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COMMITTEE ON THE GRANT OF HONOURS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS

IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION SERVICE MEDAL

Note by the Secretary

On 26 June 2004 Her Majesty The Queen graciously approved the proposal for the issue of a special civilian medal, in recognition of service by civilians and others involved in the reconstruction and transition to democracy in Iraq. The Prime Minister announced the approval of the medal in a statement to Parliament on 30 June 2004. The Committee is asked to consider the proposed eligibility criteria and other details. A Memorandum was prepared by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (attached at Annex A) but various changes have now been negotiated, as outlined in this paper.

2. Background

No civilian medal has ever been awarded for civilian service in a war zone. It is therefore important that this case is considered carefully. It is essential that members of the military who have been awarded the military medal should not feel that they are disadvantaged by the application of less rigorous standards to a parallel medal for civilians and members of the military in non-operational roles.

3. The situation in Iraq has been unprecedented, in terms of the number of civilians who have been involved in reconstruction and the transition to democracy. Civilians have been involved firstly with the Coalition Public Authority, responsible for the administration of Iraq, and subsequently, in a wide range of Government Ministries, to rebuild the government and civil infrastructure, as well as in the reconstruction of the country's physical infrastructure. Civilians have been, and continue to be involved in training a wide range of Iraqi officials, including the police, military and Facilities Protection Service.

4. These civilians have volunteered for this work. The work has generally been well rewarded financially. A concern of the MoD is the fact that the military have been haemorrhaging personnel who leave the forces to become highly paid security contractors in Iraq. There is some discomfort over the prospect of these people becoming eligible for a medal on the same basis as their former colleagues.

5. Operational Area

The proposed operational area for the medal will be the geographical territory of Iraq. This will mean that personnel involved in training exercises elsewhere in the region will not be entitled to a medal.

6. Qualifying Period – FCO Proposals

The proposal from the FCO is that the qualifying period for the "civilian" medal should be the same as that demanded for the military medal: that is 30 days

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continuous service in Iraq. Aggregation of service, under this proposal would not be permitted. The FCO have based this on the criteria for the military medal.

7. An additional qualifying period of 10 working visits of a minimum of 2 days per visit has also been suggested, to enable frequent visitors, including contractors who have worked on construction projects to be eligible. This proposal for frequent visits adds up to less than the basic 40 day qualifying period. The FCO are therefore prepared to concede that this criterion should be amended to a minimum of 960 hours, in blocks of 48 hours or more, which may be aggregated over the period of one calendar year, on working visits within Iraq.

8. Specific qualifying criteria – FCO Proposals

Aggregation: Service is not to be aggregated. All service is to be continuous (with the exception of the above criterion relating to frequent short visits, above).

9. Qualifying Service Unexpectedly Reduced/Terminated: If qualifying service is brought to an end before the completion of the specified qualifying period on account of death, capture, wounding or other disability due to service in Iraq, the reduced period completed by the individual will be sufficient qualification for an award. The grant of a British honour, decoration or medal (other than the Iraq Medal (military)) for services on operations during the qualifying period not amounting to the qualifying criteria specified above, will also qualify the recipient for an award.

10. Service already counted towards the award of the TELIC/military medal cannot qualify for the civilian medal. There will be some circumstances in which individuals might qualify for both the civilian and the military medal for different periods and differing types of service.

11. Details of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's recommendations for eligible, and excluded personnel, are included in their paper (Annex A). Details of the risk and rigour associated with service in Iraq are also given in the FCO paper.

12. Specifications, Design and Production

The FCO is recommending the Ian Rank Broadley effigy of HM The Queen for the obverse of the medal. The preferred design, which has been approved by the Royal Mint Advisory Committee, is submitted for approval, together with the preferred colours for the medal ribbon, which incorporates the "sand" colour in the Iraq Military Operational medal. Details of the design of the medal and the medal ribbon are attached to this Note.

Front design:	Round with obverse showing the Rank Broadley effigy of HM The Queen with the wording ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA FID DEF.
Material:	Cupro-Nickel
Diameter:	36.07mm
Thickness:	4mm
Manufacture:	Struck
Finish:	Rhodium Plating/Coating
Engraving:	Recipients name to be inscribed on bottom rim edge observe uppermost of the medal

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13. The medal will be on a plain bar swivel, with standard 3 pin mount and will come in a presentation case.

14. Points for consideration

The FCO have suggested that civilian service in Iraq continues to warrant recognition, and so no end date for the medal has been suggested. The same is true of the military medal. The situation will be reviewed on a regular basis to determine whether the medal is still warranted.

15. At the original meeting of officials, convened last year to discuss general criteria for the medal, there was an agreement that the time requirement should be a minimum of 60 continuous days (including leave of one week). The FCO subsequently argued that the risk and rigour associated with qualifying service for the Iraq "civilian" medal are, in very many cases, the same as those for members of the Armed Forces. They have provided risk and rigour statements (attached at Annex A). However, given the number of military fatalities, it may be invidious to suggest that civilians face the same degree of risk. The political factors at para 4 are also relevant. The FCO has therefore agreed that a compromise position of 40 days would be acceptable to them.

16. Another important point relates to the original FCO proposal at para 7 above. Time criteria for medals are not normally drawn up to accommodate specific personnel. The Secretariat advice is that the Committee does not support the original FCO proposal on the grounds that there is no real justification for it, and it would set a difficult precedent. The Committee may alternatively consider that service need not be continuous, but might be aggregated over a calendar period of one year. The FCO would be satisfied with this alternative.

17. A significant point arises in connection with the voluntary/NGO sector. The Department for International Development has undertaken an extensive NGO consultation exercise over the last five months. They have concluded that it would not be appropriate to award the IRSM to NGO staff or volunteers. The NGOs have agreed. This is largely for reasons of security and demonstrable independence. DfID and FCO Ministers have agreed this.

18. In parallel with the criteria for the military Iraq Medal, qualifying service for the Iraq Reconstruction Service Medal ought not to count towards the qualifying criteria for the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal (ACSM).

19. Recommendations

- a. *the qualifying period should be set at 40 days;*
- b. *qualifying service may be aggregated over a calendar period of one year;*
- c. *the criteria at para 7 should be rejected;*
- d. *qualifying service will not count towards the ACSM*

20. Conclusion

Members of the Committee are asked to:

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- a. agree the proposals set out by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the medal to be known as the Iraq Reconstruction Service Medal, *amended as recommended at para 19 above*;
- b. approve the proposed medal and ribbon design.

In the absence of dissenting comment by 15 September the Chair proposes to submit a Report to The Queen.

Ceremonial Secretariat
35 Great Smith Street
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9 August 2006

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