

Patron. Her Majesty The Queen.

FROM THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE



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17th November 2015

Dear Mr Kelley

Thank you for your letter dated 2nd November 2015 concerning the UK National Defence Medal.

I regret to inform you that it is a long-standing principle of The Royal British Legion not to campaign on medals or honours issues. There are a number of reasons for this, the overarching one being that, were we to begin to campaign for new forms of medallic recognition, we would find ourselves quite literally overwhelmed with requests for assistance, all of which would have to be properly considered. In any case, as a charity with finite means, valuable time and resources in support of different medal campaigns would mean that we should not be able to improve the welfare of the Armed Forces community, which of course is our primary focus.

The British system of awarding campaign medals may be characterised as being deliberately parsimonious: medals should be hard-earned, thus recognising service to one's country where life is placed at risk and conditions are tough. The Legion broadly supports this position as this is precisely why veterans of past conflicts wear their medals with pride. We recognise, however, that, as a consequence of such a restrictive approach by Government, some Service personnel will inevitably feel excluded, despite their having served with distinction for many years.

In his Military Medals Review of 17th July 2012, Sir John Holmes noted that a National Defence Medal was "worthy of consideration." Whilst the Legion itself does not campaign on medal issues, we are inclined to agree with Sir John's recommendation that a Cabinet-led working group should explore these proposals further, so that the matter might finally be settled for those without medallic recognition.

Whilst we are unable to support a campaign for the UK National Defence Medal for the reasons stated, we of course recognise the bravery and sacrifice of all who have served, and continue to serve, in Her Majesty's Armed Forces, including those who have not been engaged in conflict.

Thank you for taking the trouble to write to me and I wish you good fortune in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

John Crisford
National Chairman

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