

Sir Jonathan Stephens KCB  
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Dear Sir Jonathan

August 2017

Ref: Letter from Sir Jonathan Stephens KCB to Colonel Terry Scriven dated 28 July 2017  
Letter from Anonymous at Cabinet Office to Sir Jonathan Stephens dated 23 May 2017

I am writing with regard to the response which has been made in answer to the complaint submitted by Colonel Scriven on 14 February 2017. I submitted two claims for medallic recognition to the original Sir John Holmes Medal Review. A case for an Award for those who have been injured as a direct result of their military service, and a case for the Harmonisation of the award criteria for both versions of the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal. I am also a supporter of the National Defence Medal campaign. You might also have already come across my name as I was the person who pursued a claim for the release of the Minutes of the Meeting of the ACSM held on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013. My original FOI request was made asking for a copy of these minutes on 27 August 2014 and it took until 30 August 2016 to see the GRC FTT instruct that a partially redacted copy of those minutes must be provided to me within thirty five days. It took me just over two years to obtain those minutes.

I suppose that I didn't really expect much else from your internal investigation. I know from my own experience that while politicians may come and go, we can expect that the years of experience of our Civil Servants who are (generally but not always) a constant font of knowledge are there for transient politicians to call upon. Such experience based advice does come with conditions however. A shrewd politician will realise very quickly that advice from civil servants is more often than not unrecorded and unaccountable. As such it is very much a case of "Caveat Emptor". Basically it is a case of "once you have signed off the item.....it is yours." I expect that Sir John Holmes will realise this and see the position that he has arguably been placed in, subsequent to this investigation.

Sir John Holmes will also no doubt recall his brief from the Prime Minister which was reported in **Hansard, House of Lords 17 July 2012 Column WS24**. I shall not quote it in full, but as a reminder of a part is shown below in bold italics, the most important phrase being of course "using the principles he has proposed to implement his findings".

***"I welcome the report and have asked Sir John to lead a second stage of work to make further recommendations using the principles he has proposed to implement his findings".***

Particularly interesting then to see that your investigator found that *"While campaigners may not accept the statements that consideration of the case for various medals has been*

*“thorough and full”, I think the combination of Sir John Holmes’ various studies and the work done by HD and the AMSC does merit this sort of statement”.*

I am afraid that the above leads me to believe that the investigator cannot have actually read the AMSC minutes of 29 August 2013. I show below extracts from those minutes in italics, and with certain parts emboldened.

*Further Claims for Medallion 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.*

And here is the header for Appendix 1

*RESTRICTED HONOURS*

*Appendix 1*

*Further Claims for Medallion 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.*

I find it difficult for anyone to put any other interpretation upon those two italicised pieces other than this. The twenty one medal submissions were not even considered by the Independent Review Team and of course this should have been carried out prior to the AMSC meeting. In the first entry, Sir John admits that he is referring to cases *“that have not so far been considered in detail by the review”*.

This must suggest that even the members of the AMSC had not read any of these twenty one submissions prior to the AMSC meeting, and Sir John was effectively handing over to the AMSC the decision making process which quite simply allowed AMSC to effectively dismiss any of these cases, unread, out of hand. We know from the timings of that meeting that it would have been a physical impossibility for those cases to have been even skim read, in the three minutes or less that would have been available at best to do so.

I note that in your own covering letter to Colonel Scriven, that you state of your investigator that, *“He has concluded that the Independent Military Medals Review Process was handled entirely properly”*. I am afraid that if he had produced this report for me he would have had it back, red inked, and carrying advice to *“Try Again.”*

Yet again another disappointing report, and the campaigns that I represent will continue to be fought until we reach a result which as the **Prime Minister** promised us would be fair.

It will be added to the increasing number of documents we have, which will in time be used to find the Military Medals Review and subsequent handling by the Honours and Decorations Committee to be completely unfit for purpose with respect to providing an **“open and transparent process and draw a line in the sand once and for all.”**

I suppose that we do have to see the positive in all of this. At least now we have an excellent example for the future, when we question the wisdom of allowing Government Agencies to carry out investigations upon themselves, in response to concerns raised by members of the public.

I note from your letter to Colonel Scriven that you now find yourself unable to respond to any further communication in this matter and find this most disappointing.

Yours sincerely

M G H [REDACTED] BA(Hons) MA(Ed) PhD MCMi FIET

Copy to:

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP - Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Damian Green MP – First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office