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The 2RAR Association Chronicle

2nd Battalion
The Royal Australian
Regiment Association
Inc

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A MEDAL FOR SOME? ACTION!

The response to our front page article last issue has been overwhelming. In almost every case there was consensus that if the Government is to go ahead with the issue of a medal for national service, then it is a case of one in, all in. On the basis of this response we sent a letter to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the bulk of this is reproduced below:

Recently you released details of the Prime Minister's announcement that a new commemorative medal would be available to those who completed their obligation under the national service schemes from 1961-1972.

This Association noted the details in our most recent newsletter, the 2RAR Chronicle, and we have been inundated with incignant letters and phone calls from our members throughout Australia.

The general thrust of these complaints is that National Servicemen should receive the Commemorative Medal, but that members of the Defence Force of Australia should also be recognised.

The recognition of one group who served Australia, and not all groups, presents many uncertainties and precedents obviously not anticipated by those who framed the commendation to you and the Prime Minister. Much of the communications to us suggests that, by appeasing the very powerful lobby group- the National Service Association, the Coalition is cynically buying votes from that group. This is not the view of this Association, but the individual views of our members must be considered.

Bearing in mind that national servicemen and Regulars served together in Vietnam, that many of our members served in the Army Reserve, then as Regulars, that many were volunteers for K-Force during the Korean War, the anomalies the issue of the medal will bring will require yet another Anomalies Committee to be appointed.

Might we, then, suggest a compromise without altering the rationale behind the issue of the medal?

Our suggestion is that a new Australian Defence Medal be struck and be available for all service in the armed forces of Australia for men and women of all Services. The conditions might include:

* all service since 3rd September 1945, and the cessation of the issue of the Imperial Defence Medal,

* available to personnel who successfully completed their engagement or commitment, or a minimum of two years efficient service. If that service was terminated by death during service or by discharge for medical reasons the issue of the medal will still apply, in the case of death to the next-of-kin.

In this way, not only the people who have served will be recognised for their service, but also those now serving will be recognised for their service which might only be served within the limits of Australia.

We trust you will give this suggestion serious consideration?

We await a response eagerly!

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