



Ministry  
of Defence

THE RT HON BARONESS GOLDIE DL  
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

MSU/4.4.2.14

September 2021

Dear Tobias,

I thank you for your letter of 23 June addressed to the Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, Secretary of State for Defence, prompted by your being contacted by Dr Caroline Johnson MP enclosing a letter on behalf of her constituent Wing Commander N Firby (Retired).

I am responding as the Minister responsible for medallic issues within the MOD. I have had previous contact from the Wing Commander.

The Government and the nation have the utmost admiration for all those who have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. I would like again to assure Wing Commander Kirby that his loyal and dedicated service in the Royal Air Force is very much appreciated.

I would like to begin by explaining that in April 2012, the Government appointed Sir John Holmes to conduct an independent review of the policy governing the award of military medals. This substantial and complex piece of work concluded in 2014. Sir John's review was subject to detailed discussion by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals and the conclusions submitted for Royal approval.

As part of the review, Defence Ministers at the time agreed that the eligibility requirements for the LS&GCM, which was awarded only to Other Ranks and not Officers, should be harmonised for the future. The introductory date for Officers was set at 29 July 2014 as that was the date of the first public announcement that there would be a medal for Officers of the Regular Armed Forces to recognise their long service and good conduct. Therefore, only those serving in the Regular Armed Forces on or after this date can qualify for a medal.

The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP  
Chair of the Defence Committee  
Committee Office  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Additionally, the regulations for awarding the LS&GCM across all three Services were revised with effect from 1 October 2016. Eligibility for the medal was widened to include Regular Officers and backdated to 29 July 2014. There are no plans to change this date to extend the eligibility of the award further, as this date marks a clear change in policy that came in as a result of Sir John's Review.

Please let me know if you require anything further.

*Yours sincerely,  
Annabel Su Hooie*

**BARONESS GOLDIE DL**



## Defence Committee

Chair, Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP

Committee Office, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

020 7219 6872 defcom@parliament.uk www.parliament.uk/defcom

Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP  
Secretary of State for Defence  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

23 June 2021

*Dr Caroline Johnson*

Dr Caroline Johnson MP forwarded a letter for my attention from Wing Commander N Firby (retd.), in relation to eligibility for Long Service and Good Conduct Medals (LSGCM).

Commander Firby explained that the Ministry of Defence introduced revised eligibility criteria for the LSGCM meaning that those who left Regular service before 29 July 2014 are unable to apply. This seems unfair as long service to our Armed Forces should be recognised, regardless of when it took place and when someone left service.

I would be grateful if the department could clarify the reasons behind this decision and whether it would be possible to revise the eligibility criteria to allow ex-servicemen/women such as Wing Commander Firby to receive proper recognition for their commitments to serving their country.

I await your reply.

*Tobias Ellwood*

**Rt Hon. Tobias Ellwood MP**  
**Chair of the Defence Committee**

[Copied to Wing Commander Firby]

*W.C. quite serious*