lost; 55,573 out of a total 125,000 aircrew lost their lives, including personnel from the Commonwealth and other Allied nations; a further 8,000 were wounded and 10,000 became Prisoners of War. The average age of the RAF aircrews in Bomber Command was 22 years.⁸ To date, the contribution of Bomber Command has not been recognised by the institution of a separate campaign medal or bar, or a national memorial. In contrast the personnel of RAF Fighter Command who flew in the Battle of Britain were awarded a separate bar to the 1939-1945 Star, a point that has been raised by campaigners.

As an article in *The Daily Telegraph* summarised in March 2008:

⁵ Letter from The Earl of Arran to Derek Conway, 26 July 1990

⁶ Further information on this award is available in Library Standard Note, SN/IA/2880, *Retrospective Medal Campaigns*. It should be noted that approval for the award of the Russian 50th Anniversary of Victory Medal was subsequently denied in 1995.

⁷ HC Deb 16 June 2004, c957W

⁸ Further information on RAF Bomber Command is available online at: http://www.rafbombercommand.com/master_welcome.html

During the course of the war, 125,000 aircrew of Bomber Command carried out a total of 366,514 sorties. Of these, 297,663 were by night. During these sustained operations, 55,573 pilots and crew were killed.

The dead included 38,462 Britons, 9,980 Canadians (58 per cent of the Canadians who flew with Bomber Command were killed), 4,050 Australians, 1,703 New Zealanders, 977 Poles, 218 Free French, 68 Americans attached to Bomber Command from the United States Army Air Force, 34 Norwegians and three Indians - as well as 1,479 ground crew.

Ninety-one members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force also died while on duty with Bomber Command. 10,999 members were taken prisoner of war; as many as a thousand evaded capture after being shot down, most making their way back to Britain to fly again.

In all, Bomber Command was awarded 19 Victoria Crosses, nine of them posthumously [...]

125,000 aircrew still await a campaign medal for outstanding bravery, where the chances of survival were about one in two [...] the time has surely come for a campaign medal – and also a monument in London to these brave men.⁹

Medal Recognition

Service in Bomber Command during World War Two was recognised in the eligibility criteria for several other campaign medals which were instituted at the time. As outlined above, successive governments have supported the view that medals should not be instituted for theatres of operation which have already been recognised or occurred more than five years previously. This was addressed by the MOD in answer to a Parliamentary Question on 4 July 2007:

The creation of medals is the prerogative of the Sovereign. The Sovereign takes advice from the Government of the day, who, in turn, are advised by the inter-departmental, non-political Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (known as the HD Committee), on which the armed forces are represented. In the case of campaign medals for service during the second world war, the issue was discussed exhaustively by those in command at the time and by the HD Committee. Those who served in Bomber Command during the second world war could qualify for one of the Stars instituted for campaign service for example the 1939-45 Star, the much prized Aircrew Europe Star or the France and Germany Star. World war two campaign medals were instituted for periods of military service in specified geographic areas and did not relate to individual battles, operations or military commands. The HD Committee has made it clear on many occasions that it will not revisit cases for service performed many years previously or where medals already exist for specified periods of service, both of which apply for service in Bomber Command.¹⁰

The eligibility criteria for the France and Germany Star, the Aircrew Europe Star and the 1939-1945 Star were as follows:

- The 1939-1945 Star was awarded for six months service, or 2 months for operational aircrew, under operational command between 3 September 1939 and 15 August

⁹ "Bomber Command Deserves a Medal", *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 March 2008. See also Max Hastings writing in *The Daily Mail* on 4 April 2008 ("Why political correctness has denied wartime bomber crews the honour they deserve").

¹⁰ HC Deb 4 July 2007, c1041-2W

1945. A Battle of Britain bar was awarded for the aircrew of fighter aircraft engaged in the Battle of Britain between 10 July and 31 October 1940.

- The Air Crew Europe Star was awarded for two months of operational flying from UK bases over Europe between 3 September 1939 and 4 June 1944. However, the Air Crew Europe Star could not be awarded until after the 1939-1945 Star. Therefore, the total requirement to earn both stars was four months. The Air Crew Europe Star was not awarded after D-Day and subsequent entitlement to the France and Germany Star or the Atlantic Star was denoted by bars on the Air Crew Europe Star.
- The France and Germany Star was awarded for operational service in France, Belgium, the Netherlands or Germany from 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945. Service in the North Sea, English Channel, and the Bay of Biscay in connection with the campaign in Northern Europe also qualified. The Atlantic bar was awarded to those personnel who qualified for the Atlantic Star, having already received the France and Germany Star.

Personnel who served in Bomber Command would also have been eligible for the Defence Medal and the War Medal 1939-1945:

- The Defence Medal was instituted for three years service in the UK or six months non-operational service overseas in an area subject to air attack between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945. Personnel of anti-aircraft command, RAF ground crews, dominion forces stationed in the UK, the Home Guard, Civil Defence, the National Fire Service and other civilian units also qualified for the medal.
- The War Medal 1939-1945 was awarded to all full-time personnel of the armed forces with 28 days service in any theatre of conflict between 2 September 1939 and 2 September 1945. It was granted in addition to the campaign stars and the Defence Medal. A few categories of civilians, such as war correspondents and ferry pilots who had flown in operational theatres also qualified. Members of the Merchant Navy qualified after 28 days at sea.

However a campaign to gain specific recognition for those individuals who served in Bomber Command has been established. In addition to the construction of a national memorial (see below) campaigners are also calling for a Bomber Command campaign medal to be instituted in recognition of those whom they consider to be the “forgotten heroes” of World War Two. In the 2007-08 parliamentary session an Early Day Motion (EDM) was tabled by Austin Mitchell MP which stated:

That this House considers that it is more than time that a campaign medal should be issued for those who served in Bomber Command between 1940 and victory in 1945; recognises the enormous achievement of Bomber Command's volunteer pilots' air crew in crippling the Nazi war machine and paving the way for the 1944 invasion of Europe, in the course of which Bomber Command lost 1,500 heavy bombers and 56,000 lives, mainly air crew, all sacrificed for their country; and further considers that the failure of the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals at the end of the war to recognise service in Bomber Command as an operational qualification for decorations was a mistake that should now be rectified for this unique service.¹¹

¹¹ EDM 218, Session 2007-08

By the end of the session that EDM had attracted 209 signatures.

This issue has received increasing support from across the House. During a Westminster Hall Debate on 26 February 2008, Andrew Mackinlay commented:

I want to use this occasion to refer to our establishment's failure to address the issue of Bomber Command. I know that the issue is surrounded by controversy and that the Government's recent replies indicate that they will not change their minds, but that simply is not good enough, because a wrong has been committed that still cries out to be remedied. I recently read the pamphlet by the distinguished historian Sir Martin Gilbert, who presses the point.

...The controversy relates to the operation of Bomber Command, although it would be highly inappropriate to discuss it in detail now because time does not allow me to do so. However, some 55,500 aircrew in Bomber Command, whose average age was 22, lost their lives, but they received no recognition; indeed, political decisions have excluded those brave men from obtaining a medal. I urge the Minister to reflect on that because I would like the issue to be addressed with some dispatch. A number of Bomber Command veterans are still alive, and they, as well as spouses and loved ones, would like some recognition.'

...The fact is that many other operations have distinctive medals, but there is no recognition of the fact that Bomber Command was unique. Winston Churchill said that the Spitfires were our salvation, but that the bombers were our means to victory. There is a self-evident case for awarding a medal with some dispatch.

...I do not want to labour that point, however, because this morning's central theme is the need to press the Government on the issue of those of our servicemen and women who have served and made a sacrifice in Iraq, Afghanistan and other contemporary theatres. The "Honour the Brave" campaign is overwhelmingly supported by Members of Parliament. However, I hope that, in summing up, the Minister will at least be prepared to listen and to look again at the issue of Bomber Command. Will he agree to have a meeting with me, Sir Martin Gilbert and one or two others from the Bomber Command Association so that we could at least present our case to him in his office? If he is agreeable to that, our attendance this morning will have been worth while as far as that issue goes.¹²

Max Hastings, writing in the *Daily Mail* in April 2008 has also argued:

No sensible person thinks less of our soldiers' deeds in Iraq or Afghanistan, because Tony Blair's wars are unpopular.

Whatever we think of the wartime bombing of Germany's cities, it is surely wrong to withhold respect, and indeed admiration, from the aircrew who carried it out [...]

Gordon Brown's administration should not for a moment be deterred from granting a Bomber Command campaign medal for fear of upsetting German opinion.

A medal would not represent a 21st century endorsement of area bombing.

It would merely be a long overdue act of justice to those who flew.¹³

¹² HC Deb 26 February 2008, c192-3WH

¹³ Max Hastings, "Why political correctness has denied wartime bomber crews the honour they deserve", *The Daily Mail*, 4 April 2008

Memorial Campaign

The personnel of RAF Bomber Command are commemorated at memorials at Runnymede and in Lincoln Cathedral, and by the statue of Bomber Harris outside the RAF church of St Clement Dane's in the Strand. However, support for the erection of an appropriate national memorial to the members of RAF Bomber Command has also been widely expressed.

It has been the long-standing policy of successive governments that the cost of war memorials and associated projects is met from private donations or public subscriptions. The Bomber Command Association, with the assistance of the Heritage Foundation and *The Daily Telegraph*, has consequently launched a national memorial fund in the hope of raising £2m to erect a national monument in central London. The MOD has given their support to the campaign. Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Glenn Torpy, has commented:

In essence, many people know about the magnificent efforts of "The Few" during the relatively short period of the Battle of Britain, but sadly much less is known about the enormous sacrifice made by the men of Bomber Command, who flew night after night deep into enemy territory, and suffered huge losses throughout the war [...]

So I am happy to add my support to this campaign, as are Ministers, as we are working closely with the Bomber Command Association and Heritage Foundation, as well as the planning authorities, to achieve this aim.¹⁴

That position has been supported across the House of Commons. In the 2007-08 parliamentary session an EDM tabled by Greg Pope MP received 53 signatures. That EDM was subsequently re-tabled in the current Parliamentary session and as of 20 January 2009 had 24 signatures. That EDM states:

That this House supports fully the campaign to build a permanent memorial to the sacrifice and courage of the men who served in the Bomber Command during the Second World War; recalls that 55,573 men gave their lives serving in Bomber Command, almost half of the total who served; recognises that this was a higher proportion than in any other branch of the armed forces; believes that the freedoms which we enjoy today are their legacy; and further believes that we should now honour them with a permanent memorial.¹⁵

An article in *The Daily Telegraph* also reported:

GORDON Brown has backed the Telegraph's appeal to honour the forgotten heroes of Bomber Command as all three main political parties voiced their support [...]

The Prime Minister said: "I have always believed that the 55,000 brave men of Bomber Command who lost their lives in the service of their country deserved the fullest recognition of their courage and sacrifice" [...]

Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, and David Cameron both added their support to the campaign.

The Tory leader said: "Their deeds have not been recognised in the way the heroes from the Battle of Britain have been, but their sacrifices were just as great."¹⁶

¹⁴ MOD Press Release, 29 October 2008

¹⁵ EDM 450, Session 2008-09

¹⁶ "Memorial to bomber crews backed by PM", *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 October 2008

In November 2008 Westminster City Council agreed to provide a site in Central London for the memorial once the £2m in funding has been achieved.¹⁷

Further information on the RAF Bomber Command memorial appeal is available at:

<http://www.rafbombercommand.com/memorialfund/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/rafbombercommand/>

3.2 Russian Arctic Defence Medal

In addition to the campaign for service on the Arctic convoys to be recognised, veterans have also been campaigning since 2001 for those who served in the allied Arctic convoys to receive the Russian Arctic Defence Medal¹⁸ from the Russian Government.

Allied veterans of the convoys have already received the 40th Anniversary of Victory Medal from Russia after permission to receive and wear them was granted by The Queen in 1994. Approval was given in light of the changed circumstances in Russia since the medal was first issued in 1985; the improvement of relations between the UK and Russia and the fact the medal was a commemorative award rather than a campaign medal. Approval for the award of the Russian 50th Anniversary of Victory Medal was refused in 1995, however, as awards commemorating an anniversary where permission has already been granted to receive and wear an award for an earlier anniversary of the same event, are not recognised.

The Arctic Defence Medal is of a higher standing than the Anniversary of Victory Medals as it is a battle decoration. Therefore the rules on the acceptance and wearing of foreign medals, as outlined above, are more stringently applied. At the end of the Second World War it was also agreed by the Allied countries at the time that campaign medals would not be exchanged.

In June 2002, however, the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs approved the decision to award the Arctic Defence Medal to all veterans of the allied arctic convoys. According to several press reports, a proposal was put before the UK Government in July 2002, which had subsequently been rejected.

In a Written Answer on 21 October 2002, however, the then Prime Minister refuted these allegations:

We have received no formal request from the Russian Government asking that permission be granted to issue the Defence of the Soviet Arctic Region Medal to British veterans. Were the Russian authorities formally to ask for this campaign medal to be officially recognised in this country, the Government would consider it carefully and discuss with relevant groups.¹⁹

This position was reiterated by the then Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, on 4 November 2002 and the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Lewis Moonie, on 19 November 2002.²⁰ However, in late 2003/early 2004 the Government confirmed that it was considering the possibility of allowing an exception to the rules on the acceptance and wear of foreign medals in order to allow veterans of the convoys to receive the Russian Arctic

¹⁷ "Bomber command memorial: Westminster agrees to provide central London site", *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 November 2008

¹⁸ Also referred to as the Soviet Arctic Region Medal.

¹⁹ HC Deb 21 October 2002, c80W

²⁰ HC Deb 4 November 2002, c77W and HC Deb 19 November 2002, c35W

Defence Medal.²¹ In a Written Answer on 22 June 2005 Mr Straw indicated that the issue was, however, no longer under review:

Mr. Benton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 24 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 1355W, on world war two medals, whether he has made a decision on the possibility of an exception to the rules governing the acceptance and wearing of foreign awards to enable British veterans who served on Arctic Convoys during the second world war to receive the Russian Defence of the Soviet Arctic Region medal. [6301]

Mr. Straw: No final decision was taken on this matter because, in December 2004, the Russian authorities made known that they were no longer considering conferring the medal for the Defence of the Soviet Arctic Region on foreign war veterans.

3.3 National Service Medal

For several years veterans, in particular the National Service Veterans Alliance, have been calling on the Government to institute a new medal for those who were conscripted for military service, particularly in the period following the Second World War. Advocates of the campaign have argued for recognition on the grounds that conscription was mandatory; it disrupted lives, education and employment and led to the untimely deaths of many young men while in the service of their country.

Personnel who served on National Service, both during World War Two and in the post-war years, were eligible for the medals and medal clasps instituted for the various campaigns in which they served.

During Oral Questions on 5 June 1997 the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence, John Spellar, stated:

National servicemen were eligible to receive the full range of campaign stars and medals available to the Armed Forces, subject to individual qualification. Service between 1939 and 1945 was recognised by the 1939-45 Star, 1939-45 War Medal, the Defence Medal and the Campaign Stars for the various campaigns in which they served.

Similarly, servicemen called up between 1946 and 1963 were eligible for the various clasps to the General Service Medal for the operations in which they served for example, Palestine, Malaya or Cyprus, and those who served in Korea were also eligible for the campaign medal and the United Nations Service Medal Korea. There are no plans to institute any additional awards for service during the above periods.²²

The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency has stated:

There is no official British medal specifically for those who performed a period of National Service and there are no plans to institute one. It has never been the Government's policy to consider service in the Armed Forces as the sole justification for the institution of a medal; Long Service and Good Conduct Medals require 15 years service and exemplary conduct. In the case of the estimated two million people who were conscripted into the Armed Forces in the post-war years, those who did take part in campaigns or operations for which medals were subsequently awarded, had an equal right to receive them as did their regular colleagues. Conversely, those who spent their National Service in the UK or with the British Army of the Rhine under

²¹ See HC Deb 22 October 2003, c618W and HC Deb 24 May 2004, c1355W

²² HC Deb 5 June 1997, c223

peacetime conditions did so alongside Regular personnel who, likewise, did not receive a medal. It would be divisive to offer National Servicemen a medal simply for being conscripted, when those who volunteered for service would be excluded from receiving any award. Even today, many people leave the Armed Forces without having received a campaign medal during their service. This does not imply that their contribution to the defence of the country has not been appreciated.²³

3.4 Dunkirk Medal

A separate medal for involvement at Dunkirk was not issued by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals in 1946. However, service at Dunkirk was recognised by waiving, for those involved, the eligibility criteria for the 1939-1945 Star.²⁴

In 1948 the Dunkirk Commemorative Medal, which is also referred to as the Dunkirk Star, was established by the French Government, under the patronage of the town of Dunkirk. In 1970 authority was given by The Queen for the medal to be awarded to British personnel who served in operations at Dunkirk in 1940.²⁵ Medals given by foreign governments may not be worn alongside, or in line with, medals or awards instituted and approved by the Sovereign unless express permission is also given.²⁶

In December 1986 representations were made to the Government at the time for the institution of a bar to the 1939-1945 Star recognising service at Dunkirk. In a Written Answer the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence, Roger Freeman, outlined the Government's position:

Mr Holt asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to provide Dunkirk clasps to the 1939-1945 medal for surviving veterans of that event; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Freeman: No. All significant operations and battles of the 1939-1945 war were carefully considered by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals in 1946. The importance of the Dunkirk operations was recognised by the waiving for those involved the normal qualifying period for the 1939-1945 star. It has remained policy since 1946 that no further awards should be introduced in respect of service in the 1939-1945 war.²⁷

3.5 The Aden Campaigns

Three medals were instituted for service in the military campaigns in Aden between 1957 and 1967, although they do not cover the entire period of operations there:

- Operational service in the Arabian Peninsula in resistance to border raids and against bands of dissidents between 1 January 1957 and 30 June 1960 was recognised with the "Arabian Peninsula" clasp to the General Service Medal 1918-1962 and the Naval General Service Medal 1915-1962. The minimum period of

²³ http://www.veterans-uk.info/medals/national_serv.html

²⁴ The qualifying criteria for the 1939-1945 Star were six months service (two months for operational aircrew) between 3 September 1939 and 15 August 1945 under operational command.

²⁵ Authority for the acceptance and wearing of foreign medals, both campaign and commemorative, must be given by The Queen.

²⁶ Letter from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence, the Earl of Arran, on 26 July 1990. A copy of this is available from the Library.

²⁷ HC Deb 10 December 1986, c205-6W

service determining eligibility was 30 days, not necessarily continuous.²⁸ The clasp was also awarded to eligible members of the local armed forces and certain civilians.

- Service in the Aden theatre of operations between 25 April and 31 July 1964 was recognised with the “Radfan” clasp to the General Service Medal (GSM) 1962.²⁹ The minimum period of service was 14 days of continuous service in the South Arabian Federation. The clasp was also awarded to designated civilians.³⁰
- Service in the Aden theatre of operations between 1 August 1964 and 30 November 1967 was recognised with the “South Arabia” clasp to the GSM. The minimum period of eligible service was 30 days or more continuous service (Army, RAF and Royal Navy and Royal Marines posted ashore), and 30 days or more, not necessarily continuous, for Royal Navy and Royal Marines afloat in the South Arabian Federation. Again, certain categories of civilian were also entitled to receive the award.³¹

The Aden Veterans Association is currently campaigning for the Government to extend the qualifying period of either the “Arabian Peninsula” GSM/NGSM or the “South Arabia” GSM to cover operational service between July 1960 and 1964 which is not currently recognised by any of the clasps to the GSM. It is worth noting that the GSM with “Radfan clasp” is not mentioned in the AVA’s literature on this campaign.³²

In response to this campaign the Government has made the following comments:

The Command Paper for the NGSM and GSM with clasp ‘Arabian Peninsula’ provided for the possible extension of the published end-date, subject to a case being submitted to the HD committee. The contemporary papers were revisited afresh fairly recently.

As far as could be determined, no case was ever made and it had to be concluded that those in Command at the time felt that the scale and scope of the border raids and terrorist attacks from dissidents in Aden did not justify the extension of the qualifying period for the medal. However, it is apparent that the situation had again deteriorated in 1964, by which time original two medals had been replaced by the new tri-service GSM 1962. Accordingly the ‘Radfan’ clasp was instituted for service in the South Arabian Federation between April and July 1964, followed shortly afterwards by the clasp ‘South Arabia’ which included service in Aden.

Those in Command had every opportunity to reconsider the earlier medal and extend its qualifying period at that time while the events were still relatively fresh and could easily have closed the gap so that service in Aden could qualify for medals throughout the early 1960s, but they decided not to. The HD Committee will not attempt to second guess decisions made many years ago and it is clear from the institution of the later medals that the matter was not overlooked at the time, so at this late stage there are no plans to amend the qualifying criteria for any of the medals for service in Aden.³³

²⁸ Cm 1277, Session 1960-1961

²⁹ The GSM 1918-1962 and the Naval GSM 1915-1962 were amalgamated into one generic tri-service medal in December 1962.

³⁰ Cm 2732, Session 1964-65

³¹ Cm 3041, Session 1966-67

³² Further information is available online at: http://www.adenveterans.org.uk/gsm_qualifying.htm

³³ Letter from the MOD dated 21 May 2007 and made available at: <http://www.adenveterans.org.uk/medal.htm>

3.6 Munitions Workers during World War Two

Background – First World War

During the First World War, in addition to joining the auxiliary services,³⁴ approximately 2 million women took up occupations on the “Home Front” in order to support of the war effort. Among other things, women were employed as drivers, farm workers, shipyard workers and in the munitions factories and other areas of heavy industry. The attraction in taking up such roles was higher wages, better conditions and greater independence than that which could be offered in domestic service. However, the roles were also often physically exhausting and the hours were long (often 12 hour shifts, seven days a week). For those working in the munitions factories the work was also unpleasant and even dangerous.

In taking up these roles women were also often criticised for taking men’s jobs whilst they were away serving their country. However, women and women’s organisations fought back, arguing that they were also serving the nation in wartime, no less than the men on the front. For many women it was also a necessity given the loss of the main breadwinner in the home. Indeed, following the introduction of compulsory military service for men between the ages of 18 and 41³⁵ in January 1916, the government began to actively encourage women to join the labour force and take up essential roles from men who had been released from their normal occupations to serve at the front.³⁶

With respect to the munitions industries specifically, during the early stages of the war there was a recognised munitions shortage and the Government quickly moved to appoint a Minister for Munitions, Lloyd George, who was then tasked with resolving the crisis. In the years that followed the subsequent expansion of the munitions industry in the UK was significant. The munitions industries produced the metals, chemicals, weapons, ammunition, textiles, food and other equipment required by the armed forces. Those industries included government-owned arsenals, dockyards and factories as well as private firms across all manufacturing sectors, some of which came under national control during the war. In July 1914 approximately 212,000 women, nicknamed “Tommy’s sisters”, worked in the engineering and munitions industries. Some women were trained to do exactly the same jobs using the same machinery as men, while others were taught only a component of a skilled man’s job or were trained on new machinery.

As a result of the mass expansion of the munitions industry, nearly all of which at some point relied on women workers, and the introduction of conscription in 1916, by the end of the war the number of women working in the engineering and munitions industries totalled almost one million. By the end of 1918 British industry had also produced more than 4 million rifles, 250,000 machine guns, 52,000 airplanes, 2,800 tanks, 25,000 artillery pieces and over 170 million artillery rounds.

In the book *On Her Their Lives Depend* by Angela Woollacott, a breakdown of the role of women munitions workers is set out, as originally reported in the *Daily Chronicle*, 21 December 1918. That book highlights:

³⁴ Such as the Women’s Auxiliary Corps and the Women’s Voluntary Service

³⁵ With some exceptions for those in essential occupations, those deemed medically unfit, religious ministers and conscientious objectors.

³⁶ An example of the propaganda campaign is set out in Katie Adie’s book *Corsets to Camouflage*. I attach a copy of that section for information.

Table Two: Breakdown of Women
Munitions Workers by Area of Work

Area	Number of Workers
Ministry of Munitions	
Shell Manufacture	183,000
Filling Shells	64,500
Ordnance	18,900
Rifles, Machine Guns	8,800
Small arms ammunition	31,800
Trench warfare	24,900
Explosives, chemicals	35,900
Aeronautical supplies	63,700
Mechanical warfare	3,500
Railway material	3,100
Optical munitions, glass	3,800
Mechanical transport	18,400
Iron, steel	30,100
Nonferrous metals	10,800
Construction engineering	26,100
Machine tools	6,600
Gauges, tools, screws etc	20,100
Inspection	40,600
Subtotal	594,400
	[should be 594,600]
Admiralty	114,800
War office, misc	60,400
Other government work	39,500

Work for allies	5,700
Total	814,800
	[should be 815,000] ³⁷

As outlined above, working in the munitions factories was often unpleasant, hard and dangerous. The hours were long, while the work was repetitive and strenuous. Strict regulations on dress and appearance were put in place and the punishments for infringing the regulations were severe, often a fine of up to two weeks pay. The exposure to TNT, cordite and other chemicals also had health implications, inducing headaches, hysteria and epilepsy. Toxic poisoning from TNT resulted in jaundice, which occasionally proved fatal. Hundreds were also badly injured in explosions and other accidents and during the period of war approximately 400 women were estimated to have died in the factories.³⁸

A journalist who visited the government's munitions complex at Gretna Green in 1916 was reported as commenting "the girls who take up this work sacrifice almost as much as men who enlist".³⁹

Munitions Workers during World War Two

In contrast to the situation in 1914, the presence of women workers in factories at the onset of World War Two was not uncommon. However, as more men were called up to join the armed forces women were once again needed to replace them in the workforce. Thousands volunteered for work on the land and in the factories producing among other things aircraft, munitions, uniforms, tents and parachutes. Munitions workers came under the control of the Ministry of Labour.

During the first two years of the war, however, it became clear that volunteers alone were not going to meet the demands of wartime production. Indeed, over 60 munitions and armaments factories had been established at the beginning of World War Two in order cope with demand. In 1941 the *National Service Act* was consequently passed which, for the first time, made the conscription of women legal. As part of the conscription requirement women had to choose whether to enter the armed forces or work in farming or industry. In reality however, the forces of supply and demand meant that the majority of women were conscripted into industry, and specifically the munitions industry. At first only single women aged 20-30 were called up. However by mid-1943 almost 90 % of single women and 80% of married women were employed in essential war work and one in three factory workers was female. Over the total period of the war an estimated 7 million women were employed in the war effort, with one and a half million of those women directly employed in the engineering and munitions industries.

The disadvantages of such work, particularly in the munitions industries, were largely same as in the First World War. The hours were long (often 12 hour shifts) and the work unpleasant and dangerous. Resentment in the work place was also common as many men did not like working with women, and the women were generally paid less than the men for the same job. However, in addition to the health risks and the possibility of accidents, the

³⁷ Angela Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend*, 1993, p.31

³⁸ Angela Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend*, 1993

³⁹ Devil's Porridge Exhibit, Gretna Green:

(http://www.iknow-scotland.co.uk/tourist_information/south_west/gretna_green/womens_roles_munitions.htm)

technological advancements of World War Two also meant that the factories were also constantly at risk from enemy bombing raids. In the knowledge that the Germans would inevitably target munitions factories during bombing raids, secrecy surrounded their existence.

Recognition

The women working in the munitions industries have never received formal recognition of their contribution to the war effort in either the First or Second World Wars, even those who were conscripted during World War Two. In contrast to the women who served in the auxiliary forces, the Women's Voluntary Service and other similar organisations they were not recognised in any of the eligibility criteria for the medals instituted for service during World War Two, including that of the Defence Medal which was issued in recognition of non-operational service in the UK. In addition, these women are not eligible to receive the recently instituted Veterans Lapel Badge.

At the beginning of June 2008 David Jones MP tabled an EDM calling for recognition to be extended to those individuals who were conscripted into the munitions factories during the Second World War. That EDM stated:

That this House acknowledges the contribution made by munitions workers to the defence of the United Kingdom in the Second World War; notes that many such workers were women conscripted under the provisions of the National Service Act 1941; considers that the contribution of munitions workers proved crucial in securing victory in 1945; regrets that that contribution has never been formally recognised; and calls on the Government to recognise the effort of former munitions workers in maintaining the security of this country.⁴⁰

That campaign received some attention in the press including an article in *The Sunday Telegraph* on 22 June 2008.⁴¹

To date, the Government has not indicated whether it intends to institute an award recognising this specific contribution, or not. In answer to a Parliamentary Question in July 2008 the MOD commented:

The Veterans Badge is designed explicitly to recognise those who have served at any time in the country's armed forces and it would not therefore be appropriate to extend this badge to those who worked in munitions factories in the UK during the World Wars. The Government hold in high esteem the contribution of all those who supported the war effort during these major periods of national conflict which has been recognised in a number of different ways depending on the particular group. Any question of a badge specifically for munitions workers would be a matter for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform which has legacy responsibility for those matters covered by the Ministry of Supply, including those who worked in the munitions industry.⁴²

3.7 Submarine Service Medal (Cold War)

Various British gallantry medals were awarded to individual submariners for acts of bravery during the Cold War. A number of British campaign medals, or bars on the Naval General Service Medal and General Service Medal, were also awarded to a number of submariners

⁴⁰ EDM 1764, Session 2007-08

⁴¹ A copy of that article is available online at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2170652/Women-war-munitions-workers-seek-medal.html>

⁴² HC Deb 15 July 2008, c300W

during this period. Bars on the General Service Medal were instituted, for example, for service in the Korean War and in the Suez Crisis in 1956.

However, an all encompassing medal, or bar, for British submarine service during the Cold War was not issued. Service in the Royal Navy, Army and RAF during this period was also not recognised by an individual service medal or bar.

In a debate on 19 December 2002 Dr Bob Spink raised the issue of awarding British submariners for the role they played during the Cold War. He stated:

Another Member spoke earlier about the need for a Suez medal, and I agree entirely. However, I want to raise a new matter in connection with medals.

Will the Prime Minister consider awarding a campaign medal to recognise the service given and sacrifices made by the men who served in Polaris and Hunter-killer submarines during the cold war? They maintained the peace for many years, but the people involved in the campaign have received no recognition. They were effectively on active deterrent patrol all year round, including at Christmas and the New Year. A constituent of mine once left his wife over the New Year to go on patrol, leaving her with one child aged five years, and one aged three days. There was no paternity leave for him, and I think that he deserves a medal. The Prime Minister had paternity leave so I hope that he will award a medal to reward those people. At this time, many of our service men and women are getting ready to fight for world freedom from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and they go with our blessings and good wishes.⁴³

In a letter placed in the Library of the House on 30 January 2003 the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Dr Lewis Moonie, stated:

There is no doubt that the Country and, indeed, the world, owes a debt of gratitude to all British Service personnel, and the Armed Forces of the whole NATO Alliance, for their efforts in maintaining and preserving peace during the Cold War years. There is also little doubt that for some personnel the Cold War was more dangerous, arduous, trying and less visible than for others. The patrols undertaken by the Royal Navy's Submarine Service are a prime example of this, and our submariners can be justifiably proud of their significant contribution to world security.

It would, however, be invidious to single out for recognition the contribution of one small group of people amongst so many others. It would also be impossible to do so without, in some way, being seen to regard the contribution of others as somehow of less worth. Whilst, therefore, the Government recognises the very important role that personnel of the Royal Navy's Submarine Service played during the Cold War, there are no plans to consider the institution of an award to submariners for this service.⁴⁴

There are a number of commemorative medals that recognise the service of submariners during this period. The International Submarine Service Medal, commissioned by London Submariners and supported by the International Submarine Association, is one such example. However, these medals are not official decorations and therefore cannot be worn alongside other formally constituted military medals.

⁴³ HC Deb 19 December 2002, c1084

⁴⁴ DEP 03/394, 30 January 2003

The US Position

In April 1999 former Secretary of Defense William Cohen approved the creation of a Cold War Certificate, recognising the contribution of all service members and federal employees who served the US military during the Cold War period.⁴⁵

However a majority in the US Congress were in favour of recognising military service during this period with the award of a Cold War medal. Consequently, the US *Defense Authorization Act* 2002 formally recommended for the first time that the Secretary of Defense consider authorising the design and award of the Cold War Service Medal. However, in January 2003 the Department of Defense announced that it would not be creating and issuing a medal in recognition of Cold War service.

Brad Loo, Deputy Director of Officer and Enlisted Management Personnel for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, stated:

After careful consideration, it was decided not to create a medal. Throughout the Cold War years, commanders used a full spectrum of individual unit and service awards to recognise the achievements and sacrifices of service members.⁴⁶

In January 2003 a memorial honouring Cold War submariners was unveiled at the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum. Constructed with funding from the Cold War Submarine Memorial Foundation, the memorial also recognises the service of submariners of the British Royal Navy.⁴⁷

A commemorative Cold War Medal is also available, although it is not officially recognised by the US Government.

⁴⁵ Further information is available online at: http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr1999/b04051999_bt146-99.html

⁴⁶ More information on the memorial is available online at: <http://www.cwsmf.org/>

⁴⁷ "DoD decides not to create Cold War medal", *Army News Service*, 23 January 2003