The politics of British concepts of heroic gallantry, 1955-1979

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The ‘Sixties’ value shift in Britain – often referred to as the ‘cultural revolution’ – has long been shrouded in generalisation, stereotype and misunderstanding. Countless studies have considered many aspects of this timeframe, often concluding in support of either its revolutionary progressiveness or conservative stasis. This thesis aims primarily to shed new light on the nature, extent and timing of cultural and political transition through focusing on a concept overwhelmingly rooted in conservative, military and state-orientated culture: the concept of heroic ‘gallantry’. It does so by concentrating on the interaction between the Sixties value shift and government policies relating to British gallantry awards. The thesis concludes that, in an area in which moral and political ‘conservatives’ – namely Tory ministers and MPs, civil servants, military servicemen and ex-servicemen’s associations, combined with right-wing journalists and their readership – held a dominant emotional stake, it was they who pioneered ‘progressive’ reform to gallantry awards policy in order to maintain the relevancy and acceptability of these decorations in evolving British politics and culture. The transformation of concepts of gallantry, therefore, provides evidence of how ‘conservatives’ engaged proactively and constructively with the broader liberal Sixties transition, whilst preserving the conservative essence of gallantry throughout this transition. Through investigating this interaction, the thesis also considers what the Sixties reveal about interconnected themes such as ‘militarism’ and ‘militarisation’ in Britain; the material culture of medals; the socio-political agenda of the Honours System and the place of the ‘hero’ within British politics and society. This study therefore provides a fresh perspective, through an often militarised and conservative lens, on an important milestone transition in postwar British history.

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Introduction

In May 1969 the Chairman of the Albert Medal Association, Lt. General Sir John Cowley, wrote to the British government demanding justice for what he considered to be the downgrading in status of the Albert Medal [AM] within both official rankings and wider society. Lord Stonham of the Home Office [HO], responding to these complaints, admitted that the standards of gallantry invested in medals 'tend, I shall not say to change but, to take on differing shades of relationship over the years because they are not absolute. There are no categories fixed for all time into which gallantry can be neatly divided.'[1] In essence, Stonham argued that concepts of heroic 'gallantry' were fluid, malleable and eternally shifting according to evolving historical conditions. This was in direct contrast to the approach of the AM Association who demanded reaffirmation of the supposedly rigid, unchanging standards of the past. This episode is but one of many, from the mid-1950s to the late-1970s, demonstrating the way in which concepts of gallantry, as manifested primarily through the British awards system, could be caught in a contest between those advocating conceptual change or continuity. These decades would consequently prove to be of pivotal importance for evolving cultural and political attitudes towards British gallantry medals.

The conceptual transformations of heroic gallantry and associated terms, such as courage, honour, chivalry and heroism, have long been traced by historians of a diverse range of historical periods. From studies of gallantry within early-modern gentlemanly behavioural standards through to its integration and application through the British state Honours System from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, it has often been recognised as evolving in accordance with contemporary cultural and political preferences. Most of these studies have, however, focused on the decades and centuries prior to 1945 and have neglected to consider the impact of seismic postwar political and cultural transformations. Indeed, it has often been assumed that little of lasting significance occurred after 1945 to revise British concepts of gallantry. This thesis, in challenging this assumption, concentrates accordingly on how gallantry interacted with a particularly crucial period of postwar transition, often identified as the 'Sixties cultural revolution', from 1955 to 1979. In considering the way in which this often conservative, state-orientated, nationalistic and militarised concept interacted with a period often associated with fast-paced progressive or permissive change, it not only sheds new light on the fate of mid-twentieth century concepts of gallantry, but also on the politics and culture of this period more broadly.

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[1] London *The National Archives* [henceforth *TNA*], T 333/142, Draft minute from Lord Stonham to Lt. General Sir John Cowley, [undated] 1969.

The thesis consequently explores the extent, direction and timing of the supposed Sixties 'value shift' through a concept – gallantry – with strong affiliations to 'conservative' culture and politics. It considers whether gallantry remained 'militarised' at a time in which the military footprint within society is often thought to have faded. Beyond these issues, this study also considers the place of gallantry awards – as part of the Honours System – in the cultural interaction between state and society and, closely interlinked, the status of 'the hero' within postwar British society. Finally, it also considers the place of gallantry medals within material culture. In so doing, this thesis not only explores evolving British concepts of gallantry after 1945, but also their implications for understanding postwar British politics, culture and society more broadly.

Whilst most British historians would agree that '*something* significant happened in the sixties', rarely is there any consensus on what, when or how this occurred.[2] The term 'cultural revolution' has regularly been used in a variety of contexts to describe the period from the mid-1950s to the early-1970s. Some have applied it specifically in relation to the rise and impact of what is broadly known as 'counter-culture': the renaissance in progressive left-wing artistic, social and political movements during these decades.[3] Arthur Marwick alternatively used it to describe more broadly a 'transformation in material conditions, lifestyles, family relationships, and personal freedoms for the vast majority of ordinary people' and that these were revolutionary in that they occurred '*simultaneously*, by unprecedented *interaction* and *acceleration*'.[4] Historians of diverse specialisms have, however, increasingly contested the sudden 'rupture' often implied by revolutionary change and have instead favoured the notion of slower evolutionary gradualist transition.[5]

Indeed, commentators remain divided on not only the nature of the transition, but also when the main high point of cultural change occurred. Most now subscribe to Marwick's concept of the 'Long Sixties' which encompasses at least the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s and, indeed, many historians are willing to extend this umbrella concept further.[6] However, there is

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[2] Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c.1959-c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. xii.
[3] For instance, Glenn Altschuler, *All Shook Up: How Rock 'n' Roll Changed America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 1.
[4] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 7.
[5] Hugh McCleod, for instance, traces a short-term transition to secularisation from the mid-1950s to late-1970s and also a longer-term transformation since the early-modern growth of religious toleration. Hugh McCleod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 1 and 257.
[6] Sandbrook, Savage and Beckett push the 'Long Sixties' into the late-1970s and beyond. Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974-1979* (London: Penguin, 2012), pp. 401-02. Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), p. 5. Andy Beckett, *When The Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), p. 4.

disagreement about the moment of catalyst. Marwick argued that the 'Long Sixties' centred around 1958-1974, but particularly emphasised that 'the critical point of change came, as precisely as one could ever express it, in 1958-9'.[7] Sandbrook, on the other hand, focuses on 1970-1974 as the crucial years of change in which the reforms of the 1960s permeated through to mainstream society.[8] Other historians have concentrated around what David Fowler has described as ''pivotal year' histories'.[9] A vast number of studies have concentrated on the revolutionary global significance of 1968 in politics, culture and society.[10] Indeed, the importance of '68 is likely to be considered a major turning point by historians well into the future. Richard Vinen has, for instance, recently stressed the importance of this year regarding its short or medium-term legacies of protest that extended into the 1970s and 1980s, whilst also considering its long-term significance in political ideologies and policies into the twenty-first century.[11]

Perhaps in reaction to the emphasis on 1968, however, other recent studies such as those by Simon Hall, Francis Beckett and Tony Russell have stressed the importance of 1956 as the most important point of change.[12] Christopher Bray has also described 1965 as 'the year the old Britain died and the new Britain was born.'[13] Jon Savage has instead emphasised 1966 as a decisive landmark, particularly in relation to music culture but also in a wider political context.[14] More theme-specific studies have also pointed to other landmark dates. Cultural historians have, for instance, often underlined the importance of 1963 as the year in which sexual revolution began decisively.[15]

Historians remain equally divided on the extent and nature of cultural transformation. The majority of Sixties literature still tends to focus on progressive movements at popular level, thus presenting a narrative of British culture largely overthrown by new permissive ideas of

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[7] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 7.
[8] Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency – The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-1974* (London: Allen Lane, 2010), p. 10.
[9] David Fowler, '1966: the year the decade exploded', *The Sixties*, 10 (2017), 115-117 (p. 115).
[10] For standard examples see, Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004). Chris Harman, *The Fire Last Time: 1968 and After* (London: Bookmarks, 1988). Vladimir Tismaneanu, 'Introduction', in *Promises of 68: Crisis, Illusion and Utopia,* ed. by Vladimir Tismaneanu (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), pp. 1-20 (p. 1).
[11] Richard Vinen, *The Long '68: Radical Protest and Its Enemies* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), pp. xiv and 332-334.
[12] Francis Beckett and Tony Russell, *1956: The Year that Changed Britain* (London: Backbite Publishing, 2015), p. 5. Simon Hall, *1956: The World in Revolt* (London: Faber and Faber, 2016), p. iv.
[13] Christopher Bray, *1965: The Year Modern Britain Was Born* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2015), p. xiii.
[14] Jon Savage, *1966: The Year the Decade Exploded* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), p. 3.
[15] Ariel Leve, *1963: The Year of Revolution - How Youth Changed the World with Music, Art, and Fashion* (London: Harper Collins, 2013), p. 1. R. Hewison, *Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties, 1960-1975* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. xiii.

sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll.[16] Nevertheless, an increasing range of studies – from the broad surveys of Frank Mort and Sandbrook to detailed theme-specific studies such as Bill Schwarz on immigration, Wendy Webster on decolonisation and Ben Thompson on media censorship – have emphasised that a powerful 'conservative culture' endured within society whilst still acknowledging coinciding progressive developments.[17] Moreover, a range of studies have also concentrated on how Conservative politicians 'modernised' or engaged constructively with the broader progressive transitions within society in order to maintain long-term Tory interests. John Davis and Lawrence Black have, for instance, variously explored how the Young Conservatives engaged enthusiastically with university reform, European integration and the politicisation of youth culture throughout the late-1960s.[18] Alternatively, Jim Bulpitt – in his several studies of 'Conservative statecraft' – explored the way in which the Tories approached immigration, devolution and economic management in a seemingly progressive, proactive and pragmatic way in order to secure long-term electoral and policy goals.[19]

There hence remains deep divisions within Sixties literature on the extent of a 'permissive' shift and the way in which an enduring nostalgic and conservative culture interacted with change. In the context of this thesis, the frequently referred to 'conservative culture' is defined by a range of moral, cultural and political values often opposed to perceived Sixties permissiveness. These values were shared by a significant cross-section of British society, from the general public to lobby groups, right-wing newspapers to Tory politicians and conservative institutions such as the Armed Forces and the Anglican Church. They could be interpreted as having constituted a 'conservative community'.

Finally, Sixties historians also differ in what they consider primarily drove transformation within society. For many years commentators, particularly of '68, often emphasised the role

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[16] For instance, Jonathan Green, *All Dressed Up: The Sixties and the Counterculture* (London: Pimlico, 1999). Bernard Levin, *The Pendulum Years: Britain in the sixties* (Cambridge: Icon, 2003).

[17] Sandbrook, *State of Emergency*, p. 10. Frank Mort, 'Scandalous Events: Metropolitan Culture and Moral Change in Post-Second World War London', *Representations*, 93 (2006), 106-137 (pp. 136-7). Bill Schwarz, ''The only white man in there': the re-racialisation of England, 1956-1968', *Race & Class*, 38 (1996), 65-78. Wendy Webster, '"There'll Always Be an England": Representations of Colonial Wars and Immigration, 1948–1968', *The Journal of British Studies*, 40 (2001), 557-584. Ben Thompson, ed., *Ban This Filth: Letters from the Mary Whitehouse Archive* (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), pp. 1 and 5.

[18] John Davis, 'Silent Minority? British Conservative Students in the Age of Campus Protest', in *Inventing the Silent Majority in Western Europe and the United States: Conservatism in the 1960s and 1970s*, ed. by Anna Von der Goltz and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 63-82 (pp. 73, 76-77). Lawrence Black, 'The Lost World of Young Conservatism', *The Historical Journal*, 51 (2008), 991-1024 (pp. 1018 and 1024).

[19] Jim Bulpitt, 'Continuity, autonomy, and peripheralization: the anatomy of the centre's race statecraft in England', *Government and Policy*, 3 (1985), 129-147 (pp. 137-38). Jim Bulpitt, 'Conservatism, Unionism and the Problem of Territorial Management', in *The Territorial Dimension in United Kingdom Politics* ed. by Peter James Madgwick and Richard Rose (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982), pp. 139-176 (p. 145). Jim Bulpitt, 'The Discipline of the New Democracy: Mrs Thatcher's Domestic Statecraft', *Political Studies*, 34 (1986), 19-39 (p. 39).

of grassroots movements in providing the momentum behind change, forcing governments to become more progressive.[20] Some commentators have, however, instead emphasised the role of politicians and elite segments of society in imposing progressive reform upon society, hence making transformation more of a 'top-down', as opposed to 'bottom-up', process.[21] Marwick, on the other hand, advocated a middle-way position through his concept of 'convergence', by which he argued that a range of factors including 'major forces and constraints', 'events', 'human agencies' and 'convergences and contingencies' combined at a decisive moment in history to lay the foundations of cultural revolution.[22] This convergence theory will be applied throughout this analysis.

Collectively, whilst it is acknowledged that something significant happened during the Sixties, opinion differs on the extent, timing and direction of change. There is hence space in which to offer fresh interpretations of transition. Whilst revisionist historians have done much to further understandings of a more enduring British nostalgic culture with studies of empire, race and religion, rarely have they considered an equally 'traditional' cultural concept with such close associations to state-orientated, often militarised, values as gallantry. In a society which had only recently lived through a culture of total war and mass conscription, this omission is surprising and a significant hole in the literature. It is likely that conservative, militarised values – related to notions of service and sacrifice to state and society – remained an influential frame of reference for many within society. However, its interaction with the cultural transitions of the Sixties remains neglected.

Concepts of gallantry, as manifested in the British awards system, hence constitute an effective way of further understanding this conservative culture in the Sixties context. Within mid-twentieth century Britain there existed the highest number of veterans decorated for gallantry in the nation's history: the by-product of two total wars in which medals permeated into all levels of society. These awards, and the values projected from them, arguably held more emotional investment and resonance in postwar British culture than many of the themes which current historiography has focused on. The medal often remained a prominent part of the recipient's sense of identity and highly valued by the community which shared their frame of reference. At the same time, however, the extent to which concepts of gallantry remained wrapped up in the British state honours and awards system, as it had been since the mid-nineteenth-century but increasingly so since the expansion of awards from 1914-onwards,

[20] Sarah Waters, 'Introduction: 1968 in Memory and Place', in *Memories of 1968: International Perspectives*, Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters, eds., (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 1-22 (p. 9).
[21] Jarvis has explored the role of the Macmillan government in promoting permissive legislation. Mark Jarvis, *Conservative Governments, Morality and Social Change in Affluent Britain, 1957-64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 160.
[22] Marwick, *The Sixties*, pp. 23-25.

meant that there also remained a strong sense of 'possession' over the concept of gallantry by the British state and its military.

Accordingly, in studying gallantry through the awards system, a concept is addressed with unusually strong foundations in both state-centred and popular culture whereby both groups often felt powerful senses of ownership and entitlement to dictate ideological direction. Under these conditions, therefore, a focus on gallantry's engagement with the Sixties allows a clearer picture to be built of the interaction between cultural forces from 'above' and 'below' during a period of major social change, unavailable through other case studies which do not possess the same themes of patriotic sacrifice and duty to the nation.

Hence, in focusing on concepts of gallantry – as explored through medals – this thesis will provide a fresh interpretation of the nature, extent and timing of the value shift. It will explore what evolving concepts of gallantry reveal about the 'revolutionary' or 'evolutionary' nature of change and its timing. The thesis will also address whether 'progressive' ideas, originating from either state or society, influenced overall concepts of gallantry or whether this concept remained essentially conservative and untouched by other liberal cultural developments. In so doing, it will shed new light on the direction of either a progressive value shift or the endurance and enhancement of a nostalgic and conservative culture. Furthermore, it will uncover where the momentum lay behind such change: either state, society or a 'convergence' of different forces. Finally, regardless of the direction of change, this thesis will explore the pacing and timing of developments, considering the relevance of landmark dates and the 'Long Sixties'. Consequently, this thesis will make a significant contribution to debates on these long-contested social and cultural developments.

If historians of the Sixties value shift are guilty of failing to engage with state-dominated, militarised values, it equally remains the case that historians, social-scientists and political geographers of British 'militarism' and 'militarisation' neglect Sixties culture in equal measure. Indeed, there remains a long-standing but disconnected and patchy literature on continued military influence in late-twentieth and twenty-first-century Britain. Often these studies arise out of current affairs rather than historical analysis; for instance, the mushrooming case studies on militarisation of medicine, the police and geographic spaces from the late-1990s-onwards.[23]

[23] Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson, 'The militarization of policing in the information age', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 27 (1999), 233-255. Peter Coates, Tim Cole, Marianna Dudley and Chris Pearson, 'Defending nation, defending nature? Militarized landscapes and military environmentalism in Britain, France and the United States', *Environmental History*, 16 (2011), 456-491.

Often the disconnected condition of this literature has also meant that there is little consensus on basic definitions of 'militarism' and 'militarisation' and how they interact with each other. Ron Smith argued that militarism is 'not a unitary phenomenon, but a portmanteau description covering a number of distinct aspects', thus allowing it to be used in various diverse contexts.[24] In terms of its positioning in relation to militarisation, John Gillis has emphasised that these two terms are entirely distinguishable concepts, the former being the influence of the military on society, politics and the economy, whilst the latter involves 'the contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence'.[25] Alternatively, other commentators such as Paul Dixon, Richelle M. Bernazzoli and Colin Flint have argued that militarism is primarily an ideology whilst militarisation is the process through which this ideology is implemented.[26] Hence, using Hew Strachan's definition of militarism as the 'veneration of military values and appearances in excess of what is strictly necessary for effective defence', then militarisation, for the purposes of this thesis, will constitute the process through which these ideas permeate British political, social and cultural spheres during the Sixties.[27]

The fact that literature on militarism has tended to avoid engaging with the Sixties value shift is, perhaps, surprising. As mentioned previously, this was the period in which National Service ended and an entire generation were supposed to have made the physical and mental transition 'from battlefield to bungalow', whilst anti-war sentiment in the ever-expanding protest movements was on the rise.[28] Indeed, whilst some historians have considered militarisation in this period from an industrial, technological or economic perspective, this has done little to further understanding of how militarism interacted with the political or cultural sphere. For example, David Edgerton has argued that until 1970 Britain remained a 'warfare state' as opposed to a 'welfare state', emphasising the continued prioritisation of military technological development over more 'civilian' concerns throughout a significant proportion of this timeframe.[29] He explores, for instance, the military origins of Harold Wilson's 'White Heat'

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[24] Ron Smith, 'Aspects of Militarism', *Capital and Class*, 19 (1983), 17-32 (p. 17).
[25] John R. Gillis, 'Introduction', in *The Militarization of the Western World*, ed. by John R. Gillis (London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), pp. 1-10 (p. 1).
[26] Paul Dixon, 'Bringing It All Back Home: The Militarisation of Britain and the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars', in *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan*, ed. by Paul Dixon (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 112-147 (pp. 117-118). Richelle M. Bernazzoli and Colin Flint, 'Power, Place and Militarism: Toward a Comparative Geographic Analysis of Militarization', *Geography Compass*, 3 (2009), 393-411 (p. 395).
[27] Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 264-5.
[28] Lynne Segal quoted in Abigail Wills, 'Delinquency, Masculinity and Citizenship in England 1950-1970', *Past & Present*, 187 (2005), 157-185 (p. 168).
[29] David Edgerton, *The Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 4.

revolution which many cultural historians have instead used as evidence of the Labour government's commitment to social and technological modernity.[30]

Edgerton has also argued that successive British governments of the 1970s and 1980s continually practiced what he called 'Liberal Militarism' through which Britain supposedly continued to prioritise military concerns in relation to industrial, economic and scientific development whilst no longer requiring the same mass-mobilisation of the civilian population.[31] This notion strongly correlates with Martin Shaw's concept of 'post-militarism', through which he argues that the British armed forces gained increasing influence over government institutions and budgets during the Cold War whilst simultaneously losing their footprint in popular culture and society.[32] Collectively, however, although these studies often claim to make significant contributions to historical understandings of postwar cultural history, as well as technological, economic and political history, their ultimate failure to grapple with the social and cultural context, particularly during the Sixties, leaves a notable gap in current understandings of cultural militarism, militarisation, re-militarisation or de-militarisation in postwar Britain.

At odds with the above debates, and yet rarely considered alongside them, various commentators have alternatively addressed how far British military institutions experienced an encroachment of civilian values or 'civilianisation' across the late-twentieth century. David French, for instance, has explored the way in which the expectations of civilian professionalisation increasingly permeated military thinking, at the expense of a vocational approach to recruitment, across the 1950s to 1970s, meaning improvements in career benefits relating to skills training and facilitation of family commitments.[33] Vinen has also studied aspects of declining traditional military culture in the face of evolving civil-military relations that surrounded the end of National Service in the late-1950s and early-1960s.[34] Moreover, Anthony Beevor has analysed the ways in which the military has been compelled to mirror other socio-cultural developments within modern society relating to multiculturalism and

[30] Edgerton, *Warfare State*, p. 230.
[31] David Edgerton, 'Liberal militarism and the British state', *New Left Review*, 185 (1991), 138-169 (pp. 138-41)
[32] Martin Shaw, *Post-Military Society: Militarism, Demilitarisation and War at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), pp. 73-75.
[33] David French, *Army, Empire and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy, 1945-1971* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 173-74.
[34] Richard Vinen, *National Service: Conscription in Britain 1945-1963* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), pp. 381-82.

sexual difference.[35] Like most of the militarisation literature, however, the majority of studies on 'civilianisation' relate to military adaptation in the post-Cold War period.[36]

There has been little attempt to address the conflicting messages emerging from these literatures on militarisation and civilianisation: the first appearing to stress encroaching military control over postwar Britain and the latter suggesting increased civilian domination over military institutions and culture. Concepts of gallantry, with their deep roots in both state/military-orientated and popular culture, hence provides the ideal case study through which the enduring or declining cultural influence of the military over wider societal values can be effectively traced. With gallantry awards divided into 'military' and 'civilian' categories within the Honours System and applied initially according to separate values, the extent to which the principles of military gallantry – as dictated by military institutions – encroached upon the civilian system, or visa-versa, will shed light on how far a vital tenet of state culture, the awards system, remained militarised, remilitarised or increasingly civilianised.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to finally unite the various disconnected literatures on the Sixties value shift and military culture, addressing to what extent Britain remained a culturally and politically militarised society during the era of the Sixties value shift. In so doing, it will use the interaction between the military, state and society over concepts of gallantry to gauge how far the armed forces retained cultural and political influence over the civilian sphere or, alternatively, the extent to which the military footprint within society and politics disappeared, followed by a corresponding 'civilianisation' of military culture. Indeed, by focusing on militarisation, this thesis will also further academic understanding of broader 'conservative culture' in the Sixties as outlined previously. It has often been recognised by social scientists and historians that the late-twentieth century British Army was still a highly conservative institution in terms of morals, identity and ethics.[37] By concentrating on the influence of such

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[35] Anthony Beevor, 'The Army in Modern Society', in *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* ed. by Hew Strachan (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), pp. 63-74 (p. 73).

[36] For instance, Hannah C. Hale, 'The Development of British Military Masculinities through Symbolic Resources', *Culture & Psychology*, 14 (2008), 305-332. Christopher Dandeker, 'New Times for the Military: Some Sociological Remarks on the Changing Role and Structure of the Armed Forces of the Advanced Society', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 45 (1994), 637-654. Rachel Woodward and K. Neil Jenkings, 'Military Identities in the Situating Accounts of British Military Personnel', *Sociology*, 45 (2011), 252-268.

[37] Antony Beevor, *Inside the British Army* (London: Corgi, 1991), p. 301. Lindsey A. Hines, Rachael Gribble, Simon Wessely, Christopher Dandeker and Nicola T. Fear, 'Are the Armed Forces Understood and Supported by the Public? A View from the United Kingdom', *Armed Forces & Society*, December (2014), 1-26 (p. 5).

an institution, therefore, this thesis will be simultaneously considering the reach of 'conservative culture' more broadly.

'Gallantry' is a term that has been used in a vast array of different contexts and remains ill-defined within its literature. Indeed, rarely has a word been so complex, malleable and contradictory. It is a term which, throughout the centuries, has been used to describe fashionableness, politeness, romance, courage, effeminacy, manliness, degeneracy and nobility. Often these meanings have coincided simultaneously. Despite this confusion, gallantry as a shifting concept, alongside overlapping and similar terms, has been subject to extensive academic debate. The use of the word 'gallantry' within the public sphere reached a height during the eighteenth-century and it is here that a high proportion of current studies concentrate. This thesis will, however, enhance these debates by tracing gallantry through the mid-twentieth century; a pivotal period in which control over this concept was often contested between state and society.

It is clear from the literature that gallantry possesses closely interlinked moral and physical dimensions and that, as this concept has evolved over time, the significance of each component to public understandings has shifted. At the same time, the meaning and nature of these moral and physical manifestations have also evolved. In relation to its moral dimension gallantry has been identified with the campaign to reform male manners during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Gallantry was a behavioural style intended to generate male attentiveness towards women, thus allowing them to evolve into refined gentlemen. It did, however, raise fears that it instead produced effeminacy. Philip Carter has traced gallantry's transition from implying male 'foppishness' in the mid-seventeenth century to a more 'masculine' form of polite gentlemanliness in the early-eighteenth century.[38] Nevertheless, this has not stopped Barbara Taylor from continuing to identify its association with effeminacy throughout the century.[39]

Other historians such as Laura Runge have, however, alternatively pointed to various eighteenth-century commentators who instead viewed gallantry as the behaviour of the male sexual predator who used this code of conduct to seduce women.[40] Indeed, according to Donna Andrew, by the late-1700s the term had become synonymous with the sex scandals which rocked the governing classes and had become strongly associated with ideas of moral

[38] Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), p. 140.
[39] Barbara Taylor, 'Feminists Versus Gallants: Manners and Morals in Enlightenment Britain', *Representations*, 87 (2004), 125-148 (p. 129).
[40] Laura L. Runge, 'Beauty and Gallantry: A Model of Polite Conversation Revisited', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 25 (2001), 43-63 (p. 44).

degeneracy.[41] Gallantry as a moral behavioural concept was, therefore, one of deep and complex contradictions – intended to improve male manners and yet accused by observers of reducing its adherents to potential 'foppish' effeminacy or alternatively harmful heterosexual lust.

A key component of gallantry has often been its physical emphasis on gentlemanly courage, whether on the battlefield or in defence of a woman's honour. This physical understanding has been closely associated with similar terms such as honour, courage and chivalry, all of which have received considerable academic attention within an eighteenth to early twentieth-century context. Matthew McCormack has explored the interaction of civil and military concepts of honour and gallantry within the Georgian army whilst Robert Shoemaker has alternatively studied such concepts as applied to the duelling culture of the same period.[42] Indeed, Shoemaker has traced the evolution of courage from the much more bloodthirsty confrontations of the late-seventeenth century through to the more passive and formalised expressions of courage a century later.[43] This in some ways reflects Carter's conclusion that this period witnessed a shift in concepts of courage from relying on anger and aggression to much more controlled and chivalric expressions of honourable gallantry.[44]

Paul Escott and James Davis have also explored how gallantry evolved into the predominant term used for the expression of courage in mid-nineteenth century western military and civilian culture, often overshadowing others such as chivalry and honour. Escott has particularly examined how important gallantry, with its emphasis on noble courage, was to concepts of national identity and moral justification in the Confederate States during the American Civil War (1861-65).[45] Davis has alternatively looked at its expression in the battlefield music of the same conflict and subsequent importance in inspiring soldiers to brave deeds.[46]

These studies perhaps make way for the extensive literature that exists on concepts of chivalry, courage, morale and fighting spirit which have tended to concentrate around the First and, to some extent, Second World Wars. For instance, in the oft-quoted *The Anatomy of Courage*

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[41] Donna T. Andrew, 'Adultery Á -la-Mode': Privilege, the Law and Attitudes to Adultery 1770-1809', *History*, 82 (1997), 5–23 (p. 13).
[42] Matthew McCormack, 'Stamford Standoff: Honour, Status and Rivalry in the Georgian Military', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815*, eds. by Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014) 77-95 (p. 79).
[43] Robert B. Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour and Ritual Violence, 1660-1800', *The Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), 525-545 (p. 536).
[44] Carter, p. 76.
[45] Paul D. Escott, 'The Uses of Gallantry: Virginians and the Origins of J.E.B. Stuart's Historical Image', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 103 (1995), 47-72 (pp. 71-2).
[46] James A. Davis, 'Music and Gallantry in Combat During the American Civil War', *American Music*, 28 (2010) 141-172 (pp. 141-42).

(1945), Lord Moran explored the idea of 'courage' as an expendable commodity during total war, claiming that a 'man's courage is his capital and he is always spending'.[47] Jessica Meyer has recently explored this notion of 'courage' and how it was increasingly reconciled with 'fear' within war memoirs. She ultimately points to the creation of new cultural understandings of heroism in which mental 'self-control', 'endurance' and the prioritisation of comradeship and duty over self-preservation were central.[48] Stefan Goebel has alternatively traced how the courageous element of 'chivalry' was promoted in the memorialisation of the First World War. He demonstrates how 'heroic ordinariness' – emphasising 'character rather than outstanding achievement' – became essential to commemorating brave sacrifice on a mass scale during and after the conflict.[49]

Within a Second World War context, Sonke Neitzel and Harald Welzer have explored attitudes towards bravery within the Wehrmacht.[50] Richard Holmes and Major-General F.M. Richardson also explored the psychological motivations behind acts of bravery in a British context.[51] However, whilst these studies do indeed hold some overlaps with concepts of gallantry, they often deal with notions of sacrifice and bravery on a mass collective or national scale. In so doing, they diverge from the exceptional acts of valour dealt with by more exclusivist state-sponsored notions of gallantry. Accordingly, academic studies of gallantry, as opposed to courage or sacrifice, remain neglected in the twentieth century, and particularly after 1945.

Ultimately, what the previous literature suggests is that gallantry is a widely used, highly diverse and often contradictory word and concept. Its predominant meaning within society has mutated over time despite continually retaining both its physical and moral elements to a certain degree. However, this literature has done little to explore the course of gallantry from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, in which period this concept was increasingly dominated by the distribution of medals. In the 1850s and 1860s the British Crown established numerous decorations for recognition of bravery in both military and civilian life. These medals soon

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[47] Leeds, *Brotherton Library Special Collections*, Liddle Collection E-0/MOR, Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage* (London: Constable, 1945), p. x. A more recent theoretical study can be found in Geoffrey Scarre, *On Courage: Thinking in Action* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).
[48] Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 81, 141-46.
[49] Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 229. See also, Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
[50] Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten: On Fighting, Killing and Dying – The Secret World War II Tapes of German POWs* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2012), p. 241.
[51] Richard Holmes, *Firing Line* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985), p. 136-41. Major-General F.M. Richardson, *Fighting Spirit: A Study of Psychological Factors in War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1978), pp. 58-9.

fell under the categorisation of 'gallantry awards' and soon transformed the concept of gallantry more radically than ever before. Whilst a number of private societies, such as the Royal Humane Society [RHS] and Society for the Protection of Life from Fire [SPLF], had been awarding bravery medals since at least the early-nineteenth century, the creation of the Distinguished Conduct Medal [DCM] in 1854, the Victoria Cross [VC] in 1856, the AM in 1866 and the Distinguished Service Order [DSO] in 1886 enshrined within popular culture the notion of gallantry as a heroic trait closely associated with service to Crown, state, nation and society. Vinen has noted how far the VC, in particular, strengthened the bond between concepts of gallantry, loyalty to the British monarch and periodical reinforcement of social hierarchies.[52]

Indeed, as Victorian masculinity became more entangled with notions of chivalry and 'muscular Christianity', the previous 'elegant' and 'refined' behavioural concerns simultaneously diminished within the moral component of gallantry, to be replaced by service and sacrifice to state and society.[53] Furthermore, with its increased thematic usage in rewarding bravery, it could be argued that the physical, courageous, component of gallantry became far more dominant than previously. The mid-nineteenth century had, therefore, witnessed a radical redefinition of gallantry – ideological direction of which rested much more extensively with the state than ever before – whilst still retaining its moral and physical components.

Throughout the late-nineteenth and into the early-twentieth century, British gallantry awards expanded into a fully-fledged system of honours and decorations with both 'military' and 'civilian' spheres, assessed according to a hierarchy of four 'degrees' of bravery.[54] The First World War proved a particular milestone in the creation of a whole raft of new medals in both military and civilian spheres including the Military Cross [MC] and Medal [MM], Air Force Cross [AFC] and Medal [AFM], Distinguished Flying Cross [DFC] and Medal [DFM] and the Order of the British Empire. Craig P. Barclay has written that 1914 ultimately witnessed the final disappearance of the non-governmental organisation's dominance over the recognition of civilian bravery and the full consolidation of gallantry as a state-orientated value and concern.[55] Moreover, as Barclay acknowledges, this conflict intensified the bond between

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[52] Richard Vinen, 'The Victoria Cross', *History Today*, 56 (2006), p. 50 <https://www.historytoday.com/richard-vinen/victoria-cross>[accessed 21/03/18].

[53] Donald E. Hall, 'Muscular Christianity: reading and writing the male social body', in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. by Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 3-13 (p. 3).

[54] With a fifth degree, if one includes the recommendations made to non-governmental societies such as the RHS.

[55] Craig Peter Barclay, 'Heroes of Peace: The Royal Humane Society and the Award of Medals in Britain, 1774-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of York, 2009), pp. 366-7.

concepts of gallantry and specifically *military* values and experiences, with a far higher number of medals being awarded for killing than lifesaving.[56] This bond was consolidated further during the interwar and Second World War periods whereby new medals for supposedly 'civilian' gallantry, such as the George Cross [GC] and George Medal [GM], were regularly distributed in military contexts, such as for bravery by servicemen 'not in the face of the enemy' or by civilians in defence of the Home Front.[57] The early-twentieth century, therefore, witnessed another important transition in concepts of gallantry as they increasingly came under the ideological influence of British state and military culture.

At the same time, however, the experience of total war, involving the mass mobilisation of British society, resulted in gallantry awards being distributed on a huge scale. As Barclay acknowledges, 'Courage, which had previously been a rare and valued commodity, became almost commonplace as hundreds of thousands of men drawn from every stratum of society were forced to struggle for survival on a daily basis'.[58] Consequently, gallantry became a value with major emotional investment and resonance within wider British society and popular culture. By the mid-twentieth century, therefore, gallantry was a concept with a considerable sense of emotional investment at public level, despite its continued ideological guidance by the state.[59] Accordingly, for the sake of this thesis 'gallantry' will be defined simply, in the words of Davis, as 'a higher brand of courage', with all of the accompanying associations with militarised culture and service to Crown, nation and wider society that the moral and physical components of this concept have projected since its integration into the British awards system and consequent ideological influence by the state.[60]

This thesis thus aims to make a major contribution to the historiography on concepts of gallantry through a principal focus on the British awards system. The majority of this literature neglects the post-1945 period, regarding it as largely a time of stasis and stagnation. This study will, however, demonstrate that the politically, socially and culturally transformative decades of the mid-twentieth century were indeed pivotal to the evolution of modern British concepts of gallantry. It will do so by considering whether, at a time when other supposedly 'traditional' cultural values such as hierarchy and patriotism were supposedly undermined in the public sphere, these impulses affected a militarised and state-orientated cultural value – gallantry –

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[56] Barclay, p. 367.
[57] Stuart Ryder has explained how civil awards were tailored to military preferences during the Second World War. Brigadier Stuart Ryder, 'Reform of operational gallantry awards: A missed opportunity?', *RUSI Journal*, 142 (1997), 41-44 (p. 42).
[58] Barclay, pp. 366-7.
[59] Lynn has noted a similar state-societal relationship in relation to concepts of 'virtue' and 'honor' in revolutionary France. John A. Lynn, 'Toward an Army of Honor: The Moral Evolution of the French Army, 1789-1815', *French Historical Studies*, 16 (1989), 152-182 (pp. 166-170).
[60] Davis, pp. 158-9.

with such strong emotional investment at all levels of society. As will be outlined in further detail, it will also consider whether, in the face of the Sixties value shift, the momentum and initiative behind reform lay with either state or society.

Whilst this study feeds directly into previous conceptual studies of gallantry, it also makes a significant contribution to the growing academic study of medals and awards systems, otherwise known as 'phaleristics', within society more generally. The current literature on this topic is notoriously patchy and of diverse quality. As medals possess a very broad audience, from auctioneers to collectors, serious researchers to casual enthusiasts, the literature is often guilty, in the words of Melvin Charles Smith, of 'puff without substance'.[61] Barclay summarises the condition of this work effectively:

> Driven by the interests and needs of collectors and armchair warriors, much of what has been published has concentrated upon military awards, providing information of value to those researching specific types of medal, individual recipients and specific campaigns but little that is of value to those trying to understand the broader context in which they are created and awarded. Texts have tended towards the antiquarian – offering many bare facts but little analysis.[62]

Hence, whilst these texts can be very useful in tracing the recipients and regulations of medals, any wider exploration of the messages behind awards and what they reveal about broader social values is largely absent. Reference studies are, however, interesting in that they are often written with a clear contemporary agenda that can point to the place of medals within the current affairs of a particular timeframe. For instance, Sir Arnold Wilson and Captain J.H.F. McEwen's frequently cited *Gallantry: Its Public Recognition and Reward in Peace and in War at Home and Abroad* (1939) was primarily intended to stress the value of civilian gallantry in the face of impending total war.[63] P.E. Abbot and J.M.A. Tamplin's highly respected *British Gallantry Awards* (1971) was written to provide a definitive reference guide at a time when general public interest in medal collecting and research allegedly reached a peak.[64] John D. Clarke's *Gallantry Medals and Awards of the World* (1993) was similarly

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[61] Melvin Charles Smith, *Awarded for Valour: A History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of British Heroism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 4.
[62] Barclay, p. 16.
[63] Sir Arnold Wilson and Captain J.H.F. McEwen, *Gallantry: Its Public Recognition and Reward in Peace and in War at Home and Abroad* (Eastbourne: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2015), p. 337.
[64] P.E. Abbott and J.M.A. Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards* (Enfield: Guinness Superlatives Ltd, 1971), p. 7.

written to encourage the British government, during the honours reforms of John Major's premiership, to streamline and simplify the recognition of gallantry.[65]

More recently, Lord Ashcroft has written a series of books on gallantry awards with the main intention of raising greater public awareness and appreciation of medallists in tandem, particularly in his first VC book, with promoting the recently established Imperial War Museum Ashcroft Collection.[66] Furthermore, whilst biographical and autobiographical accounts usually refrain from discussing the deeper meaning of medals within society, they can provide an interesting insight into general public reactions to recipients.[67] Ultimately, however, these reference and biographical accounts – representing the vast bulk of the literature – do little to further academic understandings of the concept of gallantry or how it interacts with broader cultural transitions. It should also be acknowledged that numerous medal association research journals periodically publish articles on post-1945 medals.[68] It is, however, very rare for them to be thoroughly rooted in the cultural or political history of the distributing nation.

In recent years there has, nevertheless, been a minor increase in academic studies investigating the interaction between the British awards system and cultural history. Melvin Charles Smith's landmark political and cultural history of the VC, *Awarded for Valour* (2008), explored the process through which policymakers managed to steer concepts of gallantry away from a Victorian symbolic and humanitarian emphasis, towards a 'new heroic paradigm…imposed by industrial-scale warfare' which praised 'a homicidal maniac, eager to kill until killed himself'.[69] The principal flaw of Smith's work, however, is how far he neglects the evolution of the medal after the First World War era and, like most historians, post-1945. He himself justifies this neglect on the basis that 'the basic ideas of what the Cross was were laid down during the nineteenth century and the new paradigm of what the Cross is was established

[65] John D. Clarke, *Gallantry Medals & Awards of the World* (Yeovil: Patrick Stephens Limited, 1993), pp. 240-241.
[66] Michael Ashcroft, *Victoria Cross Heroes* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2006). Michael Ashcroft, *George Cross Heroes* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2010). Michael Ashcroft, *Heroes of the Skies* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2012). Michael Ashcroft, *Special Forces Heroes* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2012). Michael Ashcroft, *Special Ops Heroes* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2014). Michael Ashcroft, *Victoria Cross Heroes: Volume 2* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2016).
[67] For instance, John Mullholland and Derek Hunt, *Beyond the Legend: Bill Speakman VC* (The History Press, 2013). Mark Adkin, *The Last Eleven? Winners of the Victoria Cross since the Second World War* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 1991).
[68] Recent examples could be, Owain Raw-Rees, 'The Jordanian Medal of Gratitude 1970', *Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society*, 56 (2017), 284-287. Stan Bates, 'Life after death: Lieutenant Henry Leigh Carslake, RN', *Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society*, 56 (2017), 203-209.
[69] Smith, pp. 121 and 205.

during and immediately after the Great War', whilst principles have allegedly remained unchanged ever since.[70]

Smith's stance, however, reflects a fundamental misunderstanding amongst historians as to the evolution of gallantry and, indeed, of the pivotal importance of the postwar period. Whilst, as Smith argues, the main VC qualifying standard may have remained relatively static, other sub-themes relating to age, gender and social status have indeed significantly evolved since 1945, both regarding the VC and other awards. The postwar period should not therefore be defined simply as a stagnant epoch in which the legacies of previous wars were enacted and, instead, should be approached as a landmark transition period in its own right.

Whilst Smith periodically emphasises that the VC has been increasingly 'a tool of command and party politics' since the 1914 – used to reinforce the momentum of a military campaign or bolster the public standing of a fledging politician – he does little to explore this argument post-1945.[71] Admittedly, Gary Mead's excellent *Victoria's Cross* (2015) has indeed gone some way into exploring the political utility of the VC in unpopular wars during this period. However, even his study of the postwar period is confined to a single final chapter and he is ultimately distracted from providing a thorough political and cultural analysis by his overriding determination to highlight the overly harsh and harmful qualifying rules and selection process.[72]

As noted above, Barclay has also explored the cultural history of non-governmental gallantry awards within the RHS up to 1914. He maintains that societies like the RHS, Royal National Lifeboat Institution [RNLI], Royal Geographical Society [RGS], Carnegie Hero Fund [CHF] and SPLF lost their position as the primary advocates of civilian gallantry after 1914, as their medals were increasingly integrated into the official state apparatus.[73] Whilst he is indeed correct in acknowledging this decline in non-governmental awards, neither he nor any other commentator has chosen to trace the course of 'civilian gallantry' beyond this point and, in particular, after 1945. At a time in which a significant number of prominent civilian awards had been distributed in a militarised context – mass participation in total war – the extent to which concepts of civilian gallantry had become overshadowed or dominated by militarised culture and the way in which this evolved or endured post-1945 have yet to be ascertained. For clarification, this thesis will interchangeably use 'civilian' and 'non-operational' phraseology to refer to those medals distributed in both civil and military spheres for gallantry

[70] Smith, p. 4.
[71] Smith, pp. 205-6.
[72] Gary Mead, *Victoria's Cross: The Untold Story of Britain's Highest Award for Bravery* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015), pp. 240-41.
[73] Barclay, pp. 366-7.

not in the face of the enemy. Accordingly, 'military' or 'operational' awards refer to gallantry in the face of the enemy.

Collectively, it is clear from Smith, Mead and Barclay's more detailed histories of medals that the post-1945 period has been largely ignored or underappreciated as a pivotal stage in the development of concepts of gallantry and medals policy. Commentators have either chosen to confine this period to a brief final chapter or stopped well before 1945. The social and cultural context of the Sixties value shift has, either way, been largely omitted. Furthermore, commentators have tended to make rather sweeping observations about the nature of heroism and courage whilst focusing on a single or limited range of medals. Rarely is it appreciated that, to fully understand the broad framework through which the state and society often view gallantry, the historian must view the system as a whole. Accordingly, whilst the academic literature on gallantry awards remains a growing field, it possesses considerable flaws. This thesis will explore these issues by focusing on the neglected social and cultural context of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. In so doing, it will address what the place and importance of the medal, as a focus of cultural interaction between state and society, was within Britain during this timeframe. Accordingly, it will shed new light on many of the questions raised by Barclay, Mead and Smith: the evolving concept of state-orientated civilian gallantry, the degree to which medals have been increasingly dominated by ulterior military or political interests and how far elements of social discrimination have played a part in selection processes.

To effectively approach these quandaries, it is necessary for this thesis to engage with another sub-literature of phaleristics in which these questions have been more thoroughly considered: the closely interlinked literature on the British 'Honours System' as a whole. Whilst this sub-literature occasionally includes gallantry awards, it primarily covers a whole raft of wider 'service' honours. Ian Inglis has divided Honours down into 'decorations', including gallantry awards, 'the Peerage', 'Orders of Chivalry' and 'miscellaneous' awards.[74] Considering that gallantry remains a fairly small part of a system that also rewards service in innumerable other fields, from politics to popular culture, it is perhaps unsurprising that bravery awards feature less prominently in this medal sub-literature. Nevertheless, in choosing to avoid this element of the system these studies have, like the gallantry awards historiography mentioned above, also failed to fully explore the importance of concepts of gallantry as a tool in understanding the place of the medal in society and its existence on the cusp of both popular and state culture.

In his influential 1978 study, *The Celebration of Heroes*, sociologist William J. Goode included awards and honours in his analysis of the culture of 'prestige' through which

[74] Ian Inglis, 'The Politics of Stardust or the Politics of Cool: Popular Music and the British Honours System', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 41 (2010), 51-71 (p. 53).

governing elites implement a 'system of social control that shapes much of social life'.[75] In essence, honours were viewed as an effective way of reinforcing class, gender and racial hierarchies. More recently social scientists including Bruno S. Frey, Jana Gallus and Peter Olsthoorn have built upon this notion of awards as 'motivational instruments', assessing how institutions distribute medals to determine and control what kind of behaviour should be encouraged and amongst whom, thus reinforcing established hierarchies at state, military and business levels.[76]

These theories of social control have been regularly applied, in a historical context, to narratives of British, Imperial or Commonwealth history. For instance, John McLoed has explored the extent to which imperial honours were used to purchase princely loyalties in the face of Indian nationalism at the end of the Raj, thus contributing to the policy of divide and rule.[77] Karen Fox has more recently explored British honours and their 'de-dominionisation' in the settler states of New Zealand, Australia and Canada since independence. She has argued that in both the colonial and post-colonial period, these systems were used in an attempt to maintain dominant gender norms and established conceptions of race relations.[78] Moreover, Tobias Harper has recently explored the domestic British Honours System between 1917 and 2014 and its continued usage, despite considerable reform in improving the general accessibility of the system, in reinforcing class structures through the distribution of specific honours to specific segments of society.[79] The concept of 'social control' has also recently been applied to a range of international studies of heroism. Janice Hume, for instance, applied it to the way in which mid-twentieth century American female heroes continued to be straightjacketed by a gendered discourse of motherhood and wifehood.[80] Clearly, the fast-growing literature on the Honours System has tended to centre, whether consciously or

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[75] William J. Goode, *The Celebration of Heroes: Prestige as a Social Control System* (London: University of California Press, 1978), p. vii.

[76] Bruno S. Frey and Jana Gallus, 'Honors: A rational choice analysis of award bestowals', *Rationality and Society*, 28 (2016), 255-269 (p. 256). Bruno S. Frey, 'Giving and receiving awards', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1 (2006), 377-388 (p. 20). Peter Olsthoorn, 'Honor as a Motive for Making Sacrifices', *Journal of Military Ethics*, 4 (2005), 183-197 (pp. 193-94).

[77] John McLoed, 'The English Honours System in Princely India, 1925-1947', *JRAS*, 3 (1994), 237-249 (pp. 238-9).

[78] Karen Fox, 'Grand Dames and Gentle Helpmeets: women and the royal honours system in New Zealand, 1917-2000', *Women's History Review*, 19 (2010), 375-393 (pp. 389-90). Karen Fox, 'Ornamentalism, Empire and Race: Indigenous Leaders and Honours in Australia and New Zealand', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42 (2014), 486-502 (pp. 487 and 499).

[79] Tobias Harper, 'Voluntary Service and State Honours in Twentieth-Century Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), 641-661 (p. 661). See also, Tobias Harper, 'Orders of Merit? Hierarchy, Distinction and the British Honours System, 1917-2004' (unpublished doctoral thesis: Columbia University, 2014), pp. 350-51.

[80] Janice Hume, 'Narratives of Feminine Heroism: Gender Values and Memory in the American Press in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *Extraordinary Ordinariness: Everyday Heroism in the United States, Germany and Britain, 1800-2015*, ed. by Simon Wendt (New York: Campus Verlag, 2016), pp. 139-166 (p. 166).

unconsciously, around Goode and Frey's notions of decorations used for social control, reinforcing gender, racial and other social and political hierarchies.

There are many ways in which this thesis can complement these historiographical debates on the broader Honours System. Previous commentators have frequently failed to incorporate gallantry awards into their studies on the basis that they either need to contain the breadth of their investigations or because they perhaps regard gallantry as less indicative of social values than concepts of 'service' to state and society and, ultimately, less controversial.[81] However, it is apparent, looking at the work of Smith, Barclay and Mead, that gallantry awards encountered many of the same allegations involving social discrimination and elitist conspiracy as honours. Similarly, they were subject to the same, if not considerably more, emotional investment within society. It is therefore equally vital to consider gallantry awards in the same context of 'social control' as 'service' honours.

Harper has explored the process through which political elites were able to navigate and negotiate the Honours System's contact with the cultural developments of the 1960s by partially opening it up to the whims of popular culture, epitomised by Wilson's awarding of MBEs to 'The Beatles' in 1965, whilst ultimately retaining the ideological reins over the system and allowing more continuity than change. This thesis will consider whether a similar process enveloped gallantry awards – the state conceding some liberalisation of qualification whilst ultimately retaining control over the pace and extent of transition. Similarly, whilst Fox, Harper and McLeod have underlined the extent to which the system was implicated in gender and other discrimination, this thesis will consider how far this also extended to gallantry awards. In so doing, it will further academic understandings of the Honours System, both in Britain and the Commonwealth, as a means of social control, fusing and reconciling this historiography with that of gallantry awards.

Finally, there remains another phaleristics sub-literature of relevance to this study, on the 'material culture' of medals and the 'materiality' of conflict. Whilst it is indeed surprising how little research has been undertaken into the material culture of twentieth-century medals, there are a few notable exceptions. Rose Spijkerman has recently explored, in relation to Belgian medals, the way in which the state primarily infused emotional meaning into decorations during the gazetting and investiture processes which, subsequently, had an motivational impact on the recipient and their comrades.[82] Jody Joy has also explored, through

[81] Harper has considered briefly the use of the OBE as a gallantry award during World War II. However, his analysis is confined to the early years of this conflict and he does not to trace the relationship between gallantry and the OBE into the postwar period. Harper, 'Orders of Merit', pp. 158-167.
[82] Rose Spijkerman, ''The Cross, naturally': Decorations in the Belgian Army and their effect on emotions, behaviour and the self, 1914-1918', *War in History*, 00 (2018), 1-26 (p. 13).

a focus on her grandfather's DFC, the way in which the medal becomes increasingly invested with multiple layers of meaning through a process of 'performative action', thus turning an fairly meaningless object into 'a thing' which acts as a focus of family memory and identity.[83] Alternatively, Matthew Richardson has explored the way in which the material, social and cultural value of First World War campaign medals mirrored the growing status of the conflict itself within popular culture.[84] Joy and Richardson's work reflects Nicholas Saunders' notion of medals as part of a 'memory bridge' which, 'composed of materiality, emotion, memory and imagination, as well as official and personal histories…,[spans] the physical and symbolic space of a postwar world, shaping people's everyday lives, their perceptions of the past and their hopes for the future'.[85]

What many of these studies appear to advocate is that the medal, with its original 'pre-programmed meaning' dictated by the state, often gains significantly greater emotional importance and depth once in the hands of the medallists themselves and their wider communities.[86] Whilst this is to a significant extent true it does, however, fail to recognise the continuing importance of the state in revising the meaning and memory attached to medals throughout their lifespan. Indeed, there is a tendency to relegate state initiative to the very early stages of a medal's lifespan. This thesis, however, with its emphasis on state-orientated medals policy, will consider the extent to which the state had an ongoing stake in and influence over medals and was not simply the initiator of a pre-programmed meaning attached to awards upon their creation and investiture. Indeed, it will consider how the state remained an active player in influencing and revising the emotional relationship between medal and medallist in the long-term. In so doing, this thesis aims to make an important contribution to understandings of the place of the medal in material culture.

There is one final historiographical field to which this thesis will contribute. The study of heroes and the hero-making process is long established, particularly within the sphere of imperial history. From the initial investigations of John M. MacKenzie into the way in which nineteenth-century heroic icons such as Henry Havelock, Charles Gordon and David Livingstone were used to mobilise or reinforce public enthusiasm for the imperial project, a whole range of recent historians, including Berny Sèbe and Max Jones, have followed in

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[83] Jody Joy, 'Biography of a medal: people and the things they value', in *Materiel Culture: The Archaeology of Twentieth-Century Conflict*, ed. by John Schofield, William Gray Johnson and Colleen M. Beck (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), pp. 132-142 (p. 57).
[84] Matthew Richardson, 'Medals, Memory and Meaning: Symbolism and cultural significance of Great War medals', in *Contested Objects: Material Memories of the Great War*, ed. by Nicholas J. Saunders and Paul Cornish (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 104-119 (pp. 114-116).
[85] Nicholas J. Saunders, 'Material culture and conflict: The Great War, 1914-2003', in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War*, ed. by Nicholas J. Saunders (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), pp. 5-25 (p. 15).
[86] Joy, p. 133.

exploring the evolving depictions of empire heroes into the early-twentieth century.[87] Indeed, they have concentrated on the way in which heroic reputations were promoted and used by a range of diverse interest groups and then often recycled and readjusted to suit successive generations. Imperial history has, therefore, done more than any other discipline to further academic understandings of heroic icons. For the sake of this thesis, a hero will be approached, using G. Cubbit's definition, as:

> …any man or woman whose existence, whether in his or her own lifetime or later, is endowed by others, not just with a high degree of fame and honour, but with a special allocation of imputed meaning and symbolic significance – that not only raises them above the others in public esteem but makes them the object of some kind of collective emotional investment.[88]

The limits of empire literature have, however, been demonstrated in the study of heroism following the Second Word War. Jones once wrote that 'the changing forms and functions of heroic icons after 1945 remain obscure' and, indeed, whilst some efforts have been made in recent years to rectify this uncertainty, they have produced only partial clarity.[89] This appears to have been the result of a restrictive approach to the topic which emphasises the importance of the individual heroic persona in public memory and the centrality of past, as opposed to contemporary, heroes.

Hence, Jones has considered the depiction of Captain Scott in 1980s popular culture, whilst Peter Yeandle has focused on the place of traditional empire heroes in British education debates of the 1990s.[90] Graham Dawson has also studied the deep resonance of the 'soldier-hero' within modern British society and his/her ability to resurface as a powerful political and cultural force during more modern conflicts such as the Falklands War (1982).[91] However, despite this reference to a postwar conflict, Dawson's primary emphasis remains firmly on Victorian and Edwardian heroes and their memory as opposed to truly focusing on

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[87] John M. MacKenzie, 'Heroic myths of empire', in *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950*, ed. by John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 109-138. Berny Sèbe, *Heroic imperialists in Africa: The promotion of British and French colonial heroes, 1870-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013). Max Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes? Reflections on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain', *History Compass*, 5 (2007), 439-454.

[88] Geoffrey Cubitt, 'Introduction: Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives', in *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, ed. by Geoffrey Cubitt and Allen Warren (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 1-26 (p. 3).

[89] Jones, 'What Should Historians Do With Heroes?', p. 449.

[90] Max Jones, ''The Truth about Captain Scott': The Last Place on Earth, Debunking, Sexuality and Decline in the 1980s', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42 (2014), 857-881. Peter Yeandle, ''Heroes into Zeroes'? The Politics of (Not) Teaching England's Imperial Past', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42 (2014), 882-911

[91] Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), pp. 279-281.

contemporary icons. Whilst the notable exceptions of Wendy Webster and Jeffrey Richards have indeed covered the depictions of a limited number of fictionalised empire heroes in a range of postwar conflicts, their focus remains notably confined to a small range of film and literary case studies, rather than rooted in contemporary events involving real-life heroes.[92] The study of contemporary British heroes after 1945 is, therefore, in need of the same attention currently being applied to this epoch by foreign scholars. Bruce Peabody and Krista Jenkins have, for example, recently traced the divergence of elite and popular notions of American heroism since the break-down of trust between the electorate and politicians in the 1960s.[93] An extensive transnational comparison of martial heroism in the supposed 'post-heroic age' – entirely excluding British heroes in postwar decades – has also recently been edited by Sibylle Scheipers.[94]

The tendency towards focusing on memory as central to understanding concepts of British heroism post-1945 has also influenced another sub-genre of hero literature: namely, the depiction and memory of Second World War heroism in postwar popular culture. For instance, John Ramsden has explored the prominence of the hero in 1950s film depictions of the war, whilst Martin Francis has studied the prominence of the RAF fighter pilot as heroic icon in postwar popular culture more generally.[95] Often these studies stress the importance of Second World War memory as vital to understanding postwar hero culture, due to its powerful utility in underlining more recent British decline and aspiration to reclaim former greatness.[96]

The focus on memory and legacy of past historical icons after 1945 is once again symptomatic of the fundamental and widespread neglect of the postwar era as a time of relative stagnation in the conceptual evolution of heroism. Whilst, of course, contributions to the memory of heroes within postwar culture have furthered understandings of heroism after 1945, their contribution can only go so far. It is indeed true that popular emotional investment in the Second World War and the Empire remained palpable throughout the late-twentieth century. However, the heroism arising from important contemporary events was, as in any epoch, arguably the source of greater public attention during this period. Yet, very little has been

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[92] Webster, '"They'll Always Be an England"', p. 569. Jeffrey Richards, 'Imperial heroes for a post-imperial age: films and the end of empire', *British culture and the end of empire*, ed. by Stuart Ward (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 128-144 (pp. 133-34).

[93] Bruce Peabody and Krista Jenkins, *Where Have All The Heroes Gone?: The Changing Nature of America Valor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 3-4.

[94] Sibylle Scheipers, ed, *Heroism & The Changing Character of War: Toward Post-Heroic Warfare?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

[95] John Ramsden, 'Refocusing 'The People's War': British War Films of the 1950s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33 (1998), 35-63. Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[96] For instance, Geoff Eley, 'Finding the People's War: Film, British Collective Memory and World War II', *The American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 818-838 (pp. 822 and 830).

written on what might be called the 'contemporary heroes' of these decades. Considering the sheer number of events through which heroic status might have been achieved – from the wars of decolonisation to everyday civilian heroism – this neglect is surprising. MacKenzie has recently offered one explanation:

> … heroes are more difficult to find in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The heroic era is likely to lie in the creation of empires rather than in their decline and fall…Despite the great wars of the century—or perhaps because of them—the twentieth century has remarkably failed to produce military heroes on the old model. War had ceased to be small-scale, chivalric and personal. Mass killing in industrialised warfare produced countless ordinary heroes, but few if any among the leadership, the 'lions led by donkeys' syndrome.[97]

In essence, MacKenzie suggests that the opportunity for heroism on a mass scale during total war has destroyed the very individuality which lies at the heart of hero culture. He goes on to explain that heroes 'are only truly effective if they can be identified on the fingers of one or at most two hands. If they jostle in crowds, by definition they cannot be heroes (unless in a collectivity like the war dead or the historic deeds of a specific regiment).'[98] Hence, exploring heroic 'individuals' is unlikely to advance the study of contemporary heroism post-1945. A 'collectivity' can, however, be found amongst gallantry medallists: groups who are often regarded with clear homogeneity on the basis of their heroic traits. Indeed, often the presence of medal associations or leagues enhances the coherence of such groupings. Furthermore, the fact that medals are primarily awarded for present-day acts of gallantry allows this thesis to release the study of heroes, to a significant degree, from its complete dependence on notions of 'memory' and place it decisively within the current affairs of mid-twentieth century Britain's political and cultural life.

The study of gallantry will therefore be used to assess the place and importance of the contemporary state-sponsored hero within mid-twentieth century Britain. In particular, it will use the 'collectivities' provided by groupings of medallists to explore the interaction between heroism and a range of landmark postwar events which potentially changed public attitudes towards such icons. These include decolonisation, counterinsurgency and the expansion of the welfare state. For instance, the study will analyse how far the moral authority of the hero figure was called into question by Britain's 'dirty wars', whereby allegations of excessive brutality and secrecy made the government's highly publicised justifications of awards much more

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[97] John M. MacKenzie, 'Afterword', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42 (2014), 969-979 (pp. 976-77).
[98] MacKenzie, 'Afterword', p. 977.

problematic. Furthermore, in an age of increasing state welfare accessibility, the thesis will explore the degree to which British heroic figures were considered more entitled to, or 'above', these provisions. In so doing, this thesis will considerably further academic understandings of British heroism after 1945 as viewed through heroic medal 'collectivities'.

In summary, this thesis will ultimately explore the way in which a previously conservative, militarised and state-orientated concept, 'gallantry', interacted with the cultural and political transitions of the Sixties value shift. In so doing, it will address a variety of previously unconnected but highly relatable historiographical debates. With regards to Sixties literature, it will explore the nature of this interaction through a new lens, gauging the extent and timing of change. It will analyse how far Britain remained a 'militarised' society in a political and cultural, as opposed to an economic or industrial, context. In relation to the diverse debates surrounding concepts of gallantry, it will assess the degree to which conceptual direction over and reform of gallantry lay primarily with either state or society. Strongly interlinked with this issue, it will ascertain how far gallantry awards, like other elements of the Honours System, constituted part of a system of 'social control'. Furthermore, in relation to the material culture of medals, it will assess the role of the state, as opposed to society, in the investment of meaning and memory within these objects. Finally, it will use the 'collectivity' provided by gallantry medallists to explore the evolving nature of British concepts of contemporary heroism and how far this was dictated more by current affairs than by the memory of the past. In contributing to these five different fields of literature – the Sixties, militarisation, gallantry, medals and heroes – this thesis will assume a highly interdisciplinary approach. Moreover, rather than dismissing the postwar era, as many historians have done, as a time of stagnation in which the legacies of the past dominated, this thesis will underline its pivotal importance to the evolution of modern concepts of gallantry.

The thesis addresses these objectives across four distinct thematic cultural transitions – associated with Sixties value-shifts – which influenced British awards across the period from the mid-1950s to the late-1970s. It will begin with a focus on more concentrated issues specific to the mechanics of the awards system itself and, with these more technical foundations laid down, will progress to wider themes relating to the application of this system on the broader international stage. Accordingly, the first chapter investigates the potential 'welfarisation' of gallantry awards: the process through which these decorations and their annuities became increasingly aligned in the public mind with entitlement to social welfare provision during this period. The second chapter will then address the 'standardisation' of gallantry: the extent to which the awards system was compelled to rationalise and clarify its concepts of gallantry due to the encroaching public demand for meritocracy and more general fairness and justice in the workings of the system. Building on these technical foundations, the third chapter – the

'dirtification' of gallantry – explores the extent to which, in a society increasingly critical of controversial colonial wars, British awards policy was influenced by the moral dilemmas produced by these conflicts. Finally, the fourth chapter considers the 'decolonisation' of gallantry whereby the British conception of a London-led shared global culture of gallantry, with colonial and Commonwealth nations using the same awards despite imperial retreat, was gradually undermined and destroyed. In each of these chapters the historiographical concerns raised above will be addressed.

The decision to focus on 1955 to 1979 as the key period of overall change requires explanation. As Marwick acknowledged, continually significant cultural transition can be traced from 1945 to the present day.[99] Due to the complexity and ambiguity of this framework, pinning down a decisive period of transition remains a difficult task. However, the frequent tendency of many Sixties historians to begin their focus around the mid-1950s coincides with the beginning of many of the cultural transitions undergone within the awards system. Moreover, the conclusion of this investigation in the late-1970s similarly coincides with a gradually emerging view that the cultural changes of the 1960s only permeated into the furthest corners of British society during the 1970s. In relation to concepts of gallantry, 1979 also witnessed the decisive endpoint of many of the administrative reforms that had been undertaken over the previous twenty-five years. Whilst key events will be identified as having occurred both before and after this timeframe, the sheer pace and intensity of developments between 1955-1979 require analytical focus to be concentrated here. Indeed, as this crucial twenty-five-year framework is regarded in this thesis as the period in which many of the cultural transitions usually associated with the 1960s took place, the term 'Sixties' – and all this entails in terms of transformation – will be applied to the entire period 1955-79.

This thesis concentrates primarily on a diverse range of government policy files from The National Archives in Kew. In addition, these are complemented by a variety of government and museum administrative correspondence from the Imperial War Museum and the policy files of the RHS, SPLF and CHF from the London Metropolitan Archive. Furthermore, this study is supported by a large range of digitised media archives. Attempting to build a clear narrative of evolving, often unexplored, British concepts of gallantry from a range of archival sources and historiographies has presented an array of challenges. Firstly, in terms of archives, the paper trail of important policymaking decisions was often buried amongst rafts of medal

[99] Arthur Marwick, ''1968' and the Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties (c. 1958-c. 1974)', in *Transnational Moments of Change: 1945, 1968, 1989*, ed. by Gerd Rainer-Horn and Padraic Kenney (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), pp. 81-94 (p. 81).

citation processing forms which, in themselves, reveal little about the state's conceptual framework relating to gallantry.

Additionally, the policy-making process was often decentralised amongst various government ministries rather than conveniently housed under a single prominent board, although the Civil Service Department Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals [HD Committee] – chaired across this period by Sir Robert Knox (1941-1966) and Sir Philip Stuart Milner-Barry (1966-1977) – often provided a degree of oversight.[100] The decentralised nature of policymaking has, therefore, meant this study encompasses a large range of diverse government files in order to provide a complete picture of the awards system in action. Various policy files have also remained restricted from public access either due to sensitive information about surviving individuals, or because these documents remain of significant administrative use to current ministries.[101] Finally, perhaps most significantly, the absence of a developed previous historiography detailing the political and cultural significance of gallantry awards has compelled this thesis to adopt a wholly original and interdisciplinary approach.

Whilst analysis and narrative have, therefore, been challenged in these areas, a thoroughly wide-reaching collective assessment of available archival sources and a highly interdisciplinary approach to themes and topics has allowed for a clear picture to be constructed of evolving concepts of gallantry across this period. It is hoped that as more archival sources become available in future, similarly diverse approaches to gallantry and interconnected themes will shed yet further light on a crucial period in British political and cultural history.

[100] Knox had been a ceremonial officer since 1937 and had chaired the HD Committee since its inception in 1941. Milner-Barry, of Bletchley Park fame, was replaced by R.L. Sharp in 1977.
[101] Many files, for instance, remain classified for Dhofar and the Falklands.

Chapter 1

The 'Welfarisation' of Gallantry

I

On 20 September 1952, an article in the *Daily Express* asked its readers, 'what happens to a man who wins the VC, the highest decoration a member of the Armed Forces can win in action? What is a VC worth? These questions have a sharpened interest this week, when a hero sold his medal to buy clothes for his children.'[102] The article then went on to list various VC medallists who, despite the prestige of possessing one of Britain's highest gallantry awards, had lived in poverty since their return to civilian life. Clearly, the material loss of the VC at auction was intended by the newspaper to be emblematic of postwar Britain's neglect of its ageing martial heroes. However, despite the evident shock-factor intended by the newspaper, the debate surrounding the poverty of medallists – and VCs in particular – already possessed a long and controversial history.

The connection between welfare and concepts of gallantry began with the emergence of civil organisation schemes – such as those of the RHS and CHF – to financially reward acts of civilian bravery in the late-eighteenth to early-twentieth centuries. However, it was the gradual expansion of state commitment in providing annuities and gratuities for the DCM (1854), VC (1856), CGM (1874), DSM (1914), MM (1916) and DFC (1918) that led to the close association between gallantry awards and state-centred welfare provision within the public mind. Furthermore, the inclusion of these provisions within military medal warrants, whilst largely excluding them from civilian ones such as the AM and BEM, also ensured that these monetary grants became an accepted element of military culture as opposed to more general heroic culture. The financial reward of a small number of civilians remained the preserve of declining non-state organisations.

From the late-nineteenth century, with the declining purchasing power of monetary sums enshrined in medal warrants, these state-orientated arrangements increasingly became a source of criticism for commentators wishing to highlight government neglect of soldier-heroes and, indeed, a source of public debate about the value and place of heroes within British society. Consequently, minor increases were granted. For instance, the upper limit of the DCM annuity was raised from £10 to £15 in 1888.[103] However, it would be the long public debates surrounding the VC, as Britain's premier gallantry award, where this dispute surrounding the

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[102] *TNA*, T 333/1, George Cross, 'What's the value of the V.C.?', *Daily Express*, 20 September 1952 [newspaper cutting].
[103] Matthew Richardson, *Deeds of Heroes: The Story of the Distinguished Conduct Medal* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2012), p. 17.

financial treatment of heroes would primarily concentrate for much of the early-mid twentieth-century.

The Royal Warrant of 1856 had stipulated that VCs were entitled to a £10 annuity.[104] This sum had come into media controversy in 1898 when the financial position of Piper George Findlater VC highlighted the potential link between Britain's retired heroes and poverty within the public sphere for the first time.[105] Consequently, the annuity was raised to £50 – and raised again in 1920 to £75 – in dire cases whereby 'soldiers earning the Victoria Cross, who, from old age, or infirmity not due to their own fault, may be in poor circumstances and unable to earn a living'.[106] Furthermore, an additional allowance of 6d per day was granted. The Findlater Scandal had thus been a landmark in which the association between gallantry and some minimal, tightly controlled, form of welfare had been planted in public and political consciousness. Nevertheless, due to the strict qualifications on additional pay-outs, most VCs continued to receive the original £10 – reduced to a token – and, ultimately, the resulting friction and ambiguity between 'tokenism' and 'welfarism' would endure for decades to come.

In 1920 the War Office [WO] considered raising the basic annuity to £20 but eventually decided against the proposal for fear that this sum would appear too much like a 'real pension' as opposed to a token gesture.[107] By the 1950s these questions were resurfacing. This time the debate between 'tokenism' and 'welfarism' was much more intense, relentless and ultimately led to a ten-fold increase in the standard-rate VC annuity. The Eden and Macmillan governments were finally compelled to directly address the ambiguous situation and, in so doing, set new precedents in the relationship between gallantry and welfare.

The annuity debates of the 1950s developed within a different context to those which had occurred previously. This decade has long been recognised by historians as the golden-age of the Welfare State under the consolidating influence of Butskellite economic management. However, the degree to which this period witnessed any *further* radical value shifts relating to welfare expansion, in line with other socio-cultural transformations of the late-1950s, remains contested. David Gladstone described these years as ones of complacency in which the 'affluent society' drowned out any sense of urgency to expand welfare provisions whilst, in

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[104] £10 in 1856 had a rough purchasing power of around £842.80 in 2015. See <https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php> [accessed 01/01/17].
[105] Findlater had piped his comrades into battle at the Dargai Heights in 1897 despite being wounded. Upon being discharged he began performing in music halls which brought opposition from the government and raised the issue of his financial wellbeing.
[106] Mr Brodrick, Under-Secretary of State for War (1898), quoted in M.J. Crook, *The Evolution of the Victoria Cross: A Study in Administrative History* (Tunbridge Wells: Midas Books, 1975), p. 187.
[107] Crook, p. 190.

terms of non-state charity activities, the period was essentially 'moribund'.[108] On the other hand, an increasing number of historians have pointed to the growing importance of the late-1950s as the critical beginning of a landmark attitude shift relating to welfare. The notion of a 'rediscovery of poverty' – of an increasing public awareness of hardship amongst the disabled, pensioners, single-parent families etc. within the political and public sphere – had previously been pinned to the mid-1960s within historiography.[109] However, historians including Eric Midwinter, Kathleen Jones and Dominic Sandbrook have variously pointed to the increase in poverty surveys and social work schemes as evidence that this 'rediscovery of poverty' occurred from at least the mid-late 1950s.[110] The Royal Commission on Mental Health (1957), Younghusband Report on social workers (1959) and the National Insurance Act (1959) all support this finding, as do the events detailed in this chapter. Hence, assessing medal annuity debates in the light of this value shift towards greater political and societal awareness of vulnerable groups within society – particularly the aged – allows this chapter to effectively assess the way in which, and extent to which, concepts of gallantry interacted with one particular element of the Sixties value shift.

This chapter, therefore, aims to assess the extent to which British gallantry medallists and their controversial annuities were affected by this 'rediscovery of poverty' and, accordingly, whether this resulted in a 'welfarisation' of gallantry: namely, the degree to which medallists were considered entitled to privileged state or non-state welfare benefits purely based on their past act of gallantry. In so doing, this chapter will not only address the nature of a particular interaction between gallantry and the Sixties, but also interconnected questions such as whether welfarisation constituted a 'militarised' process, whether this process was driven by state or society and what these changes reveal about the material culture of medals and concepts of heroism.

Whilst 'welfarisation' is a word applied across various academic fields, a concrete consensus on its meaning is yet to be established. It has been used in a negative context, mobilised in explaining the increased welfare expectancy of perceived lazy western societies.[111] Others have viewed it more positively as a state strategy for obtaining or reobtaining control over

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[108] David Gladstone, *The Twentieth-Century Welfare State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 66. See also, Jameel Hampton, *Disability and the welfare state in Britain: Changes in perception and policy, 1948-79* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016), p. 7.
[109] Gladstone, p. 63.
[110] Eric Midwinter, *The development of social welfare in Britain* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), pp. 110 and 134. Kathleen Jones, *The Making of Social Policy in Britain: From the Poor Law to New Labour* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), p. 142. Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to The Beatles, 1956-1963* (London: Abacus, 2013), pp. 179-80.
[111] Ralph Segalman and David Marsland, *Cradle to Grave: Comparative Perspectives on the State of Welfare* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989), p. 77.

public services, especially relating to health care.[112] However, all interpretations appear to agree broadly that it is ultimately a process through which state or non-state welfare benefits of various kinds are gradually made available or extended to certain sections of society. It is on that basis that this concept will be applied to gallantry medallists.

The VC annuity issue had been periodically resurfacing since the Second World War. On 19 November 1940 and 29 June 1943, the prospect of increasing it had been raised in Parliament and on both occasions the response had been that 'it is not considered that pensions on this scale are inadequate for the purpose for which they were intended'.[113] Yet on neither occasion did the reply, delivered by Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee respectively, care to elaborate on what 'purpose' the annuity had been 'intended'. Indeed, on 22 May 1947 General Sir George Jeffreys – Tory MP for Petersfield – again repeating the demand in Parliament and receiving the above stock-answer, chose to confront this evasion directly. In so doing he defined the 'purpose' of the annuity very much in welfare terms:

> Will the Prime Minister explain, with reference to his statement that it is not considered that the payments are inadequate for the purpose for which they are intended, what that purpose is? Is it not to save old and infirm holders of the VC from want, and, if that is so, is £75 a year considered to be sufficient having regard to the present value of money?

Attlee's response was to immediately dismiss any notions of welfare responsibility through VC annuities stating that, 'I do not think it was originally planned on that basis at all…these awards are never intended as pensions for subsistence'.[114] Finally, on 19 March 1952 the issue was raised again in the Commons and the Conservative government insisted that 'it is not proposed to make any change at the present time'.[115] Clearly, therefore, by the early 1950s there was a longstanding frontbench cross-party consensus that the annuity was best left alone and, yet, there were increasingly persistent backbench calls for change.

The major event which revived the annuity issue and brought it back into public consciousness was the VC Centenary celebrations of June-July 1956.[116] One early result of anniversary planning had been the establishment of The Victoria Cross Association [henceforth VCA]

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[112] Jayadeva Uyangoda, 'Federalism for Sri Lanka? Reconciling Many Solitudes', in *Federalism and Conflict Resolution in Sri Lanka*, ed. by V.R. Raghavan and Volker Bauer (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers & Distributors, 2006), 20-33 (pp. 23-24). Natasha Du Rose, *The Governance of Female Drug Users: Women's experiences of drug policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015), p. 117.
[113] *TNA*, T 213/583, 'Victoria Cross – Extracts from the official reports, House of Commons', [undated report].
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Crook, p. 195.

under Brigadier Sir John Smyth VC, with the support of the Royal Society of St George. Indeed, the latter organisation's chairman, Brigadier Sir Ralph Rayner, had been instrumental in raising funds for the VCA and providing it with offices. Smyth himself – a figure of crucial importance for a whole range of gallantry-related debates across the mid-1950s to late-1970s – was a man deeply immersed in the military community of veterans' organisations and pressure groups and had also recently been Minister of Pensions. Indeed, in his memoirs Smyth claimed that this linkage to both the Conservative government and military community was instrumental in his selection as chairman: 'because for nearly five years I had been a minister in Churchill's and Eden's Governments where I had been in close touch with the ex-Service associations and was well known to take a great interest in them'.[117] Clearly, the establishment of this association had been driven primarily by ex-military personnel, whilst its chairman – an ex-minister and serving Tory MP – ensured its close ties with the current Tory government. The creation of the VCA was therefore militarised in terms of the centrality of conservative ex-servicemen to policymaking and leadership of this organisation.

From the beginning of its existence Smyth acknowledged that the Association should possess welfare obligations to its poorer members. A letter to the Secretary of State for War on 10 February explained that:

> It would seem to me that this association will fill a definite need and its funds, which will be augmented during the coming months, should help to fill in the gaps between the Government expense grants for the centenary and the needs of certain individual VCs, some of whom as I know from personal experience, are in poor financial circumstances.

Furthermore, he concluded by outlining the general purpose of the Association as encompassing three objectives. The first was to provide a 'focus' for VCs from across the Commonwealth, the second was to 'cement the brotherhood' of medallists and finally – perhaps most notably – it would 'provide a benevolent fund which can help any of them who may be in financial need'.[118] The creation of this association not only, therefore, provided an extra welfare outlet, but also produced a more coherent sense of community in which the living conditions of its members were closely monitored and their lobbying powers in Whitehall enhanced through the connections of Brigadier Smyth. The association also provided a focus through which voluntary charitable donations could be made. For instance, one of Smyth's first decisions as chairman was to accept an offer by an undisclosed tailor to clothe all VCs attending the Centenary for free. He told the PM later that, 'I certainly give full marks to the

[117] Brigadier Sir John Smyth, *Milestones: A Memoir* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1979), p. 268.
[118] *TNA*, DO 35/6557, Brigadier Sir John Smyth to Antony Head, 'VC Centenary', 10 February 1956.

firm of tailors who supplied the suits and made no publicity of it at all'.[119] As will be demonstrated, the creation of the Association was crucial in maintaining government and public awareness of VC poverty in the coming years.

Additionally, with Smyth promoting himself as spokesman for a close-knit brotherhood, the media were quick to engage with VCs as a heroic 'collectivity' with shared characteristics and values, rather than as individual icons. For instance, during the Centenary, the *Daily Mirror* saluted 'the bravest men who ever walked on God's earth…What a splendid gathering of remarkable men!'[120] Similarly, in relation to subsequent annuity reform, the *Daily Express* referred to the VCA as 'a handful of heroes' in need of justice.[121] This collective tendency also extended beyond the VC. The *Daily Express* noted, during the DCM jubilee of 1956, that it 'was characteristic of the Distinguished Conduct Medal League, which held its annual service on the Horse Guards Parade yesterday, that its members should scorn raincoats', whilst *The Times* focused on summarising the Queen Mother's speech praising that 'the league was founded to keep alive in peacetime the spirit of comradeship so universal in time of war'.[122]

With media emphasis now being placed firmly on medal 'communities' or heroic 'collectivities', certain related themes began to influence British hero culture. The first was an increasing awareness of ageing heroes as most association members were 1914-18 and 1939-45 veterans. The second was an increasing awareness of the socio-economic neglect of some veterans as Smyth and others began to monitor living conditions. Indeed, public awareness of these issues was advanced still further through the number of headlines reporting VCs being sold at auction by desperate medallists during the mid-1950s.[123] Consequently, the formation and public prominence of the VCA served to increasingly influence hero culture and associate it with themes of ageing and social neglect.

The VC Centenary was also important in raising Whitehall awareness of potential VC poverty more generally. The chief organiser of the celebrations, Brigadier R. Rayner, had received a letter from Major R.R. Willis VC requesting financial assistance for travel and maintenance expenses whilst attending the London celebrations. Rayner passed the letter on to the WO with

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[119] *TNA*, T 213/583, Smyth to the PM, 'VC Allowances', 7 July 1959.
[120] 'Heroes', *Daily Mirror*, 27 June 1956, p. 2 in the *Daily Mirror Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 16/05/16].
[121] 'Opinion: Cut-price heroes', *Daily Express*, 12 June 1957, p. 6 in the *Daily Express Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 16/05/16].
[122] *TNA*, T 333/13, 'The Queen Mother scorns an umbrella', *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 July 1956. Ibid, 'Silver jubilee of D.C.M. League', *The Times*, 2 July 1956 [newspaper cuttings].
[123] See for instance, Express Staff Reporter, 'VC who sold his medal to get it back', *Daily Express*, 23 June 1956, p. 5. in the *Daily Express Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 16/05/16].

an observation that 'I expect that we shall get other letters of this kind'.[124] The WO response stressed that 'we are very much alive to the particular problem' and, indeed, an extensive series of travel and maintenance grants was soon established and enthusiastically received.[125] This fairly minor issue of travel expenses – raised by a military administrator – may have planted the issue of VC poverty more firmly in the minds of civil servants and ministers than in previous years.

Indeed, the actions of the Eden Government in the days following the Centenary celebrations perhaps serve to confirm this new awareness to a small degree. Lt. Colonel Marcus Lipton, Labour MP for Brixton, proposed to Parliament that the VC annuity receive a tax exemption and, on 12 July, Chancellor Harold Macmillan announced that he was indeed granting the request. He went on to say:

> If I may add this in the spirit in which the hon. and gallant Member [Lipton] moved the new Clause, not as Chancellor of the Exchequer but as an old Member of the House who has taken part in war, I think it would be a noble thing that we should make this little act of tribute both to what this decoration means and to the spirit which lies behind many hundreds of thousands of men who feel honoured at having been comrades of holders of the Victoria Cross.[126]

Much like the establishment of the VCA, therefore, this monetary concession had a dominant military emphasis. Not only was it proposed by a former soldier, but its acceptance by Macmillan had been framed very much in line with his own sympathies as a former soldier. Indeed, this militarised frame of reference was reflected in a *Daily Express* report which claimed that Macmillan's 'mind was back in the far-away trenches' when he made the concession.[127]

Clearly, however, the importance of this concession should not be overstated. The exemption was of minor monetary significance and would have done little to improve VC maintenance. Indeed, the seemingly half-hearted nature of the concession inevitably led to criticism in the press. 'Cassandra', writing in the *Daily Mirror*, complained that 'this morsel of the cheese of

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[124] *TNA*, WO 32/16257, Brigadier Ralph Rayner to Anthony Head, 'Victoria Cross Celebrations', 10 February 1956.
[125] Ibid, Head to Rayner, 22 February 1956.
[126] The Chancellor of the Exchequer quoted in 'New Clause - (Victoria Cross)', House of Commons Debate 11 July 1956 vol 556 cc412-7, in the *Historic Hansard Archive* < http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1956/jul/11/new-clause-victoria-cross#column_415> [accessed 18/12/16].
[127] William Barkley, 'A tax gift from the Old Soldier', *Daily Express*, 12 July 1956, p. 2, in the *Daily Express Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 16/05/16].

pusillanimity was received in the Commons with cheers. Just how mean can a great nation get?'[128]

Another way in which the Centenary served to change attitudes towards the issue of VC welfare was in relation to media coverage. The number of VC headlines soared during the celebrations and, consequently, awareness of VC poverty spread into the public sphere. For instance, there was notable press coverage when the Royal Air Force Association Annual Conference in Southport passed a motion on 3 June 1956 to increase the basic VC annuity from £10 to £100. *The Times* ran an article titled 'V.C. annuity of £10 'an injustice'' whilst the *Daily Express* asked readers, 'is the honour of a Victoria Cross enough? Of course it is. But why should the currency of courage be a medal, when every other exceptional endeavour is measured in coin?'[129] The latter paper even interrogated Australian VCs about the issue upon their arrival in Britain. Thomas Axford VC replied, 'raise the VC pension to £100? Why not?' British VC Bill Speakman similarly responded that 'this £10-a-year business is silly – it would not feed a goldfish'. [130] The same newspaper additionally ran a series of articles celebrating 'The greatest VCs of all' in which it primarily chose medallists who had struggled to adjust to postwar civilian life. Its coverage of Paddy Magennis VC was particularly notable for its praise of how he survived unemployment, poverty, and the death of his son.[131]

Moreover, there was notable coverage of the Chancellor's tax exemption the following month. The *Express* relished Macmillan's reference to his military past with the headline 'A tax gift from the Old Soldier' whilst the *Manchester Guardian* referred to the 'Signal Gesture' which the Chancellor had made to Britain's heroes.[132] Ultimately, therefore, the extent to which British media coverage focused on issues of VC welfare and monetary issues during the peak interest of the centenary stamped these debates very firmly onto public consciousness.

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[128] 'Cassandra', 'V.C. Tax Free', *Daily Mirror*, 13 July 1956, p. 4, in the *Daily Mirror Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 15/05/16].
[129] 'V.C. Annuity Of £10 'An Injustice'', *The Times*, 4 June 1956, p. 6, in *The Times Digital Archive* <http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/dispBasicSearch.do?prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni> [accessed 30/04/16]. 'Opinion: Medal-or Coin?', *Daily Express*, 5 June 1956, p. 6, in the *Daily Express Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 15/05/16].
[130] 'The Faces of Brave Men', *Daily Express*, 3 June 1956, p. 3, in the *Daily Express Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 15/05/16].
[131] Donald Gomery, 'The Greatest VCs of all', *Daily Express*, 15 June 1956, p. 6, in the *Daily Express Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 16/05/16].
[132] William Barkley, 'A tax gift from the Old Soldier', *Daily Express*, 12 July 1956, p. 2, in the *Daily Express Online Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/simpleSearch.jsp?is=1> [accessed 16/05/16]. 'Chancellor makes 'signal gesture' to V.C.s'', *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 July 1956, p. 2, in the *Proquest Online Archives* <http://0-search.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/docview/479883934?accountid=14664> [accessed 10/05/16].

The VC Centenary had, therefore, been the major landmark which had reinvigorated the welfare debate. Despite the continued frontbench cross-party consensus on retaining 'token' annuities the momentum of the Centenary had forced the government to confront VC poverty when providing maintenance grants. Furthermore, money had often been at the heart of media coverage for much of the celebrations. Most importantly, the event had provided enthusiasm and interest in the establishment of the VCA with the public voice, lobbying influence, and organisation necessary to maintain public and political awareness of the issue into the future.

The Centenary had, coincidingly, demonstrated the influence of military organisers, Tory MPs and newspapers – primarily the conservative *Daily Express* and *The Times* – in raising the profile of the VC welfare debate. What may be defined as a 'conservative community' or public sphere had, therefore, pushed the welfare agenda. This debate had, in turn, somewhat revised the material culture surrounding the VC, both in the public sphere and among medallists themselves, by increasingly emphasising how gallantry could be 'measured in coin' rather than through more symbolic gratitude. Interacting with this trend, the creation of the VCA had also served to promote the notion of a VC community or 'collectivity' within the public sphere, often characterised by aging, hardship and neglect.

Welfarisation remained, at this stage, overwhelmingly focused on the VC and there was little call for its extension into other fields of gallantry. Amongst military awards, whilst one MP attempted to extend MM gratuities to First World War medallists in November 1955, little attention was paid to the request.[133] Furthermore, the Silver Jubilee of the DCM passed virtually unnoticed by the media in July 1956 and no mention was made of its own annuity. Within the civilian sphere, there was even less interest in welfarisation. There was no attempt to introduce state-based annuities, whilst the declining funds of non-state organisations reduced, rather than increased, the likelihood of welfare from this sector. This was particularly true of the RHS, as its Annual Report of 1957 revealed:

> …[the] rise in numbers awarded was encouraging, but unfortunately financial support had not kept pace with the increased activities of the Society…This cannot go on indefinitely and it was sad to think that, with a history of 184 years of humanitarian effort, the Society was faced with the possibility of extinction within a measurable period unless further support from the public was forthcoming.[134]

[133] *TNA*, T 333/261, Extract from Hansard, 'Military Medal (monetary awards)', 15 November 1955.
[134] London, *London Metropolitan Archives* [henceforth *LMA*], LMA/4517/A/06/060, Royal Humane Society Annual Report, 1957, pp. 25-26.

Whilst 'pecuniary awards', therefore, remained listed as a potential RHS award, none were made throughout the late-1950s or early-1960s.[135] Indeed, from the mid-1960s these funds were removed from award lists entirely. The SPLF also claimed that recognition could be made 'by the grant of money to the parents, widows or children of such persons whose deaths may have resulted from their endeavours to save life from fire'.[136] However, no mention was made of any significant allocations within their annual reports and these grants were never intended to constitute long-term provisions. The same could also be said of the Bow Street Fund used to provide token cash sums to brave police officers. Coupled with the limited financial resources of this scheme, awards were, according to one Police memorandum, 'sparingly given' prior to the mid-1960s, thus limiting its impact still further.[137] Moreover, although the Treasury had advised the private controllers of the new Binney Memorial Medal Fund, upon its creation in 1947 in recognition of civilians assisting in the maintenance of law and order, 'that cash payments might be better than the grant of a Medal or plaque', the latter chose to establish a medal over monetary awards.[138]

The only non-state organisation to provide any extensive welfare-orientated benefits was, therefore, the CHF. According to one annual report, 'the purpose of the…Trust is to give financial assistance, if necessary, to the dependants of persons who have died, persons who have been injured, or persons who have incurred appreciable financial loss through performing acts of heroism in peaceful pursuits'.[139] This organisation did indeed offer meaningful welfare provisions through block grants and weekly payments. However, by the late-1950s the financial reach of the CHF was significantly declining. In 1959 the controllers of the Fund deliberately reduced those eligible for awards by rejecting, according to Simon Goodenough, 'cases where there was no injury or loss and cases of husbands and wives or parents and children'. Furthermore, those who had sacrificed in the line of duty required clearer evidence of 'exceptional valour and severe injury' to be considered.[140] Subsequently, CHF activities were sharply declining across the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst 637 awards had been made between 1940-1949, this had fallen to 360 between 1950-1959 and 82 between 1960-1969.[141] Ultimately, therefore, the extent to which non-VC medallists and non-state organisations were

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[135] See *LMA*, LMA/4517/A/01/01/027, Royal Humane Society Minute Book, 1952 Mar – 1965 Mar, Volume 1, Entries: 7 July 1959, 7 November 1961, 4 December 1962 and 6 October 1964.
[136] *LMA*, CLC/014, Society for the Protection of Life from Fire Annual Report, 1955, p. 4.
[137] *TNA*, MEPO 31/24, Memorandum from Commander 'E' Division, 'Commendations Certificates', 25 June 1968.
[138] *TNA*, MEPO 2/10350, R.L. Jackson to Philip Allen, 5 August 1947. See Dick Kirby, *The Brave Blue Line: 100 Years of Metropolitan Police Gallantry* (Barnsley: Wharncliffe Local History, 2011), p. 27.
[139] *TNA*, AST 36/69, Annual Report of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust, 1969, p. 1.
[140] Simon Goodenough, *The Greatest of Good Fortune: Andrew Carnegie's Gift for Today* (Edinburgh: Macdonald Publishers, 1985), p. 229.
[141] *TNA*, AST 36/69, Annual Report, 1969, p. 33.

ignored throughout this period of welfarisation indicates the extent to which this issue was considered to be primarily one concerning top-ranking military awards, military culture and state-orientated welfare within the public sphere.

On 25 May 1957 the issue of VC annuity increases was again raised in the Commons strictly within the confines of 'tokenism'. Lt. Colonel Alan McKibbin, Unionist MP for Belfast East, asked the new PM, Macmillan, what the monetary value of the Victorian £10 annuity would be in modern terms. Whilst Macmillan admitted that it would come to around £40 he also defended current government policy claiming that the tax-free award was likely to rise under pension increase schemes.[142] Although the matter was once again dropped following this dismissal, the following month the new Defence Secretary, Duncan Sandys, ordered a new inquiry into the possibility of raising the sum to £100. This appears to have been the first occasion on which a government minister appeared to actively favour increasing the award.

The consequent inquiry forced Whitehall to confront the token-welfare conflict directly. The purpose of the annuity was immediately called into question and a consensus among civil servants emerged suggesting that the award was antiquated in the current welfare system. As one WO official wrote on 2 July:

> On purely financial grounds the War Office has no objection to such a proposal. I think it should be pointed out however that in the 100 years or so that have elapsed since the inauguration of the Victoria Cross conditions have so changed that it may be regarded as doubtful whether it is proper to attach monetary awards of any sort to a gallantry award… If any increase in this award is decided on therefore I think it should be made clear that it is only a gesture and not made with any intent of providing the recipient with an adequate income.[143]

Another WO official, writing to the Treasury, similarly wrote that:

> Monetary honoraria attaching to awards for gallantry and distinguished military service belong to the outmoded thinking of a past epoch…to revise these historic grants now is to perpetuate – or at least to maintain for an indefinite period – an anomalous and abandoned conception…There is the further point that action on these lines, related as it is to the present cost of living, implies at least to a limited extent the intention to aid the pecuniary difficulties of the recipients and invites the retort

[142] *TNA,* T 213/583, Extract from Hansard, 'Victoria Cross (Annuity Payments)', 25 May 1957.
[143] Ibid, M.T. Tallboys to J.H. Nelson, 2 July 1957.

> that £100 p.a. for that purpose is a derisory sum. There are other ways which could more appropriately be taken for helping the indigent.[144]

Ultimately, those conducting the 1957 review had, with ministerial support, enjoyed a stark choice between 'welfarism' and 'tokenism' and the result had been unwavering support for the latter. The inquiry once again rejected the idea of defining welfare benefits based on gallant acts. Emphasis was thus placed firmly on the ordinary, civilianised, Welfare State as the option available to impoverished VCs in the same way that it was open to ordinary ex-servicemen. The annuity would remain an outdated token gesture. Consequently, on 16 August a minute to the Treasury confirmed that, 'the Minister [Sandys] has decided not to proceed with his proposal to raise the VC pension to £100 a year'. The Treasury responded simply with the word 'good!'[145]

These conclusions would not, however, be enough to discourage ex-servicemen's groups from continuing the campaign to increase ties between government welfare and VC medallists. Following the RAF Association precedent of 1956, The British Legion made a similar request to the government in 1957. The VCA itself had thus far remained divided on the annuity issue. During the Centenary Smyth had told the press to 'keep money out of it altogether'.[146] During 1958, however, his opinion appeared to gradually change. On 24 November he asked Parliament how many VCs were receiving the seldom-issued £75 maximum annuity, to which the answer was 10 VCs with a further 125 drawing smaller additions.[147] Furthermore, he had also begun cultivating an increasingly strong relationship with Sandys during the first VCA Biennial Reunion of 1958. Sandys, speaking at the reunion dinner, had been shocked by the number of VCs unable to attend due to financial constraints and had pledged to ensure that 'in future, no VC in this country was prevented from attending the dinner because he could not afford to come'.[148] Smyth had, furthermore, initiated an extensive series of correspondence with Sandys after the reunion with the aim of consolidating WO financial support for the Association, particularly relating to travel grants and other reunion necessities.

Therefore, whilst the immediate years following the Centenary may have represented a hardening of government policy within the annuity debate, the opposite was arguably true within a wider context. Not only were military ex-servicemen's associations increasingly aware and supportive of welfare measures, but the Conservative government was pledging to

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[144] Ibid, J.D.K. Beighton to Mr Shaw, 17 June 1957.
[145] Ibid, Nelson to Shaw, 16 August 1957.
[146] Ibid, 'The Faces of Brave Men', p. 3.
[147] *TNA*, T 213/583, Extract from Hansard, 'British Army – The Victoria Cross (Annuity)', 24 November 1958.
[148] *TNA*, T 213/584, P.D. Martyn to Major-General G.W. Duke, 'Victoria Cross Association', 5 February 1960.

financially support poor VCs in relation to their biennial reunion. Once again, therefore, the move towards welfarisation was driven by a conservative community of ex-servicemen and elements of the Macmillan government.

On 1 January 1959 Smyth wrote to the Chancellor confirming that he now believed the annuity should be increased to £100. A reply received from Christopher Soames once again dismissed the idea, stipulating that 'we do feel strongly that monetary awards for deeds of gallantry are out of keeping with the spirit of the age'.[149] Despite this dismissal, however, Smyth was by now committed to obtaining the annuity increase and would continue to lobby for a successful conclusion throughout the year. Indeed, the momentum of events seemed to be on his side.

Throughout mid-1959 both Labour and Conservative politicians appeared to increasingly acknowledge how degrading and stringent the 'means test' system through which VCs applied for additional annuity funds seemed upon inspection. Indeed, this 'means-testing' would remain a dominant theme for the remainder of the debate. Although National Assistance Pensions discounted VC annuities in their calculations, service regulations stipulated that Disability Pensions did indeed affect the maximum annuity amount allocated. Subsequently, very few VCs received the £75 maximum. Whilst an Air Ministry review of 1947 had already deemed these regulations as 'onerous', it was only in 1959 that politicians fully understood and acknowledged this perceived injustice.[150] A letter from Tory MP Robin Turton – formerly of the Green Howards and holder of the MC – to the PM observed that:

> …the present regulations governing the annuity are out of date and are not in line either with our social policy or with national feeling…it seemed repugnant to me that officer VCs have to subject their whole sources of income from public funds to scrutiny before they can receive anything, and other rank VCs cannot have their £10 annuity increased without a similar scrutiny. The fact that a disability pension is one of the means taken into account brings it in strong contrast to the present National Assistance regulations.[151]

With Turton also informing Macmillan in Parliament that there was 'considerable feeling in the country that it is distasteful to subject holders of the Victoria Cross annuity to a scrutiny as to means', Macmillan eventually agreed to undertake another, and ultimately decisive, review of the entire debate.[152]

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[149] *TNA*, T 213/583, Christopher Soames to Smyth, 18 February 1959.
[150] Ibid, Memorandum from Sir Robert Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals – Victoria Cross', 29 May 1947.
[151] Ibid, Turton to Macmillan, 7 July 1959.
[152] Ibid, Turton quoted in Extract from Hansard, 'The Victoria Cross', 30 June 1959.

The day after this announcement Smyth wrote to the PM encouraging his decision whilst enclosing a letter regarding a case of notable poverty recently brought to his attention: that of Captain F.C. Booth VC. The report of the Association Assistant General Secretary claimed that:

> Our Representative visited him [Booth] on 23rd, and found him to be in a very poor state of health, thin in appearance, shabbily dressed, and living in a bed-sitting room, buying all his own food. Since the interview we have been trying to get him into a hospital for a general overhaul as a first step, but are finding great difficulty in learning his exact medical history. He is rather against being helped, does not wish to go to a nursing home, and is not interested in hospital treatment…Our own view is that some hospital treatment is absolutely essential to his health.[153]

After highlighting this clear-cut case of VC poverty Smyth concluded that, 'one cannot feel at all happy about cases of this sort, and I have had several of them recently. At the moment our funds in the Association are very slender indeed, and I have to rely on various voluntary bodies for help in such cases.' Clearly Smyth was using the case of Booth and the notion of an impoverished heroic 'collectivity' more generally to encourage Macmillan towards a favourable outcome on the annuity issue. He wrote to the PM again on 7 July to explain his views still further:

> I don't want to make out for a moment that in these enlightened times people in this country are forced to live in conditions of extreme poverty, nor do I wish to make out that there are a lot of VCs who are in a bad way, but in my experience they are far from being a wealthy crowd, and a number of them are pretty impecunious.[154]

This series of correspondence demonstrates the extent to which the VCA was taking an active interest in the living conditions of its members by the late-1950s and assisting where possible. It is yet more evidence of the onset of subtle welfarisation outside the highly-publicised annuity debate and of the direct lobbying pressure this military association was exerting on Macmillan's annuity policy.

Although it is impossible to gauge the extent to which Smyth's personal contact with Downing Street had an impact on the decision-making process, it is clear from minutes that by 10 July the PM was 'very much in favour' of the annuity increase.[155] This confirmation of Macmillan's views – in favour of a standard, tax-free £100 annuity exempt from any form of

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[153] Ibid, Smyth to Macmillan, 30 June 1959. Ibid, Assistant-General Secretary W.L. Steele to Smyth, 25 June 1959.
[154] Ibid, Smyth to Macmillan, 'VC Allowances', 7 July 1959.
[155] Ibid, A.S.P. to Mr Stephen, 10 July 1959.

means test – appears to have assured its success. Although the initiative remained disagreeable to many civil servants who believed such annuities to be relics of the past, one soon noted to a colleague that 'we do not stand the smallest chance of getting our way'. [156]

The precise reason for the Macmillan government's sudden volte-face amid strong civil servant opposition is difficult to pin down. Certainly, the momentum of the VC centenary in providing medallists with a strong public and political presence reinvigorated the debate and maintained the force of Parliamentary pressure in the following years. Moreover, the persistence of various backbench, often senior ex-military and Tory, MPs forced the government to continually commit to back-to-back policy reviews through the late-1950s. As one civil servant noted, although this Parliamentary military grouping 'may be small (albeit vocal), I do not think that it can be ignored'.[157] Perhaps most important of all were the efforts of the VCA and, especially, Smyth. His close contacts with both Sandys and Macmillan ensured that they remained fully aware of VC cases of financial need. Finally, it appears that Macmillan's own military sympathies and eventual preference for the increase assisted the momentum of the final inquiry. As Smyth later recalled, he was 'above all other Prime Ministers with whom I had dealings, the most helpful over ex-Service affairs, particularly to my V.C. and G.C. Association'.[158]

How far this long debate, both within the political and public spheres, can be considered to have confirmed a radical 'welfarisation' of gallantry in the late-1950s is debatable. First and foremost, it is obvious that the final figure agreed upon – £100p.a. – was a fairly small sum for constituting fully-fledged welfare. According to modern estimates, £100 in 1959 equalled around £2,000 in 2015.[159] Indeed, as one civil servant pointed out during the 1957 review:

> …action on these lines [raising the annuity], related as it is to the present cost of living, implies at least to a limited extent the intention to aid the pecuniary difficulties of the recipients and invites the retort that £100 p.a. for that purpose is a derisory sum.[160]

Clearly there was some uncertainty regarding how beneficial this limited increase would be. Nevertheless, it is also clear that during the 1959 review many civil servants fully acknowledged that an increase to £100 would indeed constitute more fully-fledged welfare. A WO report, considering the negatives of approving the non-means tested basic £100 annuity, observed that:

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[156] Ibid, B.I. to Mr Bennett, 'Victoria Cross Annuities', 22 July 1959.
[157] Ibid, B.I. to Bennett, 22 July 1959.
[158] Smyth, p. 247.
[159] Calculated in <https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php> [accessed 20/10/17].
[160] *TNA*, T 213/583, Mr Beighton to Mr Shaw, 17 June 1957.

> The avoidance of poverty and hardship is no longer the province of such awards. The development of National Assistance and National Insurance pensions has removed any need for such annuities…[However] The £75 annuity is nevertheless in existence with the avowed aim of helping the aged and infirm VC. It should bear some relation to the purpose for which it is given.[161]

Therefore, by approving this increased award, the government privately acknowledged that the annuity now possessed much more of a welfare purpose than its predecessor. Indeed, an article in *The Times* on 29 July appeared to confirm the significance of the government's decision in this regard. It correctly observed that the VC had been continually torn between the 'token' of 1856 and the 'kind of welfare dole' precedent of 1898. It then went on to criticise Macmillan's announcement of the annuity increase claiming that, 'this seems more in line with the 1898 precedent of the welfare dole than the ideas behind the 1856 institution of an award for supreme gallantry'.[162] *The Times* had, therefore, accused the government of consolidating the association between gallantry and welfare.

Nevertheless, it is easy to overstate the significance of reform. Even with the concession of July 1959 it remained the clear government intention that the VC remain firmly inside the general apparatus of the Welfare State rather than ascend above it in both his pension arrangements and within the public mind. This had been confirmed during Macmillan's final review. One civil servant noted during the inquiry, with a hint of sarcasm, that the Admiralty 'in their usual way had done some independent thinking on the subject' and, instead of an increased £100 annuity, were proposing to retain the current system with an increased maximum allowance of £350. Their 'revolutionary idea [stipulated] that VCs should be taken right out of the scope of National Assistance. Instead the Service Departments would be authorised to make payments to any VC in need more or less equivalent to what he would get from the NAB.'[163]

In essence, the Admiralty suggested that the VC should be completely separated from the Welfare State and maintained, in full, on the basis of their award – the ultimate 'welfarisation of gallantry'. This proposal inevitably met with strong opposition from other ministries. One official responded that:

> Proposals designed to 'take people out of the National Assistance field' are in direct conflict to the Government's policy – recently endorsed in connection with the current national assistance improvements – that there is no stigma attached to national

[161] Ibid, MoD Report, 'Note on Victoria Cross Annuities', 8 July 1959.
[162] *TNA,* T 213/584, 'Opinion – Money for Bravery', *The Times*, 29 July 1959 [newspaper cutting].
[163] *TNA,* T 213/583, Mr Radice to J.A.C. Robertson, 'Victoria Cross Annuities', 17 July 1959.

> assistance. Both the Minister of Pensions and the Prime Minister have been at pains to make it clear that every citizen had a 'right' to national assistance. The steps now being taken…will be largely nullified if the Government now indicate that they do consider such a stigma exists by making special provision to avoid recourse to national assistance by VCs.[164]

Whitehall had thus possessed the opportunity of completely overhauling the existing welfare arrangements and removing the VC from the ordinary welfare system entirely. The fact that they declined to do so and instead insisted on retaining a balance between annuities and other forms of ordinary state welfare proves that reform only went so far.

In summary, the VC annuity episode is important in several ways. What the developments of 1956-59 represented was a partial 'welfarisation' of VC gallantry, increasing various privileged welfare benefits, both at state and non-state level, whilst keeping the medallist simultaneously rooted in the ordinary Welfare State. This cannot, however, downplay the significance of events for comprehending the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties value shift. A collective effort by conservative politicians, ex-servicemen and newspapers – what may be defined as a 'conservative public sphere' – managed to achieve a more liberalised, progressive reform against the instinctive annuity suspicion of the cross-party font benches. This indicates how far conservatives were willing to spearhead reform in a field of particular emotional investment to them, interacting with the Sixties 'rediscovery of poverty' in a progressive and positive, rather than reactionary, way.

This episode also demonstrates how far welfarisation was 'militarised' in nature. If the government's earlier move away from annuities and increased reliance on ordinary provisions can be regarded as the encroachment of 'civilianised' welfare on VCs, the subsequent late-1950s volte-face in favour of annuities can correspondingly be viewed as a 're-militarisation' of VC welfare provision. The fact that these benefits were pursued primarily by ex-*military* MPs, *military* associations and framed within a context of gratitude for *military* service by decisionmakers, all point to a militarised welfarisation process in terms of the personnel and motives involved.

This episode also reveals much about conceptual direction over gallantry and the momentum behind reform during the value shift. On the one hand, how far the government's policy reversal was brought about under a barrage of media coverage and pressure group lobbying suggests that, to a notable extent, the value shift was indeed decided within the public sphere. The impetus for reform certainly did not derive from the government. On the other hand,

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[164] Ibid, K. Whalley to Mr Robertson, 'Victoria Cross Annuities', 20 July 1959.

however, key figures involved in campaigning such as Smyth, Turton and McKibbin all had personal and political ties to the Conservative government whilst, despite their policy stances, key government ministers including Sandys and Macmillan had always harboured sympathies for reform. Moreover, it is evident that beyond the basic decision to increase annuities, it was entirely government personnel who debated and defined the parameters of welfarisation during the inquiry of 1959. Whilst the momentum behind reform can therefore be attributed to both state and society, the crucial agency of the former should be stressed in directing concepts of gallantry.

These events also had implications for the material culture of medals. The extent to which this debate, centring around government policy, clearly affected the relationship between many VCs and their decorations – often transforming them from a contentment with symbolic gratitude to increasingly striving for monetary recompense – illustrates how far the state continued to have an important role in influencing the material culture of medals well after initial investiture. Finally, the degree to which decision-making was influenced by notions, advocated by the VCA and the media, of a neglected VC brotherhood degraded by poverty illustrates the importance of the heroic 'collectivity' to both the public sphere and policymakers, acting as a focal point revealing the treatment of heroes in modern Britain.

Whilst non-VC gallantry awards had remained largely excluded from the debates of 1956-59, politicians and civil servants soon realised the potential implications of the government's subsequent policy reversal on wider military and civilian gallantry. In the military field, there were indeed government concerns that reform would have implications for the pensions also awarded to the DCM, CGM, DSM, MM and DFM. As the final 1959 inquiry report confirmed 'other decorations attract a monetary award and it would be difficult to treat VCs in isolation', although it also went on to claim that 'VCs are recognised as a special class'.[165] Clearly, with the decision to confirm the VC annuity increase, government policy was left in limbo regarding lower-grade military awards: at once expecting similar annuity requests and yet prepared to reject these proposals on the basis of the VC's seniority.

The 'civilian' sphere, beyond the declining activities of non-government organisations, proved more problematic. Although the GC was of equal status to the VC it had, due to its 'civilian' as opposed to 'military' categorisation, never carried an annuity since its creation in 1940. Therefore, a predictable Parliamentary question raised following the VC increase of 1959 was whether similar benefits would be transferred to civilian gallantry. Although Macmillan

[165] Ibid, 'Note on Victoria Cross Annuities', 8 July 1959.

agreed to investigate the matter there remained suspicion of double standards between the military and civilian spheres. Aneurin Bevan hinted at this with his response that:

> Is it necessary to take very much time over this? It is a very short decision to make. There are not many holders of the George Cross, which is supposed to be an award of equal rank to the Victoria Cross…discrimination surely is undesirable in the circumstances.[166]

Bevan was indeed justified in his suspicions. Although this proposal had been predicted during the VC inquiry there remained little enthusiasm or willingness within Whitehall for such an extension to GC medallists. As one civil servant undertaking the new investigation noted:

> …the Treasury would deprecate any proposal to attach financial benefits to civilian awards. Military awards have always been rather different – there are payments associated with others besides the V.C. – for example, the D.C.M. It would not be appropriate in these days, when National Assistance is available to all who are in straightened circumstances, to overthrow the principle that civilian awards do not carry financial benefits.[167]

Clearly, therefore, emphasis was placed on the military traditions associated with annuities as a key justification for excluding civilian awards from such benefits. In essence, the government intended no 'militarisation' of civilian gallantry in 1959. By 2 September Macmillan was reported to have ordered his colleagues to 'wait for next Parliament and see what pressure develops'.[168] Civil servants, meanwhile, continued to use the supposedly ongoing review to deflect further demands for reform. When one MP forwarded a letter from a constituent arguing for a GC annuity, the response of 16 October was that 'the matter is still under consideration and no decision has yet been reached'.[169] By the end of 1959, therefore, it was clear that the government was willing to drag its heals on the issue of establishing an equal GC annuity. They were inclined towards containment rather than expansion. Similarly, when the prospect of a grant also being made to the AM – considered the 'civilian VC' prior to 1940 – was raised in Parliament on 17 December the response appeared to confirm the government's resistance to civilian annuities: 'it has never been the custom for civilian awards for gallantry made by the Sovereign to be associated with monetary grants from Government funds, and I do not think it would be appropriate to make an exception in this case'.[170]

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[166] Ibid, 'Extract from Hansard', 28 July 1959.
[167] *TNA,* HO 286/57, R.D. Shuffrey to [?], 24 October 1959.
[168] *TNA,* T 333/1, A.J.S. to Stephen, 2 September 1959.
[169] Ibid, J.E.S. Simon to J.M. Temple, 20 October 1959.
[170] *TNA,* HO 286/57, 'Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons', 17 December 1959.

Despite this, and the declining financial reach of non-government organisations, there did appear to be some evidence of civilian welfarisation emerging from VC annuity reform. The Edward Medal [EM] had been instituted in 1907 for acts of gallantry in industry. Upon its creation a group of industrialists had established the Edward Medal Fund to meet the expenses of establishing the award and facilitating investitures. In 1949-50 the EM in Silver was abolished whilst the EM in Bronze was relegated to a posthumous award. As a result, therefore, by the late-1950s the Trustees – a Home Office official and Finance Minister – realised that the Fund was largely defunct. Yet, as the original regulations had made no facility for abolishing it, the Trustees decided in late-1958 to find a new purpose for the Fund.

One initial suggestion had been to facilitate a celebration in honour of civilian medal holders. It was also proposed in February 1959 that the fund could be used to embellish the newly built chapel of the Order of the British Empire in St Paul's Cathedral.[171] However, following these diverse ideas, in August 1959 – and within weeks of Macmillan's VC announcement – there was a clear shift in emphasis towards focusing on the specific welfare of EM holders. One official, whilst rejecting other funding projects, asked:

> Why can't we use the income of the fund for… [EM family] benefit – either by making an automatic award to the next-of-kin when the Medal is presented, or by letting it be known that applications for assistance will be entertained? An automatic award would save a lot of trouble; and most families, even nowadays, will be in some distress at the time when the Medal is given.[172]

Subsequently, perhaps inspired by the popular acclaim for the VC annuity reform, a consensus was quickly reached by trustees in late-1959 in favour of using the fund to support EM families. As one official confirmed:

> …we have extended the objects of the charity to embrace relief and assistance, which are wide enough to cover practically any form of grant, to recipients or their widows or dependents, adding for good measure, assistance to widows and others where the medal is awarded, as it now commonly is, posthumously.[173]

Therefore, by choosing to provide meaningful welfare to holders of the EM – a state-orientated civilian medal – within months of the VC annuity reform, it can be suggested that the trustees embraced not only a welfarisation, but also a militarisation of civilian gallantry. Within the

[171] *TNA,* HO 286/58, Mr McCombe to Sir Austin Strutt, 'The Edward Medal Fund', 28 February 1959.
[172] Ibid, John Semken to Austin Strutt, 'Edward Medal Fund', 22 September 1959.
[173] Ibid, McCombe to Strutt, 'The Edward Medal Fund', 19 November 1959.

state sphere, monetary recompense had previously been the preserve of military culture and, hence, no matter how small its extension, the decision reflected a notable conceptual shift.

The period from 1956-1959, therefore, constitutes a significant value shift in relation to concepts of gallantry. Prior to the late-1950s the government had adamantly maintained that granting welfare on the sole basis of gallant acts was obsolete and that medallists should claim funds through the normal welfare apparatus: what might be interpreted as a 'civilianisation' of military welfare. However, despite the ultimate government preference to keep VCs partly rooted within the Welfare State, the decision to give annuities meaningful purchasing power suggests that at least a partial welfarisation of the VC occurred. Furthermore, the extent to which these annuities were rooted within military culture coincidingly indicates that this process constituted a renewed 'militarisation' of VC welfare. How far this military feature also went on to influence the reform of the EM Fund also points to the first steps towards a militarisation of the civilian sphere.

However, the limits of this process by 1959 are also evident. Beyond these reforms the government appeared willing to resist further welfarisation of lower-ranking military medals or, indeed, any civilian ones. Furthermore, the fact that the government remained intent on retaining VCs within the Welfare State, rather than placing them 'above it', demonstrates that welfare allocation based solely on gallant acts remained, despite the efforts of some, only partially achieved. Nevertheless, a precedent had been set – stressing the continued relevance of medal annuities in postwar Britain – which would encourage and energise those who wished for the welfarisation process to be carried in new directions.

II

By early-1960 public and political awareness of the 'welfarisation' of gallantry was at its apex. With the high profile and sudden volte-face of the Macmillan government on the issue of VC annuity increases, the prospect of obtaining further concessions to medallists of differing status appeared to be a more realistic prospect for campaigners. A precedent had, after all, been set re-legitimising welfare on the sole basis of gallantry, supported by a growing public awareness of medallist old age and poverty. The 1960s would, therefore, be a time in which the lengths to which the government would be prepared to go in extending gallantry welfarisation was tested by the public sphere. By the early-1970s, however, the increasing government desire to restrict and control these monetary benefits led to another government about-face intent on abolishing certain annuities and gratuities. Consequently, this section will investigate how far welfarisation further encroached into both the military and civilian award systems and to what extent this had receded by the late-1970s.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades in which the 'rediscovery of poverty' and all its accompanying cultural values relating to state and communal awareness and responsibility continued to grow apace. As both Jodi Burkett and Sandbrook have noted, the mid-1960s witnessed a major resurgence in public interest – particularly on the political Left – regarding issues of homelessness, unemployment, pensioner poverty and disability.[174] Furthermore, Gladstone emphasised how 'a whole new wave of groups transformed the nature of the voluntary sector' during these years, leading to a major expansion of charity activities at non-state level.[175] Indeed, many of these welfare developments continued to expand throughout the 1970s. These decades were, therefore, characterised by a strong sense of liberal social conscience at both state and societal level with a continued determination to ensure that vulnerable groups were 'rediscovered' regardless of evident rising living standards amongst the majority. The extent to which issues of poverty continued to dominate the medals sphere, therefore, reflects this broader and increased sense of public consciousness.

The final government report into VC annuities in mid-1959 had predicted that the decision to increase monetary benefits could potentially lead to similar requests made of other lower-ranking military awards in possession of annuities and gratuities, such as the DCM, CGM, DSM, MM and DFM. However, the government's determination to resist such demands shows how far the state remained adamant in its resolve to retain ideological and financial direction over the welfarisation process. As the report outlined, whilst further claims by other medallists were expected, the government intended to reject them on the basis that the VC was 'a special class'.[176] It was not long, however, before its predictions on medallist grievances became reality. In December 1959, the Military Medallists League [MML] wrote to the Secretary of State for War requesting that their £20 gratuity or 6d-per-day pension supplement, awarded since 1945 to all Second World War holders, be extended to all MMs decorated prior to 3 September 1939. Around 17,000 MMs had been awarded for 1939-45, whilst the significantly larger figure of 116,000 had been distributed for 1914-18.[177]

This discrimination towards the older generation of MMs had already generated a longstanding sense of injustice. The extension request had been raised in Parliament in 1955 at a time when, as noted previously, the government had taken a much harder clear-cut line over the issue of annuities and, therefore, the request was quickly rejected. The Secretary for

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[174] Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties, 1964-1970* (London: Abacus, 2013), pp. 599-601. Jodi Burkett, *Constructing Post-Imperial Britain: Britishness, 'Race' and the Radical Left in the 1960s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), p. 62.
[175] Gladstone, p. 66.
[176] *TNA*, T 213/583, 'Note on Victoria Cross Annuities', 8 July 1959.
[177] *TNA*, T 213/1052, Extracts of a letter by the Secretary of State for War to the MM League, December 1959, in Appendix to letter from Douglas Stewart, Secretary of the Military Medallists League, to House of Commons, 21 May 1960.

War had responded that 'the change was made…in 1945. It has been done and I do not hold out any chance of altering it now.'[178] Hence, whilst the anomalous situation was clearly admitted by the government, no attempt was made to subsequently adjust policy.

The MM extension debate entered the 1960s in a rather ambiguous position. On the one hand, as noted above, the government appeared determined to maintain its policy of holding back the floodgates on medallist grievances. Furthermore, in the case of the MM, Whitehall did arguably have legitimate administrative grounds upon which to refuse extension. As the Secretary for War explained in a letter to the MML in late-1959:

> The reasons for restricting the awards were primarily practical ones…the size of the payment would amount to several million pounds…the administrative difficulties of making the award to all holders of the Military Medal would be enormous…the records of present holders of the medal dating from the first World War are very scanty…we should have to resolve the question of paying awards into the estates of those who have since died.[179]

Hence, any extension of the gratuity would entail major economic and administrative implications which the government mobilised in defence of its position.

On the other hand, however, the prospects of MML success were heightened by various factors. The recent landmark policy shift regarding the VC annuity had increased public and political interest in the issue of medallist welfare and had also demonstrated to medal associations how an obstinate government attitude could be overturned through public, strategic and relentless campaigning. The VC milestone therefore energised the MM campaigners. Moreover, there was evidence of growing political interest in extending monetary benefits to second and third-degree medallists more widely. On 22 March 1960, a couple of days after the MML General Meeting had passed a resolution to 'campaign publicly…and to seek help of Members of Parliament', questions had been raised in the Commons requesting that the annuity of the DCM, a second-degree medal, be tax-exempt.[180] Although the Chancellor promised to 'bear in mind' the latter request in his incoming budget, it ultimately came to nothing.[181] Nonetheless, how far political awareness appeared to be shifting towards broader second and third-degree awards potentially assisted the MML campaign.

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[178] *TNA,* T 333/261, Extract from Hansard, 'Military Medal (monetary awards)', 15 November 1955.
[179] *TNA,* T 213/1052, Secretary for War to the MM League, December 1959.
[180] Ibid, Stewart to MPs, 21 May 1960.
[181] *TNA,* T 333/13, Extract from Hansard, 'Distinguished Conduct Medal', 22 March 1960.

Additionally, there were various campaign tools open to the MML which had been mobilised effectively to achieve VC success. For instance, the MM issue received strong, vocal and relentless support from a small group of ex-military MPs, including Lt. Colonel John Cordeaux, Lt. Colonel Marcus Lipton and Squadron Leader Geoffrey de Freitas, who raised the issue in Parliamentary debates on a frequent basis, thus keeping the MM in the public domain for several years. Additionally, perhaps even more so than the VCA, the MML campaign utilised the welfare issue of old age frailty and poverty at a time in which the 'rediscovery of poverty' amongst Britain's ageing military heroes was a potent and emotive issue within the public and political sphere.[182] After all, the MML were primarily concerned with the discrimination of the older 1914-18 generation and placed the issue of old age difficulties at front and centre of their campaign message. For instance, when the Secretary of the Merseyside Military Medallists Association wrote to the PM in search of support he claimed that:

> In spite of many endeavours to have this injustice put right there are various reasons given such as, No records, Men who have since died, Widows, etc. but none put forward carry the slightest weight to justify the injustice. How can this be allied to the continued injustice to living men who have, and still are suffering from their voluntary service, and war wounds, now too old to fight. True, if the Government waits long enough they can say there are no 1st War men left, pity, we might have been able to do something for them.[183]

This issue of discrimination against needy pensioners was further mobilised in the main Parliamentary debate on the topic on 3 June. As Cordeaux noted in justifying the case for gratuity extension:

> The people most in need – the older ones – were denied the money [in 1945]. It was given to the young people…[To the latter, the gratuity] would not be much to him, but it would make a difference to some of the old people. No holders of the Military Medal won in the First World War can now be under 60, and this sum could mean quite a bit to them. It could mean the difference between having a holiday or not having one.[184]

Cordeaux continued to use the issue of frail and aging MMs to justify his arguments further, referring to a Mr. Jack Foy of Glasgow who won the medal twice during the First World War. He explained that, 'He has still got bits of shrapnel in his back and arms…He is now getting

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[182] Gladstone, p. 63.
[183] *TNA,* T 333/261, F.H. Honey to Macmillan, [undated, 1960].
[184] *TNA,* T 213/1052, Extract from Hansard, 'Military Medal (Monetary Benefit)', 3 June 1960.

deaf, his eyes are failing and he is 65 years old. He is a typical example, one of those people who are worse off than those who won their medal in the Second World War.'[185] The campaign in support of elderly MMs was, therefore, able to fully utilise the notion of an ageing and impoverished group of heroes – the powerful notion of a neglected heroic 'collectivity' – that had been effectively established during the VC campaign.

Finally, how far the MM campaign had the support of various important, primarily military, lobbying groups also raised the prospects of success. The VC campaign had highlighted the value of a medallist association with the leadership and united voice to maintain grievances in the public and political sphere. Accordingly, the MML had a significant membership which enhanced its visibility. Their General Meeting, at which members had declared their support for gratuity extension, had caught the attention of *The Times* who ran an article on 21 March declaring '1914-18 M.M. winners to lobby M.P.s'.[186] The MM issue also received support from various other veterans' organisations. At their annual conference on 5-6 June 1960 the British Legion passed a resolution demanding the government treat all MMs on an equal basis.[187] This was followed up by a more strongly worded conference resolution of 1962 stating that the 'Conference deeply deplores the distinction between benefits'.[188] The British Legion was further able to maintain the issue within political consciousness by sustaining a steady stream of correspondence with the WO during this period.

Furthermore, by late-1962 the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association [BLESMA] annual conference also passed a similar resolution and was maintaining correspondence with both the WO and Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance.[189] Finally, a significant number of medallists pursued legal counsel and support regarding their monetary claims from a newspaper advice service – the John Hilton Bureau – run under *The News of the World*. The extent to which the MM gratuity received extensive and persistent support from numerous associations and organisations, therefore, suggested the strength of their position and potential for success during the campaign.

In the long term, however, despite the above considerable pressures the government remained resilient in its refusal to concede a gratuity extension. They had outlined their position most clearly during the main Parliamentary debate of 3 June 1960 whereby the Under-Secretary for

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[185] Ibid.
[186] *TNA*, T 333/261, '1914-18 M.M. winners to lobby M.P.s', *The Times*, 21 March 1960 [newspaper cutting].
[187] Ibid, Secretary of the British Legion to Secretary of State for War, 26 July 1960.
[188] Ibid, Secretary of the British Legion to Permanent Secretary MoD, 14 August 1962.
[189] For instance, Ibid, E.A. Doughty to the General Secretary of B.L.E.S.M.A., 'Resolution 87, British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association, Annual Conference, 1962', 11 January 1963. A.J.G. Crocker to D.R.J. Stephen, 'Resolution passed at British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association Annual Conference, 1962', 29 November 1962.

War explained that 'this is a question of the financial and administrative ability of the Government and their inability to take a retrospective step'. He outlined the sheer expense involved for both survivors and the deceased and also the logistics of an understaffed WO collaborating with both the Commonwealth and Pensions departments. He concluded that:

> These are considerable difficulties apart from the general principle, which I must resist, of returning to the idea of a retrospective act…The financial and practical reasons which prompted that [1945] decision have been aired and reiterated on numerous occasions and defended by Governments of both major political parties. Those reasons, I believe, are as valid today as they were fifteen years ago…I cannot agree that it would be wise and proper to make any change in the conditions of this award.[190]

This line was energetically sustained on each occasion in which the matter was raised across 1960-62. As previously demonstrated by the VC report of 1959, a clear government determination to retain ideological and financial control over annuities also appeared to linger behind these more practical explanations. The fact that the government stubbornly maintained their position in the face of a prominent ex-military Parliamentary lobby, combined with a range of military lobbying groups and a sympathetic media suggests that conceptual control over the extent of welfarisation remained a high priority.

Other developments of the early-1960s point to how far the government rejected any concession to second or third-degree military medals. At the time of the British Legion's second conference resolution of 1962, the idea of raising the whole range of second and third-degree gallantry pension supplements was muted by some ex-servicemen. The Director of the John Hilton Bureau, writing to an MoD Permanent Secretary, appeared to have been gradually persuaded by the argument in favour of a general increase. He claimed to have received various letters from DCM, CGM, DSM and MM holders questioning whether these benefits were 'not derisory in the light of the reduced purchasing value of the £ compared when this addition to pension was first authorised'. He explained that he had always previously rejected this notion on the 'token' basis of such awards and the increasing Service pay and benefits available. However, the Director continued, 'as the question obviously causes some feeling among a certain number of ex-Servicemen, I have come to the conclusion that I should at least bring the matter to your notice'.[191] The response of the MoD was to admit that 'the Service Departments themselves have received a number of letters on the same subject either direct

[190] *TNA,* T 213/1052, 'Military Medal (Monetary Benefit)', 3 June 1960.
[191] *TNA,* ADM 1/28181, T.K.P. Barrett to The Permanent Secretary, MoD, 27 August 1962.

from ex-Servicemen, or through the medium of the British Legion or Members of Parliament'. However, the MoD maintained the principle, often stressed in the VC debate, that:

> …these additions to pension were introduced many years ago, at a time when conditions in the Services were quite different from those prevailing today. A soldier today now qualifies for a very substantial pension…and it is felt that there is now very little justification for the continuation of these minor financial rewards. It is realised, however, that the grant of these additions to pension have grown into a kind of tradition, and for that reason they have not been withdrawn. The decision not to do so does not mean that there is a case for increasing the basic rate.[192]

Once again, therefore, the governments defence of its position in the face of a whole range of different medal claims in the early-1960s highlights the extent of its determination to hold back the tide of medallist grievances and maintain their conceptual influence over the purpose of these benefits: that, ultimately, monetary allowances should be insignificant tokens below first-degree awards.

By January 1963 the MM campaign had lost its momentum under repeated government refusals to even contemplate any change in policy. There appears to have been little further effort to campaign on the specific issue of MM gratuity extension after a final WO rejection to the General Secretary of BLESMA on 11 January.[193] The same was also true of second and third-degree medallists more generally. Although one DSM holder, S.G. Nobbs, continued to lobby the new Wilson government throughout 1964-65 for an extension of gratuity rights to First World War veterans – whom he described as 'the very people who need the monetary award, i.e. the Old Age Pensioners' – Labour rejected the request in a similar way to the previous administration, stating that 'even if there is any merit in the case for retrospective payment the administrative task and cost are rather frightening'.[194]

This review ultimately spelled the end of the wider effort to extend the welfarisation process to middle-ranking military awards. As one civil servant wrote to Paul Channon, Tory MP for Southend West, regarding the tax exemption, 'this is a case of the line having to be drawn somewhere'.[195] Indeed, this was a phrase which had characterised cross-party government consensus ever since the VC annuity increase of 1959. The VC inquiry report of that year had predicted fresh efforts to extend benefits to lower decorations and the governments, both

[192] Ibid, L. Montgomery to Barrett, 4 October 1962.
[193] Ibid, Doughty to General Secretary, 11 January 1963.
[194] *TNA*, T 213/1052, S.G. Nobbs to J. Diamond MP, 10 October 1963. C.F. Richards to C.H.A. Judd, 21 January 1965.
[195] Ibid, C.W. Reynolds to Paul Channon, MP, 21 April 1965.

Conservative and Labour, had remained committed to restricting larger monetary awards to first-degree medals.

The precise reasons for the ultimate failure of attempts to obtain redress of grievances – in particular, for the MM, DSM, CGM and DCM – were varied. Unlike the VC campaign, these efforts from 1960 to 1965 did not coincide with a major centenary celebration to grip political or public interest in the same way as 1956. Despite the silver jubilee of the DCM League in 1956, interest was completely overshadowed by the VC Centenary. Therefore, whilst the issue of medal annuities was continually debated in the early-1960s, there was arguably less emotional investment in the topic than during the VC centenary period.

Secondly, the various interest groups involved in campaigning for monetary concessions lacked coordination. Unlike the highly skilled, centralised and media-savvy campaign led by Smyth for VC annuity reform, the various organisations involved between 1960-65 operated largely separately, with little overall coherence in terms of demands or activities. Hence, the MML, British Legion and BLESMA resolutions ran at separate times and no central demand or injustice was emphasised to ministers or the media. Indeed, despite the enduring public sympathy for ageing medallists, these various pressure groups failed to use the media effectively meaning that grievances went somewhat under-reported.

Finally, there remained a persistent and ultimately decisive factor in this failure. The government had been prepared to battle middle-ranking medallist requests since 1959 and never strayed from their policy of outright refusal to contemplate further extension of rewards. Whilst the new Wilson government did indeed investigate some of these issues from 1964-65, their eventual rejection demonstrated a cross-party frontbench consensus on the issue. Whilst there were legitimate administrative problems preventing a government concession, the main reason for their stubborn refusals on a range of second and third-degree medal grievances lay in a determination to retain their conceptual influence over, and ultimately contain, gallantry welfarisation.

This episode is crucial for understanding how concepts of gallantry interacted with the welfarisation process and, in turn the Sixties value shift. Firstly, the prominence of the Conservative government in defining the parameters of welfarisation, which subsequent Labour governments simply followed, is once again evident. The Tory government primarily interacted with Tory, ex-military, MPs such as colonels Cordeaux and Lipton and ex-servicemen's lobbying groups. This underlines how far welfarisation was pioneered and debated within an arguably conservative sphere of thought and debate. Moreover, the prominence of ex-servicemen and how far they justified financial concessions based on past

military service suggests how far the welfarisation process was also 'militarised' in terms of the personnel involved and their justifications.

This episode also reveals much about state-societal relations over the direction of concepts of gallantry. Non-governmental pressure through medal and veterans' associations, individual medallists and elements of the media was certainly pivotal in stimulating the debate over further welfarisation. Nevertheless, in this instance, the state – fearing potential loss of control over the annuity debate through further concessions – appeared to uncompromisingly dictate the outcome of debate by refusing any extension. Furthermore, the centrality of the state in defining the limits of welfarisation once again underlines its continual importance in revising the emotional relationship between medallists and their decorations. This episode revealed the determination with which some medallists sought to obtain monetary concessions, rather than simply remaining content with the symbolic gratitude of the nation. As demonstrated most notably in the case of S.G. Nobbs, the governments subsequent refusal to grant these concessions infused the medal-medallist relationship with considerable disappointment and bitterness. This once again underlines the role of the state in revising the material culture surrounding medals beyond the point of initial investiture.

This episode also has significance for understandings of postwar heroism. The centrality of medallist and other ex-servicemen's associations ensured the prominence of the 'heroic collectivity' within political and, to some extent, public debates. Campaigners frequently referred to the injustice inflicted on the ageing First World War generation who were refused gratuities and yet were 'most in need', whilst younger Second World War medallists received these benefits.[196] Much like the previous developments surrounding the VC, therefore, this episode underlines the centrality of the 'collectivity' within hero culture which, in turn, projected messages about declinist Britain's neglect of its impoverished and aging heroes.

The prospect of increasing welfare benefits to a broad range of civilian gallantry medallists seemed unlikely by the early-1960s. As noted previously, the Macmillan government had been willing to deny the extension of annuities to the GC on the basis that these sums were a distinct part of *military* culture. The extent to which the Tories also refused to improve benefits to middle-ranking military awards also decreased the likelihood of an extension to civilian awards not rooted within this element of military culture. Furthermore, the traditional tendency of non-government organisations to financially reward acts of civilian gallantry was also in steep decline. In a speech at the annual court of the RHS in April 1961 its chairman, Admiral Piers K. Kekewich, claimed that the society was running at a loss of nearly £1000p.a. and by the late-1960s the society no longer listed pecuniary awards as a potential source of

[196] *TNA,* T 213/1052, Extract from Hansard, 'Military Medal (Monetary Benefit)', 3 June 1960.

recognition.[197] Indeed, although the RHS reviewed their awards in 1976 and discussed the 'establishment of a Fund to use in genuine cases of financial hardship for making small pecuniary awards, as the Society used to do before lack of funds made this impossible', the plan ultimately came to nothing.[198] Moreover, whilst the CHF continued to provide regular welfare to a select and limited number of civilians, those awarded allowances had declined from 207 between 1950-59 to 155 between 1960-69.[199] The prospect of a general welfarisation of civilian awards therefore seemed unlikely.

Nevertheless, it is also clear that specifically within the first-degree civilian sphere the prospects of welfarisation were also increasing by the mid-1960s. With the full admission of GCs into the VCA in 1962 – spawning the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association [henceforth VCGCA] – first-degree civilian medallists received the same membership welfare benefits as their VC counterparts. Indeed, Smyth's memoirs reveal the extent to which he became passionate about GC membership and welfare, seeking to place them on an equal social footing to VCs.[200] It was hence predictable that by November 1964, following years of silence on the topic, Smyth would begin lobbying the new Labour government for an extension of the VC annuity to his new GC members.

In a letter to the new Defence Secretary, Denis Healey, he wrote that 'it is very invidious that the VC members should receive the allowance and the GC members should not', before recalling that 'when the Queen held her Garden Party for members of this Association at Buckingham Palace in 1962, she particularly asked that the VCs and GCs should all be mixed up together and I presented them to her just as they came along'. He also explained that 'I have recently had brought to my notice several cases of hardship amongst George Cross holders and I think that the award I am suggesting would have the warm support of both sides of the House of Commons'.[201] Clearly, therefore, the admission of GCs into the VCGCA had a significant impact on Smyth's outlook, sparking a new awareness of GC poverty and its unacceptability in an organisation priding itself on equality.

Indeed, Smyth had written very similar letters to the PM and timetabled a Parliamentary question for 12 November 1964. Harold Wilson's initial Parliamentary response was, however, to repeat the previous government's policy with the position that, 'I do not think it would be appropriate to extend this [annuity] practice to awards for acts of gallantry in civilian life'. When Smyth subsequently pointed out that 'most of these very high awards were given

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[197] *LMA*, LMA/4517/A/06/061, Royal Humane Society Annual Report, 1961, pp. 18-19.
[198] *LMA*, LMA/4517/A/01/01/030, RHS Logbook, Minutes of Committee Meeting, 3 August 1976.
[199] *TNA*, AST 36/69, Report of the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust, 1969, p. 34.
[200] Smyth, p. 273.
[201] *TNA*, DEFE 24/1010, Smyth to Denis Healey, 4 November 1964.

for service during the [1939-45] war…[and that it was] given for gallantry…in the resistance movement, prisoner-of-war camps and many other spheres', Wilson completely changed tact. He responded that 'if he [Smyth] would be good enough to let me have details of any individual cases, I will be very glad to look into them. If the problem looks at all general, naturally we will be prepared to look at the whole situation again'.[202] Ultimately, Wilson had been prepared to reject the notion of a GC annuity until Smyth had stressed the militarised nature of the medal and, accordingly, its suitability for the annuities found in military culture.

Consequently, following further correspondence between Smyth and Wilson along the above lines, the latter was able to confirm on 19 January 1965 that:

> During the Recess I had another look at the arguments you put to me…There were some difficulties in the way of doing this but I feel that you have made out the case and that we ought not to appear to differentiate these two awards. If you would like to put down another Question to me about this I would be glad to announce that holders of the George Cross will be granted the same £100 tax free annuity.[203]

Wilson's sudden volte-face was announced to Parliament on 4 February. Unlike the matter of VC annuities a few years prior, therefore, the basic issue of extending annuities to GCs had been resolved quickly, within three months, solely through Smyth's personal correspondence with the new PM. Similar to the VC campaign, Smyth had largely succeeded as a result of placing poverty and neglected heroic collectivities at the centre of his arguments. As Wilson latter explained, upon looking at the significant evidence of GC hardship presented by Smyth, he had 'thought that the issue was conclusive' and made a swift decision.[204]

Despite the speed and lack of controversy surrounding the GC annuity extension of 1965, this concession represented a notable new precedent in government policy. Prior to this point, state annuities were officially regarded as simply the preserve of military culture. From 1965-onwards they could also be allocated to civilian awards. Crucially, however, they were justified on the basis that numerous GC holders had, in fact, been decorated for military service. This milestone had, therefore, not only witnessed a militarisation of a civilian award in terms of the extension of military-style annuities, but also in terms of the militarised justifications used for this extension.

However, the literal extent to which the government was prepared to extend these military-style annuities to the GC was yet to be fully defined. Along with their £100 annuity, VCs were entitled to an additional 6d per day on their service pension. As the government began to

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[202] Ibid, Extract from Hansard, House of Commons, 'George Cross', 12 November 1964.
[203] Ibid, Harold Wilson to Smyth, 19 January 1965.
[204] Ibid, Extract from Hansard, 'George Cross Annuity', 4 February 1965.

consider the practicalities of a GC annuity in May 1965, the issue of extending this benefit into the civilian sphere was raised. One Ministry of Pensions official noted that 'the preliminary MPNI view on this is that having given way on the Victoria Cross and having said the George Cross holders are to be given the similar tax free annuity it would be difficult to refuse the 6d'.[205] The issue was, however, complicated by the fact that whilst some medallists had been awarded GCs for military service and held a service pension, others had been awarded the GC for non-military gallantry and yet still held a service pension. Finally, some GC holders had no military credentials and no service pension. In essence, this issue presented a dilemma of how far into the civilian realm the government felt obliged to extend military annuities.

This, in turn, presented a challenge to the state's influence over annuities as civil servants and ministers attempted to define the limits of civilian welfarisation and feared the persistent campaigning of medal associations to extend benefits further. As one Treasury official remarked:

> It must be remembered that the holders of gallantry awards have their own 'unions'…to take care of their interests. If we now allow the additional 6d to Service holders of a civilian gallantry award, is it not reasonable to expect a similar payment to be demanded for civilian pensioners (public service pensioners, industrial disablement pensioners or even national insurance pensioners) who hold either a civilian or military award for gallantry. The cost of allowing 6d a day to holders of the George Cross is…minimal but if this type of payment is allowed to spread the cost could be considerable.[206]

Clearly this issue was considered a challenge to state control and, consequently, some policymakers felt the supplement extension should be resisted. By September 1965 it was, according to one official, still 'not clear at this stage' whether the supplement would be granted to all GC holders, despite months of debating. One civil servant felt that the 6d should be withheld from all GCs on the basis that the medal 'is a civilian award and the servicemen who hold it hold it in this capacity as 'citizens' rather than as Servicemen – thus it has nothing to do with this Service pension'.[207] Others wished to extend it to those specific GCs who had been decorated for *military* service, whilst excluding other ex-servicemen who had been decorated as civilians. Another official wrote that 'these peculiar 6ds are part of a splendid military tradition and can surely be confined to it'.[208] Ultimately, however, by December a

[205] *TNA*, T 213/1052, S.N. Chesterman to C.F. Richards, 19 May 1965.
[206] Ibid, Richards to Judd, 30 July 1965.
[207] Ibid, Judd to Mr Wilding, 2 August 1965.
[208] Ibid, Wilding to Judd, 4 August 1965.

middle ground was reached whereby, according to the Ministry of Pensions, 'our intention is to make payment of 6d a day as far as those persons who have been awarded the George Cross as civilians are concerned only if he or she is in receipt of a disability award under our instruments resulting from other rank service in HM Forces'.[209] The pension supplement had thus been granted to GCs with any linkage to the military, whilst excluding all others.

In summary, the government had been faced with the dilemma of how far they felt compelled to extend another monetary element of military culture into the civilian sphere. They had ultimately decided to provide the supplement only to military holders of the GC and civilian holders with a military record. This represented, in essence, a partial further militarisation of civilian gallantry. Crucially, despite once again feeling compelled to wrestle with the power of lobbying groups, the government had debated the extent of this welfarisation within its own ranks and ultimately dictated the limits of this process. In so doing, the state had once again retained significant influence over the conceptual direction of the welfarisation and militarisation of gallantry medals.

Whilst a new precedent had indeed been established in 1965, the chances of advancing welfarisation into the lower levels of civilian gallantry remained slim. This was especially so considering government unwillingness to consider similar expansion in the military realm. Nevertheless, welfarisation had now become a distinctive feature of first-degree gallantry and was, subsequently, to have a significant impact on other civilian awards regarded as holding this status. Unlike the straightforward military VC, the recognition of first-degree civilian gallantry had for many years been hampered by a poorly defined and overly complex series of awards of arguably equal status.

The gold or bronze AM and silver or bronze EM had been regarded for much of the twentieth-century as first-degree awards within popular and political culture, and by medallists themselves. However, as will be analysed in greater depth in the next chapter on 'standardisation', when the AM and EM were replaced by the GC in 1940 and quietly reclassified as posthumous second-degree medals in 1949, most of these medallists remained unaware of their demotion and still considered themselves first-degree medallists. Accordingly, when the GC was conceded an annuity in 1965 – the apparent symbol of first-degree gallantry status – and it was not extended to AMs and EMs, there was an outcry amongst these medallists at the apparent revelation of their new inferior standing. As a HO

[209] Ibid, N. Scott to Chesterman, 7 December 1965.

inquiry confirmed, 'The grant of this annuity to George Cross holders alone brought home to the Albert Medallists the lower status which their own awards had come to be accorded'.[210]

Initially, when the issue of extending the annuity to the AM and EM was raised by the Marquess of Ailsbury, a former army officer, in the House of Lords on 22 July 1965, the government spokesman quickly rejected the idea without explanation stating that 'it is not proposed to extend the arrangement to any other awards'.[211] By the following year Albert Medallists had established their own association under the chairmanship of Lt. General Sir John Cowley and were soon campaigning for recognition of their status. Yet, whilst the AM Association did succeed in obtaining the same annuity as the GC in November 1968 as, according to Wilson, 'a mark of exceptional recognition', this concession did not satisfy those medallists seeking further clarification of their status.[212]

To summarise, by 1968 significant annuity concessions had been made to first-degree GCs, AM and EMs: a welfarisation of civilian gallantry. At the same time, however, the limits of this extension into the civilian realm were apparent. No attempt was made by any politicians or public campaigners to press for further concessions to second or third-degree civilian medals, such as the GM or BEM, whilst the financial assistance offered by non-governmental organisations continued to decline throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Despite these limitations, however, this episode still marked an important ideological advance, revealing much about the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties value shift. It once again witnessed the extension of military culture into the civilian sphere: a 'militarisation' of gallantry. The campaign to extend annuities to the GC only gathered momentum once these civilian medallists were integrated into the VCA – a previously military organisation – thereby catching the attention of Smyth, the Tory ex-military chairman of the organisation. Indeed, it was Smyth's personal correspondence with Wilson and the degree to which he stressed the *military* elements of the GC that secured success. Moreover, the annuity extension itself represented militarisation due to the previous confinement of these funds to military culture. Beyond the GC, it can also be noted that the campaign to achieve an AM annuity was also led by an ex-soldier, Lt. General Cowley. In terms of the main contributors to this debate, the justifications utilised and the end results of their efforts, the extension of welfarisation into the civilian realm can be regarded as a militarised process.

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[210] *TNA,* T 333/142, Note by the Home Office, 'Status of the Albert and Edward Medals', [undated, 1970].
[211] 'The Albert Medal Holders', HoL Deb, 22 July 1965, vol 268 c990WA, *Historic Hansard* <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1965/jul/22/the-albert-medal-holders#S5LV0268P0_19650722_LWA_1> [accessed 19/03/17].
[212] *TNA,* T 333/142, Harold Wilson quoted in By Our Political Staff, '£100 a year for Albert medallist', *The Times,* 15 November 1968 [newspaper cutting].

Secondly, it is clear that the momentum behind reform and its limits rested largely at state level. Smyth – who had strong links to the state – had been responsible for the GC extension, whilst it was entirely the government that debated and eventually dictated the limits of this concession. Once again, therefore, this indicates how far the state retained significant influence over gallantry welfarisation throughout the Sixties. Furthermore, in relation to material culture, the extent to which AM and EM medallists became alienated from their awards and embittered by the granting of the GC annuity again indicates how far the state retained a dominant role in influencing the emotional relationship between medallist and medal beyond initial investiture.

Finally, this episode also reemphasises the importance of the heroic 'collectivity' as manifested through the medal association. Smyth had campaigned for the GC annuity extension on the basis that this newly-renamed VCGCA treated its members equally and deserved equal benefits. In his publicised final Parliamentary speech on the matter thanking Wilson he stressed that the government's decision would 'give great satisfaction to the 124 living holders of the George Cross…and to the 236 holders of the Victoria Cross', thus emphasising the common gratitude of a heroic family.[213] The fact that AM holders felt compelled to establish an AM Association in 1966 to campaign for similar benefits once again demonstrates the importance of this group dynamic – heroic 'collectivities' – as an effective vehicle through which to project heroic narratives of neglect and decline into the political and public spheres.

Following the debates over welfare extension that had characterised the early-mid 1960s, the final years of the decade and, more crucially, the 1970s would witness decisive government efforts to define the limits of welfarisation and its importance into the future. The result of this final value shift would be a somewhat contradictory two-way process. On the one hand, successive governments continued to acknowledge the importance of reformed annuities and other welfare within the public sphere and, subsequently, maintained many of these benefits. On the other hand, these governments refused to make any significant *further* advances in welfarisation and, indeed, somewhat retreated into the realms of 'tokenism' that had defined the early-1950s. Consequently, by the late-1970s, the welfarisation of gallantry remained in a curious state of limbo.

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[213] Smyth quoted in 'Annuity added to the George Cross', *The Times*, 5 February 1965, p. 8 in *The Times Digital Archive* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=&docId=CS135882821&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [accessed 12/10/17].

In various, relatively minor, fields it can be argued that welfarisation continued throughout this period. This was evident in relation to increasing government financial support of the biennial reunions of the VCGCA. In January 1960 Smyth had been eager to hold the government to Sandys' 1958 promise to financially assist these events and, despite initial civil service grumbling that annuity reform made this assistance unnecessary, resistance was soon dropped. As one official stated:

> We are already committed at Ministerial level to giving assistance…we feel, as Sir John Smyth must do, that there will still be individuals who could not afford the journey and stay in London without assistance.[214]

Subsequently, travel grants, accommodation and food were paid for by the government and set a precedent of assistance that survived over the next twenty years. The media once again took note of this assistance and used it as further evidence of ongoing VC poverty. For instance, the *Daily Mail* reported that VCs were 'all heroes – but some could not afford a beer', before referring to the 'snag' of attendance for fifty medallists: a 'question of finance. They could not afford the night out'.[215] Furthermore, the *News Daily* covered Smyth's message to reporters that 'by and large VCs are an impecunious lot' before also reporting the government welfare provisions.[216]

By 1968 funding had increased significantly. The government agreed to pay for three nights' accommodation and two relatives to join the VC or GC at Windsor Castle, whilst Smyth also managed to arrange a private RAF flight to collect Commonwealth medallists from Auckland, Sydney, Perth, Singapore, New Delhi, Bahrain and Cyprus. Indeed, Smyth described the RAF operation as the 'highlight of the whole Reunion', with one hundred medallists and relatives able to attend the Windsor party.[217] These arrangements thus represented a notable increase in government welfare commitment to these reunions, although this was somewhat blunted by declining association membership caused by deaths. Whilst arrangements for Commonwealth flights declined after 1974, as the falling overseas VCGCA membership made them impractical, most of this financial support from the British government remained available throughout the 1970s.

Further evidence of continued, if subtle, welfarisation and its clear importance within the public sphere can be also be found in government policy regarding medal annuities during the decimalisation of British currency in 1971. Civil servants became aware in January 1972 that

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[214] *TNA*, T 213/584, Forster to Rudd, 'Victoria Cross Association', 25 February 1960.
[215] *TNA*, T 333/1, Paul Tanfield, 'The Silent Ones meet Prince Philip', *Daily Mail*, 8 July 1960 [newspaper cutting].
[216] Ibid, 'VC heroes are dying out rapidly', *News Daily*, 1 July 1960 [newspaper cutting].
[217] *TNA*, WO 32/17828, Smyth to Healey, 23 July 1968.

this process had devalued annuities by a few pence and, despite its relatively minor impact, feared public recrimination if the issue remained unaddressed. As one official from the Civil Service Department explained:

> Our concern to ensure that the full amount of the annuity is paid, is that in the emotional atmosphere that will always surround this kind of payment, the popular press could always point to Government meanness in depriving annuitants of four new pence out of what they would regard as a not very generous recompense anyway.[218]

Subsequently, it was decided that, despite the considerably greater expense incurred by the government in making these adjustments as opposed to the four pence lost by medallists, the former would agree to over-pay to ensure they were not accused of cheating medallists. Once again, therefore, this case highlights how far the government and public sphere still took seriously the issue of medallist welfare during the 1970s.

Beyond these events, it is also evident that non-state organisations also continued to maintain their welfare responsibilities throughout this period. When, in April 1967, the VCGCA was informed that a VC had been advertised for sale in the *Portsmouth Evening News* and *Western Gazette*, the Association moved quickly to discourage such transactions and to emphasise the welfare options available to medallists. Smyth reportedly claimed that 'publicity can do a lot of good' in such cases and therefore decided to write to the said newspapers to promote alternative welfare options.[219] In a letter to the editors the Association explained that:

> Today, it is to be hoped that ex-service organisations and government welfare authorities can alleviate hardship to avoid such drastic measures by individual holders. This association draws the attention of these organisations to the plight of holders or their widows; we are in correspondence with nearly all surviving holders and most widows, and we keep extensive records.[220]

It is clear, therefore, that Smyth wished to publicise the continued welfare role of the VCGCA in the late-1960s, thus highlighting that first-degree medallists continued to possess meaningful assistance from the Association itself, as well as through government assistance, during this timeframe. Indeed, a letter from Smyth's successor as chairman, Admiral Geoffrey Place VC, to the Defence Secretary in January 1975 similarly underlines this continued

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[218] *TNA*, BA 12/6, R.D.H. Baker to Wheble, 'Payment of George Cross Annuities', 18 January 1972.
[219] London, *Imperial War Museum* [henceforth IWM], Documents.6710, Admiral B.C.G. Place to Smyth, 27 April 1967.
[220] Ibid, Draft letter from VCGCA to *Portsmouth Evening News* and *Western Gazette*, 'Sale of VCs', [undated], May 1967.

welfare role. He claimed that the 'Association is frequently in touch with local authorities on behalf of our members' before referring to:

> …the kindness, courtesy and tact that have been extended to us by the local authorities in Britain, and, in two cases, overseas. Housing and accommodation are among the more intractable problems of our age and in this we have increasingly sought guidance and help of local councils.[221]

Beyond basic monetary handouts the VCGCA therefore continued to be involved in monitoring medallist living conditions and collaborating with local authorities to maintain standards. Similar involvement was also found on a civilian basis from the CHF, despite its reduced remit. In 1970 the Controllers of the fund wrote to the Department of Health and Social Security urging them to standardise their procedures to ensure that their allowances were disregarded in supplementary benefit cases. As the CHF letter outlined, 'there appears to be no definite national guide to dealing with Trust allowances – in some cases they are disregarded, in others wholly or partly taken into account'.[222] In justifying their request, the Fund explained that individual grants, as well as allowances, could also be made to medallists 'for a variety of purposes – clothing, holidays, removal or refurnishing, property repairs, health or, for children, education'.[223] Clearly, despite its declining remit, the CHF not only offered money for a range of welfare issues, but also remained committed to making their grants reach as far as possible vis-à-vis the Welfare State.

However, despite the extent of this continual welfarisation, it is evident that the 1970s also witnessed a more important value shift – initiated by the Conservatives and built upon by Labour – attempting to define the final limits of this process, particularly relating to the extent and purpose of annuities. In doing so, they ultimately resolved the tokenism vs. welfarism debate which had been raging since 1959. In consequence, there was a policy shift back in favour of limited, if nevertheless increased, token annuities and greater reliance on the Welfare State to cater for impoverished medallists at all levels.

The retreat from monetary awards was most notably apparent in the realm of second and third-degree awards. Within a police context the Bow Street Fund had, during the mid-1960s, been made available to more senior ranks and problems had subsequently arisen when the dwindling funds appeared insufficient to reward gallantry, particularly for senior ranks. Consequently, the whole basis of these monetary awards was called into question. As a Deputy Commissioner noted in May 1972:

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[221] *TNA*, DEFE 24/1010, Place to Roy Mason, 16 January 1975.
[222] *TNA*, AST 69/36, David P. Brown to Department of Health and Social Security, 30 November 1970.
[223] Ibid.

> If the capital behind the Bow Street Fund is as small as stated…the sum available for individuals will, if inflation continues, become too small one day to offer to constables without loss of dignity, let alone chief superintendents. It has long since ceased to be the practice for Commissioners to grant monetary awards by way of internal commendation and I would hope the practice might cease eventually in Bow Street cases. My own view is that it would be better if some form of memento were presented that could be associated with the history of this famous Court.[224]

However, much like the EM Fund, the Bow Street Fund Trust Deed prevented any other expenditure outside standard handouts and, accordingly, placed a major obstacle in front of reform. As the above commentator concluded, 'in these circumstances the procedure for junior ranks is best left alone', however he recommended that senior ranks should be re-excluded from the fund, thus allowing the Fund's thinly spread assets to diminish at a slower rate.[225] The police monetary award dilemma was therefore left in an indeterminate state in which the Fund continued on a minimised basis. It does, nevertheless, demonstrate that monetary benefits attached to civilian awards were coming into question by the early-mid 1970s.

This tendency to move away from monetary awards manifested itself on a much wider basis in relation to second and third-degree military awards. In May 1971 the MoD, under the new Tory government of Edward Heath, ordered the first inquiry 'with a view to standardizing conditions of awards and either aligning or abolishing the associated gratuity'.[226] According to this report the inquiry was ordered – in the context of gallantry awards – because of the many inequalities and ambiguities existing amongst second and third-degree monetary grants, many of which had been publicly criticised throughout the 1960s. Furthermore, these uneven allocations also extended into the realm of 'service' awards, with the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal [LS&GCM] gratuity awarded at different rates throughout the Armed Forces and the Meritorious Service Medal [MSM] annuity unavailable in the Navy. Consequently, the inquiry considered monetary benefits to both gallantry and service awards.

When the subsequent series of inquiries finally concluded in February 1974, the MoD made some radical recommendations. Whilst suggesting that VC and GC annuities should be retained as special cases, it moved to 'abolish benefits payable to holders of the other gallantry awards with reserved rights for Servicemen gazetted for such awards before 1 April 73'.[227] They also suggested abolishing the monetary awards attached to the LS&GCM and MSM

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[224] *TNA,* MEPO 31/24, Deputy Commissioner to Commissioner, 16 May 1972.
[225] Ibid, Deputy Commissioner to Commissioner, 10 August 1972.
[226] *TNA,* T 333/166, Memorandum, 'Conditions of award of Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and Meritorious Service Medal, and Annuities, Gratuities and Additions to Pension Associated with the Award of Medals', February 1974.
[227] Ibid.

service awards. However, the abolition of these monetary sums was soon postponed by Principal Personnel Officer's sensitive to deteriorating broader 'pay and pension fields particularly as regards ratings and other ranks' within the services, fearing that the abolition of annuities would simply add to a general mood of discontentment within the military.[228] Indeed, it appears that this issue of broader service conditions continued to stall abolition well after 1974. As a letter from Air Vice Marshal B.G.T. Stanbridge to the Civil Service Department noted in August 1977:

> …there is [still] dissatisfaction in the Services over the existing scales of pay and allowances and the PPO's therefore feel it would be wrong for them at this stage to propose any worsening of the Serviceman's position by the abandonment of such fringe benefits as the annuities and gratuities under consideration. Although the value of these is small and has also been eroded by inflation, they feel that discontinuance would be considered a mean and petty additional erosion of benefits and would be difficult to justify to the senior non-commissioned ranks at this particular moment when pay is a sensitive and emotive issue.[229]

The MoD therefore decided on 'temporarily withdrawing the whole package of proposals' until a more favourable moment.[230] Curiously, when this moment did indeed arrive in July 1980, gallantry awards were left out of renewed government considerations altogether. Whilst a fresh MoD report was able to order that 'monetary benefits associated with the award of the…[LS&GCM and MSM] should be abolished with effect from 1 April 1981' – a decision confirmed in Parliamentary debates of 17 March – middle-ranking gallantry awards were conspicuously missing.[231]

The reason for this volte-face remains unclear. A brief burst of renewed Parliamentary interest in the injustices surrounding MM gratuities in early-1979 may have confirmed to the new Thatcher government the continued political interest in second and third-degree gallantry awards which may, in turn, have persuaded them to back away from abolishing gallantry medal funds. Furthermore, the fact that the entire annuity review process had been entwined with the controversy surrounding service pay possibly had a bearing on the outcome. With general improvements to these wages occurring in the late-1970s, the abolition of *service*

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[228] Ibid.
[229] *TNA,* T 333/166, Air Vice Marshal B.G.T. Stanbridge to R.L. Sharp, Civil Service Department, 23 August 1977.
[230] Ibid.
[231] *TNA,* T 333/188, Memorandum by J.L.S., 'Committee on the grant of honours, decorations and medal: Proposed abolition of the annuities and gratuities associated with the award of certain military efficiency and long service medals', 25 July 1980. Extract from Hansard, 'Medals (Monetary Benefits)', 17 March 1981.

award benefits could at least be justified. On the other hand, abolition of monetary benefits for *gallantry* awards could arguably not be legitimised through similar explanations.

Nevertheless, the early-1970s – particularly the Heath years – had been decisive in questioning the purpose and future of monetary benefits attached to medals. Whilst these benefits did indeed survive the decade, it was evident that the Conservative government had no further interest in transforming them into meaningful benefits. Indeed, the Labour government which came to power in March 1974 appeared willing to extend this Conservative policy as the issue of raising first-degree annuities again resurfaced later in the year. This issue of transforming first-degree annuities into ever more relevant sources of welfare for medallists had intermittently re-emerged since the landmark VC annuity increase of 1959. For instance, in March 1962, Trevor Skeet, Tory MP for Willesden East and former New Zealand soldier, requested that the Chancellor raise the annuity to £500 'in recognition of the gratitude of the State for special services rendered'. Unsurprisingly, considering the recent increase, the Treasury responded that 'no amendment to the arrangements is now contemplated…These VC annuities have never been intended as pensions.'[232]

It was, however, the mid-1970s where this issue of first-degree annuity increases was discussed extensively. Once again, the government faced fresh calls to increase VC and GC annuities to keep them in line with other broader pension increases. When the HO and Civil Service Department first considered the issue in 1972, however, they appeared to revert back to the policy of tokenism espoused in the 1950s. As one report noted, 'both Departments considered that it could not be regarded as a source of income nor be related to any cost of living index and, for these reasons, saw no justification for a review of the amount'.[233] The issue was, however, considered more extensively when the VCGCA itself raised the issue in late-1974. On 19 December, Admiral Place wrote to the Defence Secretary informing him that:

> The Committee of this Association has been asked by some members to consider seeking an [annuity] increase on the grounds of the reduced purchasing power of the annuity today, and that virtually all other Government pensions are kept under review and increased at intervals.

Place went on to claim that 'Opinion is divided among committee members, and indeed others of our company on whether seeking an increase is justified or not and some held strong convictions one way or the other'. Indeed, he noted that the Association was split into 'those

[232] *TNA*, T 333/1, Daily Mail Parliamentary Correspondent, 'VC men will not get £500', *Daily Mail*, 23 March 1962 [newspaper cutting].
[233] *TNA*, DEFE 24/1010, Background Notes by J.N.A. Armitage-Smith, 15 July 1975.

who take the view that financial reward is not appropriate for the actions for which these decorations are awarded' and those who 'feel that the present tax-free annuity has so much less purchasing power than it had in 1961 (or 1965) that it results in an undue reduction in the standard of living of members, the considerable majority of whom are elderly and of modest means'.[234]

Following the increasing trend over the previous fifteen years of investing the material culture of medals with monetary as well as symbolic value, there were now VCGCA members determined to uphold the traditional meaning invested in these objects reflecting the quiet gratitude of the nation, whilst others wished to extend the monetary concessions even further. Indeed, the MoD, once again rejecting the idea of an increase, appeared keen to exploit this division as a means of justification. As an internal MoD minute noted, 'it would be misleading to suggest that there was a prospect of any increase…and, in any event, the Association is divided on the justification for making any such claim'.[235]

Despite this rejection, the notion of an annuity increase received an increasing amount of public and Parliamentary support by June 1975. One constituent, writing to his MP, considered the government's 'niggardly, cheese paring treatment to be quite despicable', whilst another claimed that 'the recipients of these decorations which are given for supreme gallantry deserve better'.[236] Government officials also became concerned by the hostility of media coverage. There was particular irritation when it was discovered that *The Times* 'may have had access' to Mason's rejection letter to the VCGCA. Indeed, the government took further note when the said newspaper, adopting the neglected heroic collectivity narrative, claimed that an 'association member said that many holders of the awards were on the breadline, to judge from the number of advertisements for the sale of their medals'.[237]

In Parliament, Andrew Faulds and Eldon Griffiths, both Tory MPs and former-RAF, continued to raise the topic of an annuity increase. However, the Labour government's consistent response, inherited from its Tory predecessor's 1972 review, was to decisively maintain the 'token' purpose of the annuity and to reemphasise the importance of the Welfare State. As the MoD wrote to Griffiths:

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[234] Ibid, Place to Defence Secretary, 'The Victoria Cross and George Cross Annuity', 19 December 1974.
[235] Ibid, Private Under-Secretary(Army) to Assistant Private Secretary to Secretary of State, 'VC and GC Annuities', 8 January 1975.
[236] Ibid, Derek D. Jeremy to M. Marshall MP, 27 June 1975. John P. Glenny to R. Brown MP, 17 July 1975.
[237] Ibid, J.N.A. Armitage-Smith, to Assistant-Private Secretary to Under-Secretary (Army), 15 July 1975. 'No increase for medal winners', *The Times*, 26 June 1975 [newspaper cutting].

> Those in genuine financial difficulties should seek help – as do other members of the community – from the services and benefits available from the Department of Health and Social Security. We have come to the conclusion that it would be quite impossible to set a cash value on gallantry and to fix the annuity at a corresponding sum. We therefore have no plans for proposing any change to the present award.[238]

Ultimately, with the declining purchasing power of the annuity and the reaffirmed emphasis on the Welfare State, government policy and attitudes arguably retreated from the advances made since 1959. The annuity debates of 1974-75 essentially marked the final limits of the welfarisation process as successive Conservative and Labour governments refused to contemplate any further concessions. Even the return of a Tory government – arguably more sympathetic to such increases – in 1979 did nothing to adjust policy. Margaret Thatcher confirmed in a written Parliamentary answer of 26 October that she had 'no proposals to alter the present arrangements'.[239]

The early-1970s had, therefore, witnessed a second decisive value shift within government policy. Whilst it is indeed true that various welfare outlets continued to expand both within and outside the state, this period ultimately witnessed the limits of welfarisation imposed and, indeed, the retreat of this process to some extent. This transformation was largely initiated under the Heath government and continued throughout successive Labour governments. The ultimate result of this shift was a reaffirmation of medallist dependency on the Welfare State and the corresponding decline of annuities and gratuities into insignificance.

In summary, the interaction between British concepts of gallantry and 'welfarisation' centred around two distinct transitions. The late-1950s proved a decisive landmark in that politicians and the wider public sphere 'rediscovered' the hardship of VC medallists and, consequently, their outdated annuities were injected with greater purchasing power and meaning. At the same time, however, the limits of this process were still evident in that the Macmillan government kept the VC rooted within the Welfare State and refused to extend these benefits further into the awards system. The legacy of 1959 was, however, that a range of other medallist groups – both military and civilian – attempted to build upon this landmark, with some annuity extensions granted to the GC, AM and EM, combined with failure in the realm of middle-ranking awards. As the momentum behind these campaigns began to disappear, however, a second decisive milestone developed in the early-mid 1970s as the Heath government attempted to abolish annuities and gratuities at lower levels of the system and

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[238] Ibid, Under-Secretary (Army) to Mr Eldon Griffiths MP, [undated] 1975.
[239] 'Victoria Cross (Pension)', HC Deb 26 October 1979 vol 972 c311W, *Hansard 1803-2005* <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1979/oct/26/victoria-cross-pension#S5CV0972P0_19791026_CWA_4> [accessed 16/10/17].

successive Labour governments expanded upon this policy to prevent further concessions to first-degree awards. Consequently, by 1979 a cross-party consensus had re-emerged endorsing a return to the policies of the early-1950s: overwhelming reliance on the Welfare State and a willingness to see annuities disappear into irrelevance.

The process of 'welfarisation' reveals much about the nature, extent and timing of the Sixties value shift. First and foremost, it underlines the centrality of a conservative community to reforming gallantry in a progressive direction. Historians have often identified the British 'rediscovery of poverty' as being a product of liberal left-wing ideology linked with the advancement of a greater public social conscience from the mid-1960s onwards. The welfarisation of medals, on the other hand, demonstrates how far those on the right-wing were willing invest in this ideology in a context of particular resonance to them: gallantry. It was the Conservative governments of Eden, Macmillan and Heath that largely pioneered the two main transitions of welfarisation: the decision to increase the purchasing power of annuities in 1959 and to subsequently reduce their significance between 1971-74. Whilst Labour were indeed also responsible for some important advances, such as the GC annuity extension, they were in fact simply building upon debates already initiated by the Tories. Furthermore, those involved in pushing for reform from within public or Parliamentary spheres were often also of a conservative hue. Ex-military Conservative MPs, such as Turton, Smyth, Cordeaux, Skeet, Griffiths, Faulds and McKibbon were invariably at the forefront of campaigns to increasing monetary entitlements, whilst the right-leaning media such as the *Daily Telegraph, The Times* and the *Daily Express* also provided a forum for debate and coverage. Despite the progressive forces often behind the 'rediscovery of poverty', therefore, the coinciding welfarisation of gallantry was spearheaded from within the conservative public sphere, constructively engaging with the Sixties value shift in a direction which suited them.

With regards to the timing of this shift, clearly there were two principle moments of catalyst closely linked to the tenures of several Tory governments. The rediscovery of medallist poverty between 1956-59 corroborates with historians such as Sandbrook, Marwick, Hall, Beckett and Russel who stress the importance of the late-1950s in laying the cornerstones of the Sixties transition. Furthermore, the retreat from welfarisation in the early-mid 1970s further supports Sandbrook, Beckett, Marwick and Savage in stressing the cultural importance of years beyond 1969. In essence, therefore, welfarisation serves to downplay the importance of the 1960s to evolving concepts of gallantry and instead points to the surrounding decades.

In accounting for the timing of this transition, it is important to stress the accumulative impact of a range of factors that facilitated lobbyists and policymakers in pushing reform. Marwick outlined a 'convergence' model for measuring the timing of change based on the collective

impact of 'major cultural forces', 'events', 'human agencies', 'convergences and contingencies' in a particular timeframe.[240] Such a 'convergence' explains the timing of welfarisation and its retreat. In terms of coincidental 'events', the rise and fall of welfarisation mirrored the ageing process of medallists themselves. As First and, to some extent, Second World War medallists reached old age in the late-1950s and 1960s, welfarisation became a significant issue. This was true of veterans' care as a whole. Julie Anderson has noted how the 1950s was a crucial time in which pressure groups, politicians and wider society became increasingly concerned with the care of ageing, particularly disabled, ex-servicemen.[241] Furthermore, as noted previously, this period also witnessed a wider 'rediscovery of poverty' as manifested in a new wave of government legislation and charitable activity. Clearly, similar influences also characterised the expansion of welfarisation with the emphasis on poverty and old age.

Correspondingly, with an increasing number of the more numerous 1914-18 medallists passing away during successive decades, this might explain the eventual government effort to draw a line under these monetary traditions in future and to refocus assistance on the Welfare State. This fall in medallist numbers is evident in that there were 426 living VCs in 1952, but this had declined to 118 in 1975, whilst the number of middle-ranking military medallists similarly fell in the same period. Richardson has also noted how many 1914-18 medals came onto the market at low prices during the 1960s and 1970s partly due to the number of deaths from amongst this generation.[242] With this decline, it is perhaps unsurprising that the government wished to set new precedents for the future. Regarding the importance of human agency in Marwick's 'convergence' theory, Heath's expansion of the Welfare State in the early-1970s 'from higher disability benefits to higher child allowances' and increasing NHS spending 'at a faster rate...than ever happened under Labour', this further corresponds with the determination to move away from welfarisation of medals. [243]

Furthermore, the convergence of 'major cultural forces' is also important in explaining the timing and extent of change. Following enhanced public and political awareness of VC hardship during the Centenary of 1956, the Tory government was willing to concede increased VC annuities, perhaps exhibiting an openness to engage with popular preferences. At the same time, however, it remained wary of embarking on a slippery slope of indulging a vast array of other medallist grievances. This was particularly evident during the public clamour for civilian and middle-ranking military welfarisation from 1960-onwards. Hence, when in the subsequent

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[240] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 23.
[241] Julie Anderson, *War, Disability and Rehabilitation in Britain: 'Soul of a Nation'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 187-89.
[242] Richardson, 'Medals, Memory and Meaning', p. 113.
[243] Sandbrook, *State of Emergency*, p. 71.

1960s various governments were obliged to increasingly address medallist groups intent on advancing monetary entitlements, there became a growing government concern of losing control of welfarisation. Indeed, the fact that the Heath government set about attempting to reduce dependency on these benefits so soon after Labour had reluctantly granted annuities to the AM and EM, combined with the unpopular AM and EM conversion to GC in 1971, perhaps confirms that this move was intended to reaffirm state influence in this area. To some extent, therefore, the timing and direction of welfarisation mirrors a growing government determination to retain control over concepts of gallantry following initial concessions to cultural forces 'from below'. Whilst the efforts of the conservative public sphere were, therefore, crucial to the direction of welfarisation, the important milestones of transition can be accounted for by the 'convergence' of a range of human and circumstantial factors in both the late-1950s and early-1970s.

Closely linked with the nature of the value shift, it is also evident that welfarisation constituted a 'militarised' process. Whilst the 1950s government dependency on the general Welfare State apparatus in aiding medallists can be regarded as symbolising a civilianisation of military welfare, the partial shift back in the direction of medal annuities – part of military culture – from the late-1950s onwards can be accordingly regarded as a militarisation of VC welfare. The fact that Tory politicians and the media often justified reform based on military service reinforces this point. Furthermore, the extension of annuities to the civilian GC, AM and EM constituted a further militarisation of the civilian sphere. The fact that the GC annuity extension of 1965 was justified almost entirely based on the militarised nature of this medal underlines the importance of military culture to this transition. In conceptual terms, therefore, the welfarisation of gallantry can also be regarded as a militarisation of gallantry.

The same conclusion can also be reached regarding personnel and institutions involved in lobbying and policymaking. The key pressure groups advocating reform were largely ex-servicemen organisations such as the VCA, MML, BLESMA, British Legion and RAF Association, whilst the civilian AM Association chose a soldier, Lt. General Cowley, as its chairman. Additionally, those MPs at the forefront of Parliamentary pressure were also of prominent military backgrounds, such as Smyth, Cordeaux and McKibbon. In terms of its main advocates, therefore, welfarisation can be regarded as a militarised process. If militarism is regarded as a veneration of military values, combined with the disproportionate influence of the military over policymaking, clearly welfarisation was 'militarised' and its extension into the civilian sphere constituted 'militarisation'.

The nature of welfarisation also reveals much about state-societal interaction during the value shift. Harper claims that the state opened the Honours System to cultural forces 'from below'

for the first time during the Sixties. It could be accordingly argued that, considering the level of media support for welfarisation, this tendency was also found amongst gallantry awards. However, it is also clear that those campaigners who had a decisive bearing on policymaking – particularly Smyth and other MPs – had close ties to successive governments and, therefore, momentum did not entirely derive from forces 'from below'. Furthermore, the state appeared to maintain close conceptual direction over welfarisation throughout the period, debating and defining the limits of change internally and, regarding the numerous refusals made, often felt able to make unpopular decisions despite the weight of public opinion. Although the welfarisation process did, therefore, constitute a close and dynamic interaction between state and society, this process nevertheless emphasises how far the state continued to retain a dominant influence over the concepts of gallantry manifested in the Honours System. Welfarisation was, nevertheless, a politicised issue. As manifested during decimalisation and annuity inquiries of the 1970s, successive governments would maintain these troublesome concessions under fear of major public backlash were they to be abolished entirely. The extent to which government popularity was a consideration within welfarisation debates therefore confirms Mead and Smith's notion of 'politicised' gallantry after 1945.

Welfarisation also reveals much about hero culture in postwar Britain. The process had been primarily campaigned for by medal associations and it was with these organisations that the media and politicians most often interacted. This ensured that any commentary about medallists in public statements or headlines tended to treat them as homogenous communities or, 'heroic collectivities' with common characteristics, views and needs. With the media focus fixed firmly on characteristics of ageing and poverty, it can be argued that hero culture was accordingly dominated by an according sense of decline: of a declinist nation failing to care for declining heroes. This supports the findings of those historians who have detected similar declinist influences in fictional representations of heroes from the 1950s to 1970s. For instance, the theme of increasingly vulnerable heroic masculinity has been highlighted in many of the films of these decades. Welfarisation, in turn, proves that similar vulnerability and decline was made evident in non-fictional contemporary affairs.

Finally, the welfarisation of gallantry also has implications for understanding the material culture of medals. Prior to the mid-1950s the simple and rather plain designs of British gallantry awards had reflected the quiet and unindulgent gratitude of the nation towards the medallist. Welfarisation notably disrupted elements of this culture. An increasing number of medallists from different spheres of the system came to invest in these objects a monetary, as well as emotional, significance throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst Spijkerman had noted the initial importance of state investitures in injecting emotional meaning into decorations, Richardson and Joy have emphasised how meaning is largely defined and revised by the

medallist and their society beyond the initial point of investiture.[244] The welfarisation process, however, points to the continued prominence of the state in dictating the meaning invested in medals beyond the beginning of their lifespan. Indeed, it shows that meaning could be renegotiated and contested in an ongoing interaction between state and society and, therefore, the stake of the former within material culture should be further acknowledged. The next chapter will build on many of these ideas in exploring various broader political and cultural dilemmas facing the awards system in this timeframe.

[244] Spijkerman, p. 13. Richardson, 'Medals, Memory and Meaning', pp. 112-13. Joy, pp. 136-8.

Chapter 2

The 'Standardisation' of Gallantry

I

In late 1966 Air Marshall S.W.R. Hughes wrote to the MoD seeking a retrospective award of a silver oak leaf emblem for his Commander of the British Empire [CBE] insignia to demonstrate that he had won it for 'gallantry' as opposed to distinguished 'service'. His request had been provoked by the highly controversial award of MBEs to 'The Beatles' in October 1965. This notorious event had resulted in a significant number of medallists returning their decorations in protest and had sparked anger from the right-wing press that the Labour government no longer respected the virtue of heroism or the Honours System.[245] That Hughes reflected these feelings is evident in how he claimed, following the MoD's refusal to grant his request, to be 'hopping mad' and 'rather embittered about it, especially now that these sorts of awards are given to the 'Beatles''.[246] Whilst Hughes' response, and those of others like him, reflected a feeling of insult at the perceived disrespect of the Wilson government, it also echoed dissatisfaction with something more abstract and long-standing: anger at the ill-defined and ambiguous concepts of gallantry enshrined within the awards system. This ambiguity had meant, according to some, that British society now failed to distinguish between awards for gallantry and those to pop stars.

Anger at The Beatles MBEs was just one in a long line of grievances levelled against the British awards system for failing to sufficiently define and standardise concepts of gallantry. By the mid-twentieth century the culture which had characterised the system since at least the mid-nineteenth century – one which favoured evolutionary change and pragmatic expansion of medal categories rather than a coherent and standard blueprint – meant that, in the words of one government report, it was riddled with 'anomalies and paradoxes'.[247] These included the allocation of awards according to social and professional rank or gender, as opposed to merit alone, and also issuing medals for a confusing mix of both 'gallantry' *and* 'service'. However, from the mid-1950s onwards there appeared to be a sustained effort on the part of both the state and sections of society to clarify, update and ultimately 'standardise' the inconsistent and contested concepts of gallantry within the system. This chapter charts these

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[245] Dominic Sandbrook, *The Great British Dream Factory: The Strange History of Our National Imagination* (London: Penguin, 2016), pp. 57-59.
[246] *TNA*, AIR 2/14644, Air Marshal S.W.R. Hughes to Air Marshal Sir Donald Evans, 20 October 1966.
[247] *TNA*, DEFE 13/788, Minute to the Naval, Military and Air Secretaries, 'Gallantry Awards', 13 July 1965.

numerous efforts across the following twenty-five years to further understand the mechanics of the system and the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties value shift.

'Standardisation' is a broad technical concept, like much of its related administrative terminology, that is often applied to the realms of industrial productivity, business management, technological innovation and government administrative efficiency. According to Jacques Repussard's frequently cited definition used in the context of technological development, standardisation can be regarded as a 'voluntary and methodical harmonisation...undertaken jointly by the interests concerned for the benefit of the community as a whole'.[248] Viewed in a broader context, standardisation may also encompass a range of sub-processes that allow this 'methodical harmonisation' to take place, including rationalisation, simplification, meritocratisation and clarification.

The process of 'standardisation' can itself also be viewed as part of a more widespread phenomenon regarded by numerous British historians as a defining element of Sixties social, cultural, political and economic life: the drive towards 'modernisation'. This concept is often associated with a general disillusionment – beginning decisively in the mid-1950s – with the outdated social, political and industrial practises of the recent past and a determination to save Britain from decline through striving for a brighter future defined by meritocracy, streamlined efficiency, vigour and creative initiative. Historians do, however, remain divided about where the momentum to 'modernise' came from and how far it permeated into general society. Matthew Grant and Charles Loft have, for instance, explored Sixties concepts of industrial and infrastructural modernisation primarily as initiatives 'from above' and Grant, in particular, remains sceptical that this process ever received widespread public interest.[249] On the other hand, Sandbrook has observed how 'modernisation' expanded to encompass vast swathes of cultural and political life by the mid-1960s, including public attitudes towards infrastructure, transport, architecture, consumerism and popular culture.[250] A significant number of sociologists advocating the 'secularization thesis' have also pointed to the prominence of 'modernisation' within British society as responsible for the decline of Christianity in this period.[251]

Despite widespread examination of modernisation in various areas of Sixties life, the extent to which these impulses also affected elements of traditional state culture, such as the Honours

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[248] Jacques Repussard (1995), quoted in Kai Jacobs, *Standardisation Process in IT: Impact, Problems and Benefits of User Participation* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 2000), p. 12.
[249] Matthew Grant, 'Historians, the Penguin Specials and the 'State of the Nation' Literature, 1958-64', *Contemporary British History*, 17 (2003), 29-54 (p. 40). Charles Loft, *Government, the Railways and the Modernization of Britain: Beaching's Last Trains* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 38.
[250] Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p. 167.
[251] A review of this debate is provided by McCleod, p. 16.

System, and who provided the momentum behind reform, are only beginning to be explored. Harper has examined how far modern meritocracy and democratic public preferences influenced service honours under the Wilson government, thus accounting for the rising number of celebrities gaining entry into the system.[252] Furthermore, Fox has explored how reforms to service honours within Commonwealth countries also reflected modernising impulses, especially in line with changes to national identity and constitutional politics.[253] How far similar impulses also encroached into the realm of gallantry awards, however, remains unexplored.

The degree to which the process of 'standardisation', applied to any field, encouraged consistency, efficiency and homogeneity, makes it an integral strand of modernisation culture. How far it was applied to the awards system thus offers an effective method of assessing how concepts of gallantry interacted with this particular area of the Sixties value shift. For the sake of this chapter 'standardisation' will be regarded as the degree to which disparate elements of the awards system were harmonised and homogenised through the systematic application of two core standardised principles. The first, 'clarificatory' standardisation, refers to how far awards were redefined to reflect more consistent and clear-cut notions of gallantry, as opposed to the disparate and ambiguous concepts haphazardly accumulated over centuries into the system. The second transformation – 'meritocratic' standardisation – refers to how far the entire system was standardised to recognise gallantry solely based on merit, as opposed to any other social or gender considerations.

By 1945 the awards system was a bloated, incoherent and inconsistent mess. As medal after medal was added to the system a structured hierarchy of four degrees had gradually taken shape by the mid-twentieth century. However, the accumulative evolutionary nature of the system's construction, as opposed to implementing a single blueprint design, ensured that it was exposed to eternally shifting and sometimes contradictory notions of gallantry over a long period. This led to patchy inconsistencies.

This was particularly true of access and entitlement to awards. Within the military realm, whilst the first-degree VC and fourth-degree MID were egalitarian in principle, the second and third-degree military DFC, DFM, AFC, AFM, CGM and DCM excluded women, the deceased and were allocated according to rank. In the civilian realm, access was even more inconsistent. Older first and second-degree civil awards the AM, EM and KPMG had often been used to reward gallantry in specific professions; namely, for sailors, industrial workers and policemen. However, the more modern GM and GC rewarded a much broader conception

[252] Harper, 'Orders of Merit', p. 244.
[253] Fox, 'Grand Dames and Gentle Helpmeets', p. 379.

of civilian gallantry – the consequence of more widespread civilian involvement in the Second World War – and quickly overshadowed the former medals in terms of usage. Moreover, the third-degree Order of the British Empire allocated its membership, unlike the rest of the civilian sphere, entirely according to social and professional rank. The extent to which some awards were issued according to merit and others according to social and professional status was, therefore, a particularly prominent form of inconsistency which served to confuse concepts of gallantry.

There was further incoherence relating to the conceptual messages emanating out of the hierarchies or 'degrees' of gallantry within the system. In the civilian realm, the older AM and EM had used classifications of 'gold', 'silver' and 'bronze' and the ambiguous rules surrounding these rankings meant that many recipients and commentators considered all three levels to fall within the first-degree category of the system as a whole. However, the newer GC and GM fell decisively into the first and second-degree categorisations without any additional hierarchies attached. The fact that these older and newer generations of awards had continued to exist concurrently for many decades meant that, by the mid-twentieth century, there were medal holders with two competing conceptions of civilian gallantry. Moreover, within both the civil and military realms, various gallantry awards – particularly the OBE, MID, QCBC, QCVSA and DSO – could be distributed for an ill-defined mixture of service, leadership and gallantry. Accordingly, if gallantry had been the main justification for a decoration, there was no way of indicating this. Indeed, the multi-purpose usage of the Order of the British Empire meant that a recipient could be awarded an MBE for gallantry, only for this to be abolished without trace upon their appointment to CBE for good service later in life. Furthermore, unless the professional ranking of the recipient was elevated over time through promotion, they could not be awarded twice for gallantry within the Order. Instead, they were either upgraded to the GM or downgraded to the QCBC regardless of how far this failed to reflect their achievement.

By 1945, therefore, the British gallantry awards system was an overly complex, bloated and inconsistent muddle; the product of clumsy evolution rather than deliberate design. The period from the 1950s through to the late-1970s would, however, be a time in which successive governments and lobby groups attempted to simplify, clarify and rationalise state notions of gallantry through a series of standardisation initiatives.

By the mid-1950s there was an increasing sense of dissatisfaction at state level with the perceived ambiguity of concepts of gallantry as recognised within particular sections of the system. This discontentment was never more evident than in relation to the British Empire awards. In April 1957 Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and Grand Master of the Order of the

British Empire, had asked the HD Committee to consider, according to one official, 'recommending the institution of a method of marking, by the description of the award, and on the insignia, future awards in the Order of the British Empire or of the British Empire Medal, when granted for gallantry'.[254] A similar proposal had been advanced by the Treasury in 1942 in order to separate out and clarify notions of 'service' and 'gallantry' within the Order, but this had been rejected. However, the subsequent increased dependency on the Order in the intervening wartime and postwar years, combined with a new climate favourable to standardisation, ensured that the idea gained considerable cross-departmental support in 1957. Brigadier de la Bere of the Central Chancery emphasised that:

> …it would be a very good plan to differentiate in future between gallantry and non-gallantry awards…so that it would be possible to distinguish between an award which had been given to a man who had just missed a George Medal and an award to a man who distinguished himself as an athlete or in some similar manner.[255]

The WO, FO, CRO and CO were similarly enthusiastic and, subsequently, the idea of distinguishing gallantry through the addition of a silver oak leaf emblem, attached to the Order's regalia, soon gained support. Additionally, it was decided to 'make OBE citations in the [London] Gazette as [classified] 'For Gallantry' where they are thus far unlabelled' to further distinguish them from service awards.[256]

From early in the policymaking process it was clear that, despite the non-operational 'civilian' categorisation of the Order and the theoretical centrality of the civilian-led HD Committee to proceedings, it was primarily the *military* that seized upon reform and debated its implications most rigorously. Indeed, one member of the Air Ministry underlined the higher stake of the military in ensuring that gallantry within the Order was separated and clarified, noting that 'it is the Service man who regularly wears the insignia or ribbons denoting awards. Civilians rarely do so.'[257] It was consequently the military who largely dictated the extent and direction of reform. For instance, on the issue of retrospectively issuing the oak leaf to previous members of the Order, it was the Air Ministry which pointed out that there 'will be cases where citations reveal an element of gallantry in a period of good service which taken together justify an award. It will be impossible to separate the two elements'.[258] Indeed, according to

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[254] *TNA*, AIR 2/14644, Report from Knox, 'Order of the British Empire – Awards for Gallantry', 12 April 1957.
[255] Ibid, Report from Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals – Order of the British Empire Awards for Gallantry – Comments on HD 5704', 4 June 1957. Letter from Brigadier De La Bere, 18 April 1957 [extract].
[256] Ibid, F.A. Jones to Air Secretary, 17 September 1957.
[257] Ibid, Minute from F.A. Jones, 'Symbol for gallantry in the Order of the British Empire', 1 July 1957.
[258] Ibid, Jones to Air Secretary, 26 April 1957.

Knox, it was notably due to the military that the current ambiguity preventing retrospection existed. Whilst he acknowledged that civilian awards shared some blame, he noted with a hint of totality that 'all military operational awards of OBE, MBE and BEM would apparently require re-examination and re-assessment'.[259] Not only did the military therefore constitute the main opposition to retrospection, it was also significantly due to military policies that the ambiguity occurred in the first place.

Furthermore, it was also the military branches that largely debated how far 'gallantry' could interact with 'service' within the Order in future. It was the WO who suggested that, in the hypothetical case of a recipient being awarded an OBE for 'gallantry' and later an CBE for 'service', 'ribbons of both gallantry and non-gallantry awards could be worn', rather than allowing the latter award to swallow up the former, as in past practice. Furthermore, they demanded that no recipient should hold two concurrent ranks within the Order for two separate acts of gallantry.[260] Both of these stipulations were subsequently adopted by the HD Committee. The only ministry to continually oppose the proposals was the Air Ministry 'who would prefer that no changes were made' on grounds that the chances of recipients doubling up on awards within the Order, and hence requiring two ribbons, were slim.[261] By September 1957, therefore, a significant step forward had been made to clarify the more ambiguous elements of gallantry within the system by distinguishing it from 'service' within the British Empire range. The degree to which this synchronised gallantry within the Order with more senior awards meant that this concept was concurrently being 'standardised'.

The decision not to make the Order's new classifications retrospective would go on to have a notable impact on the material culture surrounding the Order. As raised previously, the failure to distinguish between 'service' and 'gallantry' in pre-1957 awards contributed to the conservative backlash against the Beatles MBEs in 1965-66. When Air Marshal Hughes requested a retrospective oak leaf to distinguish his CBE, he claimed that 'I know there are quite a few others who feel the same way'.[262] The Air Secretary responded that Hughes' request had received sympathy and support from himself and the Military Secretary, but they had 'failed to alter the original decision [regarding retrospection]' as the MoD predicted extremely high application rates from medallists. He concluded stating that he was 'very sorry; if I had an OBE for Gallantry I should be hopping mad'.[263] Clearly, therefore, the decision not to make the clarification of gallantry and service retrospective had a significant impact on the

[259] Ibid, Knox, 'Order of the British Empire', 12 April 1957.
[260] Ibid, Letter from Sir E. Playfair, 6 June 1957, quoted in Minute from Knox, 'Comments on HD 5704', 4 June 1957.
[261] Ibid, Knox, 'Comments on HD 5704', 4 June 1957.
[262] Ibid, Hughes to Evans, 20 October 1966.
[263] Ibid, Evans to Hughes, 22 September 1966.

emotional relationship between Order members and their decorations. With no means of proving their gallantry, many felt that their awards would be equated with the Beatles in future. Not only does this demonstrate the legacy of the standardisation process upon the material culture of medals, it also highlights the continued centrality of the state in defining and renegotiating the emotional relationship between medallists and their decorations long after investiture.

The degree to which the military spearheaded the clarificatory standardisation of gallantry within the system during the late-1950s is also apparent in how far they extended the principles, applied to the Order in 1957, into fourth-degree awards. As with the OBE, the insignia of MIDs failed to effectively clarify whether a recipient had been decorated for gallantry or service and hence the WO proposed, according to an Air Ministry report, that they 'should, as from a future date, be classified either 'for gallantry' or 'for distinguished services', the former category to be distinguished by the wearing of a silver oak leaf emblem instead of the present bronze oak leaf emblem'.[264] With this proposal for a silver oak leaf marking gallantry and bronze leaf for service accepted in June 1959, the Air Ministry also highlighted the potential applicability of this arrangement for the non-operational or civilian fourth-degree QCBC and QCVSA. As one letter to the Air Secretary stated, 'there would be a good case for using the silver emblem instead of the bronze one used at present to denote the award of the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct…and the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air (which may be given either for gallantry or good service in the air) when given for gallantry'.[265] Consequently, the clarificatory standardisation produced within third-degree civilian gallantry was extended to both fourth-degree military and civilian gallantry on the initiative of military policymakers.[266]

Collectively, therefore, the late-1950s had been important in clarifying and, accordingly, standardising gallantry within various problematic areas of both the civil and military spheres. In so doing, this process revealed much about the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties value-shift. Whilst a culture of using awards to recognise a combination of service and gallantry had previously existed at numerous levels, various gallantry awards were now clearly segregated in order to coexist more effectively with the rest of the system. These reforms – particularly those to the British Empire range – had received support from across the Macmillan government, not only once again underlining the prominence of the Tories in embracing modernisation, but also underlining the importance of the state to promoting

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[264] *TNA,* AIR 2/17426, F.A. Lark to Air Secretary, 23 June 1959.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ryder nevertheless notes how a dual role of 'leadership' and 'gallantry' continued to exist amongst operational DSOs and MCs into the 1990s. Brigadier Stuart Ryder, 'The evolution of the distinguished service order', *The RUSI Journal*, 142 (1997), 36-40 (p. 38).

change. In this instance, it was the state which seized the initiative in undertaking reform without significant pressure from society, and it was the state which outlined the boundaries of these reforms when pressure later built up from within society for retrospective action. Clarificatory standardisation therefore underlines the importance of the state in guiding concepts of gallantry and how far conceptual reform could emerge 'from above'.

Within the dynamics of state influence, it is also clear that the military played a decisive role despite often dealing with theoretically 'civilian' or 'non-operational' awards such as the OBE and QCBC. The extent of military control and how far their actions were driven by military priorities suggests that this was a 'militarised' process witnessing a further 'militarisation' of civilian awards. Finally, this process of clarification also had an important impact upon the material culture surrounding ambiguous awards. The failure to endorse retrospection led to later disillusionment amongst many decorated in the British Empire range as the Order became increasingly associated with celebrity. This demonstrates the continued role of the state in redefining the emotional relationship between medallists and decorations beyond the point of investiture.

Alongside clarificatory standardisation, the late-1950s would also witness a significant effort to make the awards system more inclusive by attempting to include a woman in the highest echelons of military gallantry. This move, aimed at encouraging the allocation of awards according to merit alone at a time in which other social and gender considerations still played a significant role in areas of the system, was yet further evidence of a standardising impulse, this time emerging from within society.

By 1945 gallant acts by women within various fields had been recognised both inside and outside the state awards system for a significant period. Women had been decorated by non-governmental societies such as the RHS since the early-nineteenth century and the first female EMs and AMs had been recommended in 1910 and 1911 respectively. As Beryl Escott has noted, however, the significant contribution of women to two world wars led to a sharp increase in their recognition.[267] In particular, a considerable number of women were awarded the Medal of the Order of the British Empire for service on the Home Front and overseas between 1914-18, whilst a high number of GMs, MBEs, BEMs and QCBCs were awarded to women for service in the more numerous service roles available between 1939-45.[268] However, apart from a number of MMs awarded to female nurses in action on the frontlines during the Great War, the majority of female awards were non-operational or 'civilian' in

[267] Squadron Leader Beryl E. Escott, *Twentieth Century Women of Courage* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999), pp. 1-2.
[268] Escott, pp. 242-248.

nature. This reflected the limited opportunities given to women to show valour 'in the face of the enemy' and, accordingly, the roles considered 'appropriate' for women in wartime.[269]

Both Goode and Frey alluded to a 'system of social control' to which awards systems often contribute, reinforcing social hierarchies and dictating, according to the state, who can be considered heroic and in what ways.[270] It is evident that this 'social control' played a significant part in women's access to the British awards system. Indeed, Fox has suggested that service honours within the Commonwealth were used throughout the twentieth century to promote conventional gender or racial norms and stereotypes.[271] The same can be said of gallantry awards to an extent. Most non-operational awards provided to women reflected a preference by state and society to keep women away from combat roles. This was, perhaps, most evident in the awarding of civilian or non-operational medals to women serving in Special Operations Executive [SOE] during the Second World War who risked their lives in enemy-occupied territory. In the late-1950s, however, an attempt was made to symbolically challenge this degree of social control and, ultimately, provide women with the recognition due to them within the operational, military sphere of awards. In essence, this constituted an attempt to 'meritocratise' gallantry and, accordingly, to standardise the accessibility of medals to women across the awards system as a whole.

In March 1956, as Britain prepared to celebrate the VC Centenary, Dame Irene Ward, Tory MP for Tynemouth, wrote to Prime Minister Eden observing that 'this highest of all Orders can be awarded to women as well as men – though in the nature of things there are likely to be very few women who can qualify'.[272] The VC was indeed something of a rarity amongst operational awards in that it did unequivocally permit female awards and yet none had been bestowed. Furthermore, many second and third-degree operational medals discriminated against women in their royal warrants. Dame Irene Ward, therefore, wished to symbolically rectify the absence of women from the operational sphere through securing the first female VC. As she told the PM, 'I certainly think in the eyes of the world the awarding of a VC to a woman would have great support and having regard to the centenary year and the fact that we have a Queen would be particularly appropriate'.[273]

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[269] The interaction between this straightjacketing and heroic recognition in the nineteenth century has been recently explored in Christiane Hadamitzky and Barbara Korte, 'Everyday Heroism for the Victorian Industrial Classes, *The British Workman* and *The British Workwoman*, 1855-1880', in Wendt, *Extraordinary Ordinariness*, pp. 52-78 (p. 71).
[270] Goode, p. vii. Frey, 'Giving and receiving awards', p. 20.
[271] Fox, 'Grand Dames and Gentle Helpmeets', p. 389. Fox, 'Ornamentalism, Race and Empire', p. 499.
[272] *TNA*, T 350/13, Dame Irene Ward to Eden, 6 March 1956.
[273] Ibid, Ward to Eden, 'V.C. for Violette Szabo', 16 May 1956.

Ward subsequently set her sights on Violette Szabo as the ideal candidate. Szabo, an SOE agent during the Second World War, had been awarded a posthumous GC in 1946 for her gallantry in undercover operations in Occupied France followed by capture, interrogation and execution in Ravensbruck Concentration Camp in February 1945. Indeed, she was one of several female SOE agents to receive similar recognition. In Szabo's case, however, historian R.J. Minney had discovered in early-1956 that she had been captured following a shootout with regular German infantry and, subsequently, Ward believed that this constituted 'gallantry in the face of the enemy' and justification for a VC. At the heart of Ward's campaign, therefore, lay a strong desire for meritocracy: that Szabo should be judged according to her gallantry alone, rather than according to her status, role in operations or gender.

Alongside meritocracy, however, Ward appeared to also be driven by a desire to preserve public respect for female heroism at a time in which she felt it increasingly under threat. Elizabeth K. Vigurs has revealed how the 1950s witnessed a significant struggle for the historical memory and reputation of female SOE agents and this was particularly true of Odette Hallowes GC.[274] In the mid-late 1950s rumours circulated regarding Hallowes' conduct on operations and her personal relationship with her fellow agent, Peter Churchill. Ward believed that these allegations potentially compromised the appropriateness of Hallowes' award – the first ever female GC – and she was determined to uphold the reputation of female gallantry through the award of a VC to Szabo. As she wrote to the PM:

> I do not know if you are aware that part of the sordid story is now coming out in Europe and that there has been some reference to it in the British Press...Without myself commenting in anyway, there is of course considerable feeling among those who know about Odette and, as I say, I think that if it is at all possible we owe it to this history of the future that somehow or other the emphasis should be shifted without the unpleasant becoming public property. I feel very strongly myself on this matter.[275]

Ward therefore hoped to increase public respect for female heroism through obtaining the highest operational military medal for Szabo. She clearly believed that the VC held greater public reverence than the civilian GC: as she wrote to the Eden government, 'though the official view is that the GC ranks as high as the VC, I really don't think that this is the view taken by the general public'.[276] The extent to which her priority was Szabo's supposed 'elevation' to the military sphere suggests how far her objectives and wider society's perceived preferences were 'militarised'. Furthermore, how far Ward believed herself to be acting in the

[274] Elizabeth Kate Vigurs, 'The women agents of the Special Operations Executive F section – wartime realities and post war representations' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Leeds, 2011), pp. 1-2.
[275] *TNA*, T 350/13, Ward to Eden, 6 March 1956.
[276] Ibid, Ward to Bishop, 23 July 1956.

interests of female heroes as a whole once again suggests the importance of 'collectivities' within British postwar hero culture, despite the concentration on one particular figure. She operated very much with the 'collective' in mind when she later wrote that:

> What really concerns me is, that it should have been considered appropriate by somebody to recommend to the Monarch that the first woman [Hallowes] to be given the George Cross (with all the emotional symbolism attached to that) should have had an undoubted black mark against her name, and whoever made that recommendation, I shall never forgive.[277]

Ward's efforts received notable support from the right-wing media. The *Daily Sketch* quoted Minney who claimed to have 'uncovered enough evidence to win her [Szabo] the VC twice over', before describing the alleged standoff with German infantry.[278] Another newspaper also wrote an extensive endorsement under the title 'Give the VC to these women' and once again referred to the issue of VC transfer as of major significance to the collective reputation of female heroes:

> In the profound virtues which lift mankind above the level of mere creatures, there is no difference between men and women…Women have their full share of the final courage that nothing can break. It would be good if the long roster of VCs could contain the name of at least one woman, not only in recognition of the gallantry of one, but of the gallantry of countless others whose deeds and sufferings have ennobled the human race.[279]

Clearly, there was notable support from within the public sphere for meritocratic standardisation within the system through the inclusion of women in a previously male-exclusive military realm.

The Tory government, however, remained opposed to Ward's ideas and, through extensive correspondence, rejected her requests for a number of diverse reasons. First of all, it was explained by Knox that, whilst the government considered the issue with 'all possible sympathy', the GC was of equal status to the VC and hence a retrospective revision would lessen the prestige of the former medal.[280] Furthermore, it was explained that there was no

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[277] *TNA,* T 350/11, Ward to Macmillan, 8 June 1959.
[278] *TNA*, T 350/13, 'They saw Violette fight 400 Nazis', *Daily Sketch*, 1 April 1956 [newspaper cutting].
[279] Ibid, Candidus, 'Give the VC to these women', [newspaper unknown], 9 April 1956 [newspaper cutting].
[280] Ibid, Knox to Sir E. Bishop, 9 May 1956.

mechanism for revising awards made a decade previously and the WO thought a transfer could set 'an undesirable precedent' in this context.[281]

When these responses failed to satisfy Ward and she emphasised the new *military* evidence supporting Szabo's award, Knox countered that 'in considering recommendations for the VC during the war of 1939-45, it was a War Office requirement that the action should have been a sustained act of gallantry in combat with the enemy. It was also the practice that personnel engaged in clandestine or resistance work in enemy-occupied territory should not be considered.'[282] In essence, therefore, the government argued that SOE operations could not be regarded as 'military' work and that Szabo's short shootout did not constitute 'sustained' gallantry. Finally, following Ward's continued persistence, the government chose to cite clause 8 of the VC warrant requiring that conclusive proof be checked soon after the gallant act and accompanied by statements from three independent witnesses. Ward was informed that it would 'be impossible now to check on the details, since inevitably the recollections of witnesses if contact could be made with them would be coloured by what they have heard or read since the event'.[283] As a result of this final rejection, Ward dropped her campaign concluding that 'I can quite see that I can make no further progress. What of course it amounts to is that those who served in S.O.E. has no opportunity of winning the V.C., either man or woman.'[284]

It was not, however, long before Ward returned to her campaign. With allegations against Hallowes resurfacing in the French media in mid-1959, Ward reportedly suggested:

> …that the Honours Committee should in effect be instructed to consider whether the George Cross was rightly awarded to Odette. She seems to think that, if the Committee found that the current gossip was substantiated, Odette could be asked to return the decoration without comment; and that, alternatively, if the Committee found the gossip to be ill-founded, an official protest could be made to the French Government.[285]

However, as it was increasingly suspected within Whitehall that Ward was more concerned with perceived sexual improprieties, rather than Hallowes' heroism, they once again refused to countenance her demands. One government official wrote that Ward had 'come out into the open and admits that what really bothers her is that the George Cross should have been awarded to a woman who had a lover. This confirms my view that her representations afford

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[281] *TNA*, WO 32/20708, Hugh Ellis-Rees to Bishop, 10 March 1956.
[282] Ibid, Knox to J.A. Bridges, 8 June 1956.
[283] Ibid, Bishop to Ward, 5 July 1956.
[284] Ibid, Ward to Bishop, 23 July 1956.
[285] *TNA*, T 350/11, Brook to Mr Bligh, 1 June 1959.

no ground for reviewing the award, even if it were practicable to do so.'[286] Despite this rebuff, Ward continued to cling on the idea of 'preserving' and advancing public respect for female heroism through Szabo's 'upgrade' to VC, spurred on by the accusations against Hallowes.

In March 1963, an article in the *Daily Telegraph* detailing the gallant exploits of SOE women served to prompt Ward and her supporters to restart the campaign. Colonel J.W. Naylor, Szabo's SOE commander, wrote to the said newspaper emphasising that he would 'always maintain that she was not given a correct award'.[287] Another letter of support to the *Daily Telegraph* added, 'It does seem a pity that, the VC having been opened to women serving in the Forces by Royal Warrant of May 22, 1920, the one woman who did qualify under Rule 3 of that Warrant, and who certainly deserved the award, should have been deprived of this honour.'[288] Ward again lobbied the PM in July 1963 and he, in turn, consulted Brigadier Smyth of the VCGCA for advice. Smyth reportedly claimed that Szabo 'was not given the George Cross for shooting a German, but for gallantry as a secret agent and in the concentration camp'.[289] This interpretation of the award – that Szabo performed 'civil' as opposed to 'military' gallantry – was maintained by the government in defence of their refusal for the remainder of the debate.

By late-1963, having received a diverse range of rather pragmatic rejections, Ward and her supporters increasingly concluded that government policy was predicated on conscious or subconscious gender discrimination. Ward wrote in December that 'there are many people who believe that the VC cannot be awarded to women' and asked to 'see someone [in Whitehall] with whom I can now talk in an unbiased way'.[290] According to the *Sunday Times,* Colonel Naylor also accused Smyth, who had publicly defended the government's stance, of 'wanting to keep the VC a 'men-only' decoration'.[291] Nevertheless, the Tory government remained adamantly opposed to Szabo's transfer and this intransigence led Ward to abandon her campaign for the final time in 1964.

How far the government's decision was indeed predicated on sexism is open to interpretation. On the one hand, Ward provided little further evidence during her campaigns to support Szabo's transfer to a VC. The shootout discovered by Minney was probably not, by itself, of VC standard and the government's reluctance to degrade the GC was understandable. Viewed

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[286] Ibid, Brook to Bligh, 10 June 1959.
[287] *TNA*, T 350/13, Colonel J.W. Naylor, 'G.C. Heroine', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 May 1963 [newspaper cutting].
[288] Ibid, Wm. M. Lummis, 'G.C. Heroine', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 1963 [newspaper cutting].
[289] *TNA*, WO 32/20708, Office note by Mr. Holland, 4 December 1963.
[290] Ibid, Ward to Kirk, 10 December 1963. Ward to [?], 14 November 1963.
[291] Ibid, Stephen Fay, 'New battle over making GC woman a VC', *The Sunday Times*, 7 March 1965 [newspaper cutting].

from a broader perspective, however, Szabo's gender may have played some subconscious role in policymaking. One interdepartmental note observed that 'the V.C. (and the priesthood) is the only stronghold not yet conquered by feminism' and another, responding to Ward's reasoning, instructed that VCs were not distributed 'as a tribute to feminism'.[292] Furthermore, there is little documented evidence to suggest that an extensive reassessment of Szabo's case was ever seriously considered, whilst the government rejected Ward's request with a diverse and flexible range of reasons which occasionally seemed more like quick deterrence than intellectual debate.

Collectively, the campaign to acquire a VC for Violet Szabo from 1956-1964 is important in numerous ways. First and foremost, despite its ultimate failure and degree of government resistance, it reveals the extent and strength of public feeling that military awards should be based solely on meritocratic principles and, accordingly, standardised to include women within their top echelons. Whilst the campaign centred almost entirely around Szabo and there was no targeting of women more broadly, it is evident that her potential 'elevation' to the VC was regarded as symbolic recognition of a wider female contribution to military gallantry. The extent to which this campaign attempted to increase the female presence within the realm of military gallantry at a time in which they were better represented in other categories of the system, therefore, suggests the prominence of meritocratic standardisation in this period.

This process also demonstrates how far debates surrounding gallantry occurred within a distinctly 'conservative' sphere of debate. The Szabo campaign was led by a prominent Tory MP, Dame Irene Ward, supported most consistently by a range of right-wing newspapers including the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Sketch*, and occurring entirely through interaction with the Conservative government, to whom Ward appeared very close. Indeed, the fact that she refused to continue her campaign after Labour assumed power in 1964 is testament to how far this debate centred around a conservative grouping. At the same time, despite the clear importance of extensive interaction between state and society in lobbyist correspondence and the media, the process also reconfirms how far the state retained crucial influence over the concepts of gallantry practised in the awards system. Despite Ward's persistence and her notable public support, the government refused to grant her request. Indeed, the Tory government unwillingness to contemplate revising Szabo's award may be interpreted as proof of the potential complicity of gallantry awards within Goode and Frey's notion of 'social control'. The fact that government attitudes appeared to straightjacket Szabo's gallantry into

[292] Ibid, N.B. to Knox, 7 June 1956. *TNA*, WO 32/20708, Brigadier W.E. Underhill to Deputy Military Secretary, 25 May 1956.

distinctly 'civilianised', non-operational categories reinforces the idea of a system promoting idealised notions of female heroism, despite the evident martial conditions of her bravery.

Finally, this campaign again demonstrates the prevalence of 'militarised' priorities and personnel over events. In terms of priorities, Ward believed in the greater prestige attached to military over civilian awards within society and, accordingly, wished to 'elevate' female heroism through further admission into this realm. The nature of these ambitions suggests militarised priorities and preferences. With regards to personnel, it is also evident that military or ex-military figures significantly contributed to both sides of the debate: Colonel Naylor advocating Szabo's transfer whilst Brigadier Smyth and the WO defended the 'civilian' nature of Szabo's gallantry. Once again, therefore, a move towards standardisation through meritocracy had been characterised by military ideas and personnel. The fact that the government upheld the judgement of Smyth after 1963 suggests how far military advice dictated the direction and extent of reform.

Standardising awards on the sole basis of gallantry as opposed to any other social considerations appeared not just to have affected the context of gender by the mid-1960s. A similar tendency also appeared to influence discussions surrounding potential awards to individuals with a criminal record. In February 1966, the Chief Constable of the Manchester Police recommended juvenile Robert Patrick Burns for a QCBC after he helped rescue three men who had fallen through ice at Harpurhey reservoir. Unfortunately, Burns had a 'bad criminal record' and had recently served time in a detention centre. The Chief Constable did 'not, however, feel that this in any way detracts from his conduct on this occasion'.[293] This recommendation subsequently triggered a debate within the HO as to whether a criminal background should influence an award recommendation. One HO official, examining previous cases involving criminal records, claimed that 'misbehaviour or bad character is not sufficient in itself to preclude an award for gallantry and each case must be judged on its own merits'. Yet, on the other hand, the official noted that regarding a previous older criminal 'no undue weight should be attached to the possibility of such an award affecting a reformation of character'. Ultimately, his report concluded that 'this young delinquent's history of six convictions in under three years forms the pattern of his future life and it would not be proper to recommend an award'.[294]

Despite this discouragement the case continued to be considered throughout 1966, perhaps indicating a deliberate effort to overlook past crimes in favour of gallantry. Yet, decision

[293] *TNA*, HO 286/106, Letter from Chief Constable of Manchester City Police, 'Award for Gallantry', 18 February 1966.
[294] Ibid, Minute from B.J. Goulden, 10 March 1966.

makers were unable to shake off the increasingly clear list of Burns' offenses. One HO official considered the Queen's awkward position in being associated with such a case, stating that:

> …it might prove highly embarrassing to The Queen if any publicity given to such an award, revealed that the recipient was being held in a detention centre. We could perhaps ensure that reference to the Treasury should not be made until after Burns is released – if it is decided that he should be recommended at all.[295]

Combined with these dilemmas and emerging news of fresh criminal convictions against Burns since his gallantry, a newly-appointed Chief Constable felt unable to support his predecessor's recommendations and by September the case was dropped.

Ultimately, this episode is important in two opposing ways. Firstly, it demonstrates that, despite ultimate failure, meritocratic impulses increasingly featured within considerations of awards. Despite early knowledge of Burns' crimes by March 1966, the award recommendation was not formally cancelled until September, whilst the Chief Constable's rejection letter acknowledged that Burn's criminal activities 'do not detract from his conduct on the occasion in this respect of which the recommendation has been made'.[296] What can be demonstrated, therefore, is a growing consideration of meritocratic gallantry, even if this ultimately remained unfulfilled. Secondly, the negative outcome of this debate once again suggests the complicity of gallantry awards within a 'system of social control'. The fact that policymakers worried more about appearing to reward a criminal than the legitimacy of the medal on its own merits indicates how far the system still prioritised recognition of the 'right' kind of heroes according to the preferences of decisionmakers.

Roughly coinciding with these meritocracy debates, a much more extensive and government-centric push towards the meritocratic standardisation of gallantry was also developing across the awards system, particularly relating to discrimination according to social or professional rank. Whilst policymakers considering the OBE reform of 1957 had recognised the disadvantages of categorising awards on a social basis, little attempt had been made to change this arrangement. By the mid-1960s, however, there appeared to be more appetite for reform. In May 1964 the Chief of the Defence Staff, Lord Mountbatten, asked the Defence Services Secretary [DSS] to reconsider the rationale behind the allocation of awards within the whole awards system and the Order in particular. By November, despite the transition to a Labour government the previous month, the MoD had concluded its review and was writing to the HD Committee claiming that, regarding the Order, 'the present arrangements are open to some

[295] Ibid, B. Benny to W. Kocher, 14 March 1966.
[296] Ibid, Letter from the Chief Constable of the Manchester City Police, 'Robert Patrick Burns', 31 August 1966.

objection' and that recognition 'depending on the rank of the person concerned, seems invidious and illogical'.[297] This outdated practice, combined with a whole raft of other problems surrounding the Order, proved enough to persuade the MoD of the desirability of establishing a new gallantry medal within the OBE range removed completely from social categorisation.

Although Sir Robert Knox condemned the social segregation of the Order, he also felt that the broader culture of standardisation currently undertaken within the MoD should discourage the creation of yet another medal. He wrote in December that 'the formation of the Ministry of Defence…will have presented an opportunity for the reduction of the many varieties of award for the armed forces'.[298] Furthermore, he pointed to the recent reforms of 1957 as justification for slowing any further and potentially hasty adjustments. Despite this rejection, the MoD stated in March 1965 their determination to remove gallantry entirely from the British Empire range at a future date and sought the views of Prince Philip, Grand Master of the Order, on potential reforms. Whilst the Duke agreed with the MoD decision he, like Knox, discouraged any attempt to establish yet another award. Instead, according to one report, 'he preferred to see a reorganization of the whole field of gallantry awards so that as far as possible, all gallantry awards should be common to all three Services and the same for all ranks with the possible exceptions of the Distinguished Service Order'.[299] In essence, the Duke wished to be more ambitious and remove all service-specific and rank-specific medals in favour of standardised awards on the sole basis of merit. The MoD subsequently agreed to review all awards on this basis in July 1965, even considering the merging of military and civilian medals. The degree to which initial concerns regarding the OBE had been, according to one report, 'overlaid' by broader considerations relating to the system as a whole – particularly in relation to operational awards – would have a decisive impact upon the scope of inquiries and feasibility of reform.[300]

Regarding the Order, there was consensus with the Duke's view that abolition should not be followed by a new third-degree medal in the context of the new streamlined administrative culture. One minute to the Naval, Air and Military Secretaries reiterated Knox's view, emphasising that 'there is already criticism of the large number of existing medals. Formation of the new MoD should present an opportunity to reduce, rather than increase the varieties of award…the awards field has other anomalies and paradoxes which have not called for

[297] *TNA,* T 343/66, General Sir Rodney Moore to Knox, 18 November 1964.
[298] Ibid, Memorandum from Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Order of the British Empire, Gallantry Awards', 10 December 1964.
[299] *TNA,* DEFE 13/788, R.H.H. to Army Board, 'Replacement of Gallantry Awards in the Order of the British Empire', 9 March 1967.
[300] Ibid, Draft Minute of the DSS, 'Review of Service Gallantry Awards', 16 November 1966.

extravagant cures.'[301] This view was further supported by the DSS who stated that, 'I wonder that the Gallantry aspect should be removed from the Empire awards but I do not support the contribution of any new awards to gallantry to replace it.'[302] As a result of this resistance to instituting further awards, support for abolishing OBE gallantry declined through lack of alternative solutions. As the Air Secretary wrote to the DSS, 'if it is agreed that the Empire awards should be taken out of the gallantry range, it is difficult to see how the gap could be filled'.[303]

In the broader context of abolishing rank-specific operational medals in favour of a single award for both officer and ORs, there was similar resistance to standardisation. An initial report concluded that whilst:

> This could, of course, 'streamline' the whole range of awards…and reduce the total number considerably…it is traditional to maintain a distinction between officers and men in this field, I doubt whether such an idea would be generally acceptable throughout the services even though one of the reasons for wishing to exclude the Empire awards from the gallantry range is to avoid differentiating between ranks for similar acts of gallantry.[304]

A similar proposal to abolish military and civilian categories in favour of a single series of medals was equally rejected. The DSS reported that, regarding 'the "fusion" of operational and non operational gallantry awards…This would reduce the value of the former to an unacceptable degree and public opinion, I believe, would be such as to make this virtually impossible.'[305] Alongside fears that military awards would be devalued if merged with the civilian realm, it was also noted that such proposals would produce major difficulties in COIN campaigns whereby civilian non-operational awards were initially used before a transition to military medals. As the Deputy MS wrote, 'I think the main stumbling block is the…[COIN] situation where there is no operational scale'.[306] Whilst there was an ongoing MoD consensus that recognising gallantry according to social rank was outdated and hence OBE gallantry should be abolished, this clearly did not extend to professional military rank or to the streamlining of civil and military awards. The sheer number of hurdles thrown up by the complexity of the system quickly sapped the energy surrounding OBE reform.

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[301] Ibid, Minute to the Naval, Military and Air Secretaries, 'Gallantry Awards', 13 July 1965.
[302] Ibid, Brief of DSS, 'Gallantry Awards', 13 July 1965.
[303] Ibid, Air Secretary to DSS, 'Gallantry Awards', 12 August 1965.
[304] Ibid.
[305] *TNA*, DEFE 13/788, Brief of Defence Services Secretary, 13 July 1965.
[306] Ibid, DMS 1 to MS, 'Gallantry Awards', 6 September 1965.

The issue of rank-specific allocations within either the Order or the system as a whole remained unaddressed until complaints resurfaced in March 1966. General Sir Ivan de la Bere wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* complaining that there was an 'excessive variety of gallantry awards for rewarding junior officers and other ranks of the Armed Services' and that 'these various [operational] awards should be coordinated so that instead of the present 11 honours there would be five, comprising one award for all ranks'.[307] This letter was later supported by another from the Chairman of the Heraldry Society praising de la Bere's 'well-reasoned argument'.[308] Subsequently, in late-1966 the Naval Secretary wrote a new report proposing another fundamental review of the system. The paper once again argued for 'rationalisation' through the abolition of 'single-Service gallantry awards' to 'be replaced by a common scale of awards, applicable to all three Services' and, also, that 'the main criterion for making an award be the quality of the deed rather than the rank of the recipient'.[309]

The Army Board and RAF, however, continued to resist. According to the DSS, the latter service wished 'to avoid changing the value of existing medals, especially where a change would involve downgrading', whilst another commentator similarly claimed that 'I still think it is a great shame to change the "character" of the DSM/MM/AFM'.[310] Whilst there remained stronger support for reforming the OBE, Harold Wilson's outright and unexpected rejection of such a move when answering Parliamentary questions in February 1967 persuaded the MoD to abandon any further attempt at reform. Indeed, the momentum behind the campaign to revise all operational awards was also fading. As one report concluded:

> When they [Chiefs of Staff] came more fully to consider the trouble that would be stirred up if they attempted to abolish existing awards for gallantry, and came to realise that the problem was a good deal less simple than they had supposed, they lost enthusiasm for their original ideas and agreed, with a sign of relief, to drop the whole subject.[311]

The failure of this second attempt at reform incurred the displeasure of Prince Philip, whose response was apparently 'couched in somewhat acid terms'.[312] The Duke clearly believed that the climate of standardisation, instigated by the Tories and continued under Labour, provided ideal conditions for undertaking reform. He wrote that 'so many other things are being

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[307] Ibid, Letter from Sir Ivan de la Bere to the Editor, 'Too Many Medals? Service Awards Should be Co-ordinated', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 March 1966, [newspaper cutting].
[308] Ibid, Letter from John Bedells, Chairman, Heraldry Society, 'Reducing Service Medals: A Question of Parity', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 1966, [newspaper cutting].
[309] Ibid, Draft Minute by the DSS 'Review of Service Gallantry Awards', 16 November 1966.
[310] Ibid, Minutes of the DSS, 'Replacement of Gallantry Awards in the Order of the British Empire', 9 December 1966. I.G.G. to A.M.S., 23 December 1966.
[311] Ibid, Milner-Barry to Sir Laurence Helsby, 11 April 1967.
[312] Ibid.

reorganised in the Services at the moment that this would seem an excellent opportunity to do something about these awards'.[313]

Again, however, continual discontentment pushed the need for reform. In June 1967 two paratroopers, Captain John Ridgway and Sergeant Chay Blyth, were rewarded for gallantry in rowing the Atlantic over ninety-two days in an open dory. Due to their difference in rank, Ridgway received an OBE and Blyth a BEM despite their equal display of gallantry. This apparent segregation led to questions raised in Parliament. Ben Whitaker MP, writing to the MoD, described the situation as 'ludicrous and indefensible' before asking why 'can't we introduce a bit of common sense as well as democracy into the British Army?'[314]

Accordingly, in January 1968 a third investigation into rank-specific awards was undertaken by the MoD. Although there appeared to be an awareness that the pattern of previous reform attempts – initiated for the OBE and then encompassing the entire system – had proved a repeated stumbling block, the enquiry soon fell back into the same mistakes. Consequently, there appeared to be considerable resistance to streamlining military awards in relation to rank and service. One report observed that 'the present award structure was well understood by the Services and such anomalies as existed did not cause any resentment among officers and men…There was a danger too of devaluation and cheapening existing decorations [and]…there had always been a special relationship between officers and men in the Services based on leadership, and this had to be preserved.'[315] These views were reflected across the MoD. Whilst there was sympathy with the Ridgway/Blyth case, there was a feeling that this should not influence the overall system.

Once again, therefore, the third attempt at reform failed due to encompassing too many awards. By October 1968 the Ministry agreed that it would 'not pursue this matter unless and until Parliamentary pressure develops'.[316] Admiral Bonham-Carter, private secretary to Prince Philip, appeared to recognise the central flaw to previous investigations when he subsequently wrote to the Army Minister in April 1969. He claimed that attempting to reform operational awards based on rank, service and campaign 'would be too fundamental a change'.[317] He did, however, continue to pursue the possibility of reforming the OBE following the Ridgway-Blyth case and it would be reform along these limited lines that would dominate debate into the 1970s.

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[313] *TNA*, DEFE 13/788, Prince Philip to Field Marshal Sir Richard Hull, 3 May 1967.
[314] Ibid, Ben Whitaker to Gerry Reynolds, 11 November 1967.
[315] Ibid, Attached note, 'Gallantry Awards – Distinction Between Officer and Other Ranks', 6 March 1968.
[316] Ibid, Note from PS/ Minister (A), 15 October 1968.
[317] Ibid, Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Bonham-Carter to Army Minister, 24 April 1969.

By 1968, therefore, the longstanding problem of allocating gallantry according to social rank rather than merit alone within certain spheres of the award system remained unresolved. Instead of addressing segregation within the British Empire range, upon which there was considerable consensus, policymakers repeatedly made the mistake of attempting to reform all rank and service-specific awards and, consequently, encountered too many obstacles. The prospect of widespread standardisation had prevented any standardisation whatsoever from taking place. Nevertheless, these debates from 1964-68 – initiated under the Tories and continued under Labour – are once again evidence of how far there remained a desire to advance the process, initiated in the late-1950s, of standardisation. Indeed, the frequency with which contributors including Knox and Prince Philip referred to the broader modernisation processes occurring within wider government during this period, particularly the reform of the MoD in 1964, suggests how far these attempted changes to medals took place in a wider culture of reform. On the other hand, the failure of these efforts also suggests the degree to which reactionary impulses continued to coincide and prevail within policymaking circles.

This attempt to further meritocratic standardisation is important in numerous other ways. Firstly, despite most of these discussions taking place under a Labour government, this episode clearly occurred, to a notable extent, within a conservative sphere of ideas and debate. The initial investigation into standardising rank-specific awards had occurred under the Tories and it was within and, indeed, due to the culture of administrative modernisation initiated by that government – particularly the creation of the streamlined MoD – that led various commentators to justify reform. Furthermore, Tory MPs remained crucial campaigners in advocating reform throughout both Tory and Labour governments. Meritocratic standardisation was also extensively debated within the letter columns and headlines of the *Daily Telegraph*, illustrating how far this issue remained important to the conservative public sphere. Once again, therefore, it can be argued that the initiative and momentum behind standardisation derived from within a conservative sphere of thinking.

Secondly, this episode once again illustrates the overarching importance of the military, despite the centrality of the Order of the British Empire – nominally a non-operational and 'civilian' award – to debates. It was the Chief of General Staff, Mountbatten, who had initially raised the issue of reform in 1964 and it had subsequently been debated almost exclusively within the MoD, despite the significant implications that reform would have for the civilian sphere. Furthermore, reform failed on three occasions due to the MoD's desire to include OBE reform within a broader review of *military* rank and service-specific medals. The extent to which the MoD was central to spearheading reform over a non-operation award and, ultimately, rejected implementation of proposals due to wider military considerations suggests how far this process was 'militarised' in terms of personnel and priorities.

Collectively, therefore, the period from 1955-1968 revealed a significant desire at state and, to some extent, popular level to see the previous 'anomalies and paradoxes' of the awards system addressed, and British concepts of gallantry standardised. This desire for the standardisation of gallantry – namely the application of consistent and modern principles across the awards system – manifested itself in two key ways: the desire for 'clarificatory standardisation' of what constituted gallantry and a desire for 'meritocratic standardisation' by ensuring that awards were issued solely based on the gallantry performed and no other social, professional or gendered consideration. These impulses initially emerged in the late-1950s within the Conservative government and, periodically, the wider conservative public sphere. Whilst this impulse continued under the subsequent Labour government, it did so under agendas already laid down under the Tories and, indeed, a conservative commentary remained prominent throughout the period. Despite the extent of debate, however, by 1968 little concrete change had been achieved. This failure would perhaps account for the revitalised reform efforts of the 1970s.

II

Throughout the 1960s numerous reform attempts had revealed the considerable desire amongst many within both the political and public spheres to continue the standardisation of medals begun in the late-1950s to clarify, meritocratise and, ultimately, modernise British concepts of gallantry. Despite this impulse, however, little tangible progress had been achieved across the decade. Indeed, the awards system remained riddled with incoherent categories, social segregation and inequality. The 1970s would, however, witness far greater progress in clarificatory and meritocratic standardisation, officially ending many rank and gender divisions whilst clearing up various issues relating to conceptual clarity. Once again, therefore, these years can be regarded as a decisive milestone in the interaction between concepts of gallantry and Sixties modernisation.

Whilst the late-1950s had seen the clarification of gallantry through its separation from service awards, there nevertheless remained a similar clarificatory dilemma that remained largely unaddressed throughout this period and the following decade. As noted previously, many early civilian awards such as the AM, EM and KPMG had been created and notably allocated for gallantry in specific professions and their standards were rather ill-defined. When these medals were subsequently overshadowed by the all-encompassing GC and GM in 1940 – with their much more clear-cut categorisation of standards – the old and new generation of awards were forced to coexist uneasily and without coherence. Throughout 1949-54 successive governments attempted to rectify this by either abolishing older awards or reducing them to posthumous medals, aligning them with the now consistently-used GC and GM issued to the

living. Hence, the AM in gold and EM in silver were abolished in favour of the GC, whilst their bronze counterparts and the KPMG – now divided into separate police and fire service medals – survived by becoming the posthumous equivalents of the GM.

These reforms did, however, produce troublesome legacies that would endure into the 1970s. Firstly, policymakers had recategorized older medals according to modern 'degrees' that did not sit easily with those medallists still advocating the more ambiguous older conceptions of gallantry. For instance, the AM had been previously regarded as the 'civilian's VC' regardless of its gold or bronze incarnation whilst the KPMG had been viewed as the 'Policeman's VC'. Both, however, were largely re-categorised as second-degree awards in the 1940s. A conflict, therefore, arose over whether older awards should be viewed by their original standards or through the prism of modern categorisations. Secondly, interlinked with the above, these reforms also led to a disillusionment amongst a generation of older medallists who felt neglected and forgotten by society now that their awards were only distributed posthumously. This evidently had a negative impact on the emotional relationship between medallist and medal.

The disillusionment caused by these reforms was steadily intensifying throughout the 1960s. Between 1960 and 1966 the Indian Police Association (UK) lobbied the government to provide KPMGs with the option of exchanging for the more publicly-recognisable GC or GM. As retired Major C.G. Grassby of the Bengali Police persistently wrote to the HD Committee, 'it is illogical for a person to hold a decoration which has been abolished or for which comparable awards are [to be] had'.[318] Another retired policeman, Charles Robinson, wrote to the PM that:

> I have held my Kings Police Medal, for the past 30 years, and not at all have I heard during that time any praise for the holders of that decoration...I have recently had contact with the Home Secretary on this matter, who…more or less has given a classification to the value of this Medal, as not much, as the metal is worth. Sir, I went under 40 tons of falling masonry and debris to earn my award. I am wondering, was it worth it. I am beginning to think not.[319]

Evidently, the negative impact of government reforms on the emotional relationship between the medallist and their award again highlights how far the state continued to have a significant bearing on the material culture of medals, producing a sense of alienation and neglect.

[318] *TNA*, T 333/17, Major C.G. Grassby to Knox, 15 September 1962.
[319] Ibid, Charles F. Robinson to Harold Wilson, 18 June 1965.

Nevertheless, the government refused to indulge these KPMG complaints and maintained a policy of allowing older medals to die out with their generation.

This policy changed, however, over attitudes towards the AM in the late-1960s and early-1970s. Feelings of neglect similar to those surrounding the KPMG had grown amongst AM holders following the granting of the GC annuity in 1965 which appeared to confirm the idea that the AM had been demoted to second-degree status. This was particularly frustrating as second-degree Empire Gallantry Medal [EGM] holders – clearly junior to the AM – had transferred to the GC in 1940 and were now free to enjoy an annuity denied to their superiors. Consequently, the AM Association was established in 1966 to campaign for a redress of AM first-degree status and entitlements. One of its founders, Commander David H. Evans – Warden of Devonshire Hall, University of Leeds – perhaps reflected the intensified sense of public neglect and demotion of status best when he wrote that, 'My experience is that few people had any knowledge of the Albert Medal, and I doubt if one University man in a hundred, at Leeds, did not regard 'AM' after my name as a Degree from some obscure University'.[320]

The plight of these medallists was soon widely reported in the conservative media. *The Times,* under the headline 'Gallantry demoted', reported the establishment of the AM Association to 'defend the decoration against further harsh treatment'.[321] The *Daily Telegraph*, meanwhile, featured an article by General de la Bere requesting that the AM be absorbed into the GC.[322] Whilst the government initially rejected these calls for AM parity with the GC on the grounds that the vast majority of AMs were 'bronze' and therefore equal to the second-degree and annuity-free GM, there were many who immediately rejected this modern categorisation of AM gallantry. As the HO noted:

> There was perhaps a tendency to think that as the Victoria Cross was the supreme military decoration and had only one class it must be equivalent to the first class of the Albert Medal, which had two; but this evidently was not so. Our papers show that, on standards of gallantry, the Albert Medal as such – without distinction of class – was regarded as equivalent to the Victoria Cross; the Albert Medal in Gold was awarded in recognition of a very special degree of gallantry not separately distinguished in awards of the Victoria Cross.[323]

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[320] *TNA*, T 333/10, Commander D.H. Evans to [?], [undated, 1965].
[321] Ibid, 'Gallantry demoted', *The Times*, 28 May 1966 [newspaper cutting].
[322] Ibid, Sir Ivan De le Bere, 'Rewarding the Brave', *Daily Telegraph*, 17 June 1966 [newspaper cutting].
[323] Ibid, Philip Allen, to Laurence Helsby, 19 August 1966.

In essence, the HO rejected the application of modern, neatly categorised, notions of gallantry onto the older AM. Both gold and bronze AMs were regarded as first-degree awards. With support for the annuity extension coming from both the media and senior figures including Lord Mountbatten, the Chairman of the Orders of Knighthood Committee and a special delegate of the Orders and Medals Research Society, the AM Association held a strong case.[324] Accordingly, in 1968 the government finally conceded the annuity but claimed it was 'specially awarded in respect of the services which had been rendered' rather than confirming that the AM was a first-degree award on par with the GC.[325] Consequently, the AM Association refused to drop the matter and continued to seek confirmation of their status through an exchange to GCs.

The issue of clarifying and standardising AM status according to its original, as opposed to modern, ideals – and accordingly whether gallantry remained a static or fluid concept – continued to be a matter of government and public debate into 1969, manifesting itself most extensively within the *Daily Telegraph* letter columns. A letter from a number of MPs, including Tory Colonel Tufton Beamish, to the Editor argued that the first-degree status of the AM had been enshrined and maintained in its royal warrant before noting that 'many of our colleagues on both sides of the House share our view that a failure to confirm the status of the Albert Medal would amount to the retrospective devaluation of heroism.'[326] Dowager Lady Eva Keyes similarly contributed that 'this surely must be a lapse of the Government Department responsible and should be rectified immediately'.[327] General Cowley, AM Association chairman, also wrote to the paper addressing the issue in terms of a neglected heroic 'collectivity'. He asked how:

> …can men who were for over half a century invested by the Sovereign…and officially described at the time of presentation as being 'a reward for acts of highest devotion and courage'…be told many years later by a Government department that these medals had in fact been presented to them by the Sovereign for acts not of the highest devotion and courage [?][328]

Brigadier Smyth, defending the government's position, responded that standards of gallantry had been elevated by the Second World War which, in turn, had adjusted the seniority of the

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[324] See, Ibid, Sir John Cowley to Roy Jenkins, 11 July 1966. Cowley to Lord Mountbatten, 30 June 1966.
[325] Government policy quoted in, Ibid, G.S. Herlihy to Milner-Barry, 24 August 1970.
[326] *TNA*, T 333/142, Letter from Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish, Reginald Bennett, James Dunn and [?] to the Editor, 'Status of the Albert Medal', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 January 1969 [newspaper cutting].
[327] Ibid, Letter from the Dowager Lady Eva Keyes to the Editor, 'Injustice', *Daily Telegraph*, 25 January 1969 [newspaper cutting].
[328] Ibid, Letter from Lt. General Sir John Cowley to the Editor, 'Unanswered questions on the Albert Medal', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 January 1969 [newspaper cutting].

AM in favour of the GC, making the former a second-degree award.[329] The extent to which this debate had been held amongst the *Telegraph* readership and featured a range of Tory, ex-military figures suggests once again how far issues such as this remained primarily the concern of a conservative public sphere.

The government, however, remained adamant that the AM Association should accept that concepts of gallantry evolve over time and that, accordingly, standardisation be allowed to occur according to modern classifications. Lord Stonham of the HO wrote to Cowley on the above terms:

> I think the difficulty we are in in discussing this is that there is an inevitable tendency to draw hard lines where non really exist…What took place in those years was no more than a formal crystallisation of the standards and criteria which serve as a guide…Those standards and criteria tend, I shall not say to change but, to take on differing shades of relationship over the years because they are not absolute. There are no categories fixed for all time into which gallantry can be neatly divided.[330]

Despite this rejection the AM Association received a major boost when Edward Heath, Conservative Leader of the Opposition, wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* in February 1970 expressing his support for the campaign, following failed correspondence with the PM in which he complained about the 'most unsatisfactory state of affairs'.[331]

AM fortunes were boosted further when Heath won the 1970 general election. Whitehall began to discuss medal exchange much more energetically. Milner-Barry, opposed to making the concession and branding it an 'obscure fuss', noted with regret that the HO believed 'the Prime Minister would be very sympathetic [to the exchange]'.[332] Once again, debate rested on differing interpretations of gallantry according to older or modern categorisations. Whilst the HO maintained that the medal had been an ill-defined first-degree award, the Treasury, Civil Service Department and FO argued that it had been divided between the first and second-degree. As Sir Philip Allen noted:

> It is obviously a curious proposition that, although the Albert Medal exists in the bronze and the gold, they were both the civilian equivalent of the Victoria Cross. I think one of the main reasons for the disagreement between the Home Office and the Treasury has been the latter's incredulity that this could ever have been so. Yet all the

[329] Ibid, Letter from Smyth to the Editor, 'The highest decoration for valour', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 January 1969 [newspaper cutting].
[330] Ibid, Draft minute from Stonham to Cowley, [undated, 1969].
[331] Ibid, Heath to Wilson, 26 January 1970. 'Mr Heath dissatisfied', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 February 1970 [newspaper cutting].
[332] Ibid, Milner-Barry to C. Gilbraith, 31 July 1970.

> evidence on our papers suggests that this was the case up to the 1943 decision on grading.[333]

This view was similarly upheld by General P.G. Gillett of the Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood. He emphasised to Milner-Barry that the injustice highlighted by the AM Association was 'irrefutable' and labelled the policy currently adopted by the government as 'a fundamental mis-representation of the values attributable to the original award intention for the Albert Medal'.[334] This approach, however, continued to be strongly resisted by many policymakers. Milner-Barry, exasperated by the issue, complained that 'this whole agitation seems to me to be artificial and misconceived', emphasising that the AM in bronze had always been of a second-degree award.[335]

With a lack of departmental consensus over a potential medal exchange Milner-Barry was forced to report to Downing Street in January 1971 that the HD Committee had been unable to reach a consensus on any element of the debate. This led Armstrong, Heath's Cabinet Secretary, to make the final decision. He decided upon the standardisation solution that had been favourable to Heath all along: exchange to the GC. As he wrote to Milner-Barry:

> Since there is no prospect of reconciling the conflict of views within the Committee in such a way as to present an agreed Report to the Prime Minister, I have gone through the papers carefully myself; and I have come to the conclusion that on balance the Home Office recommendations are the best way of resolving the problem.[336]

The justifications Armstrong provided for this decision rested on the previous dilemma of the EGM; the annuity concession of 1968 and the fact that this 'kind of case is unlikely to occur again'.[337] Consequently, on 21 October 1971 Heath was able to inform Parliament of the AM and, accordingly, EM transfer to GC status. He spoke very much in terms of neglected heroic 'collectivities' in justifying his decision:

> …[as] the general public are no longer as conscious as they were of their significance and status…the effect of this is to deprive surviving [AM/EM] holders of these medals of the recognition which is their undoubted due. I am glad to be able to announce…that all surviving holders of the Albert and Edward Medals will be required forthwith to exchange their awards for the George Cross.[338]

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[333] Ibid, Sir Philip Allen to Sir William Armstrong, 11 August 1970.
[334] Ibid, General P.G. Gillett to Milner-Barry, 'The Albert Medal', 9 November 1970.
[335] Ibid, Milner-Barry to Armstrong, 'The Albert Medal', 1 September 1970.
[336] Ibid, Armstrong to Milner-Barry, 'The Albert Medal', 27 January 1971.
[337] Ibid.
[338] *TNA,* BA 12/6, Extract from Hansard, 'Albert and Edward Medals', 21 October 1971.

Ultimately, therefore, the AM and EM transfer to GC constitutes another form of clarificatory standardisation and modernisation within British concepts of gallantry. The earlier decision to prioritise the GC and GM over all other civilian awards had thrown into question the status of an older generation of medallists whose awards had been either abolished or relegated to posthumous status. The higher levels of civilian gallantry had thus become ill-defined. The subsequent debate over the legitimacy of medal transfer – based on either modern or more traditional interpretations of award categorisations – reflected a larger debate regarding how to standardise older medals within the modern system. The decision to allow a transfer therefore clarified notions of first-degree civilian gallantry and standardised the old with the new.

The AM transfer of 1971 is significant in numerous other ways. Firstly, it again underlines how far standardisation was driven, debated and defined within a conservative sphere of interest. It was primarily within the *Daily Telegraph* that the issue was discussed, even during the Labour period of government, and primarily Tory ex-military politicians such as Beamish, Smyth, Bennett and Heath who led debate. Furthermore, it was Heath who eventually granted reform following his victory over Wilson in 1970. With regards to momentum behind reform, it is evident that the final policy outcome was in many ways the product of significant interaction between state and society. Despite this, however, AM reform also reinforces how far the state continued to have a major guiding influence over concepts of gallantry. Those individuals involved in debates had notable ties to the government and it was ultimately the Heath government which decided the extent and direction of the final outcome. The prominence of government policymakers in this value shift should therefore be underlined.

The AM transfer also again highlights the importance of the military to what was essentially a dilemma for civilian gallantry. Both sides of the debate were influenced by military or ex-military figures. The AM Association was founded and led men such as by General Cowley and Commander Evans, supported by figures including Lord Mountbatten, Colonel Beamish and General Gillett, whilst government resistance received the support of Brigadier Smyth. Whilst the MoD may not have been heavily involved in the outcome, therefore, the debate was driven – perhaps disproportionately considering its civilian orientation – by military figures, thus constituting a ‘militarised’ process.

Thirdly, this episode again reveals the importance of ‘collectivities’ within British hero culture. As with other fields in which this tendency had been uncovered, the narrative promoted within the public sphere was one of an aging group of medallists neglected by government and society. This notion of collective British heroes fading into irrelevance through a newly streamlined awards system provided the issue of AM exchange with an

emotional weight which assisted eventual success. Indeed, the importance of collectivities was reinforced by the fact that similar demands for medal transfer by KPMG holders was rejected by the government on the grounds these medallists had not mobilised themselves into a considerable group consensus in receipt of public support. When New Zealander D.G. MacPherson, having noted the AM transfer, lobbied the British government in 1973 for a KPMG transfer, policymakers noted rather pragmatically that:

> There is little chance of pressure such as that applied by the Albert Medal Association and Co. since there is no society of QPM Gallantry holders and it is unlikely that MPs will take up cudgels on behalf of individuals…while the representations are so few and far between, I think we can safely assume most of the QPM for Gallantry are either content with it or else have lost complete interest in it. That being so, it seems pointless to make changes for the sake of a handful of men who do feel strongly enough to write in, even supposing we arranged for optional exchange only.[339]

Clearly, therefore, the government response underlines the importance of heroic 'collectivities' to both the public sphere and in government policymaking.

This process of clarificatory standardisation also has implications for the material culture of medals. The government decision to abolish and recategorize the older generation of civilian medals from 1949-54 left many medallists feeling alienated from their awards as they regarded them as no longer holding respect and relevance within society. In consequence, many medallists sought to restore their perceived status through transfer to the newer decorations, the GC and GM. This demonstrates how far emotional investment in medals could be continually bound up in notions of contemporary relevance and public respect well after the award was gazetted. When this respect was absent, the material culture of medals could become dominated by notions of neglect, embitterment and decline. How far these feelings were dependent upon government revisions to medal policy highlights the extent of continued government influence over the continually renegotiated emotional relationship between medallist and medal long after investiture.

Coinciding with the clarification of medal categories and the reconciling of older awards within newer ones, the 1970s also witnessed successful efforts at meritocratic standardisation across the system. By the early-1970s the issues surrounding discrimination and social segregation – particularly relating to third-degree decorations – continued to remain pressing and unresolved. Despite three MoD attempts to reform service-specific and social-specific medals throughout the 1960s, all had failed due to a lack of alternative solutions and a

[339] *TNA*, HO 287/2199, Official Secretary, Government House, to the Secretary of Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood, 'King's Police Medal for Gallantry', 2 July 1973.

tendency to conduct reform on too wider a scale. Subsequent attempts of the early-1970s were, however, to demonstrate that lessons had been learnt.

On 16 May 1973 J.C. Butler wrote to *The Times* regarding the award of an MBE for Gallantry to a Mrs Castledine for her assistance at the site of the horrific BAE Flight 548 crash at Staines in June 1972. He went on to observe that:

> The MBE is, of course, a substantial award. Nevertheless it is the fifth lowest degree in the Order of the British Empire. Any Honours List will be found to contain the names of hundreds of awards of higher degrees in the named Order – not to mention awards in Orders taking precedence over the Order of the British Empire. They will include functionaries, actors, jockeys, footballers and other deserving categories.

Indeed, he went on to ask, 'whether "courage and devotion" are any less meritorious than being a successful actor or a successful footballer?'[340] Three days later his observations were supported by another letter writer, Paul Marett, noting that Butler had stumbled upon an 'almost insoluble question', before highlighting that award recipients were not only recognised alongside less deserving celebrities, but also categorised according to 'the social status of the hero'. He therefore suggested replacing the Order as the outlet for recognising third-degree gallantry.[341]

Both Butler and Marett had, however, made some mistaken criticisms. They had suggested that the *degree* of gallantry had been determined by the social class of recipients and that meritorious celebrity service was considered in the same realm as gallantry, both of which were incorrect. Indeed, all gallantry awards within the Order, regardless of its rank, were awarded for third-degree gallantry and were marked separately by the oak leaf emblem. Nevertheless, the nature of these misconceived public complaints and the frequency with which they were made soon caught the attention of the HD Committee. As Milner-Barry observed:

> …the type of comment of which Mr Butler's letter is an example has been with us for a long time and will certainly recur. While its importance can be exaggerated, there seems little prospect of dispelling the underlying misunderstandings, which do a certain amount of harm. It is unfortunate that gallantry awards should give rise to controversy of a kind which may cause embarrassment and may dispel some of the

[340] *TNA*, WO32/21618, Letter from J.C. Butler, 'Award for gallantry', *The Times*, 16 May 1973 [newspaper cutting].
[341] Ibid, Paul Marett, 'Award for gallantry', *The Times*, 19 May 1973 [newspaper cutting].

> pleasure which they should give; while in this egalitarian age it seems a pity to leave so tempting an Aunt Sally to the critics as the present arrangements offer.[342]

In essence, Milner-Barry admitted that the Order had gained a reputation for outdated, socially hierarchical recognition of gallantry and conceded the potential value of once again re-evaluating third-degree awards. He did, however, remain uncertain as to the best solution. Retaining a single gallantry award within the Order would 'not get over the objection that the use of the British Empire Order for gallantry encourages irrelevant comparisons with its use for [particularly celebrity] distinguished service'. On the other hand, introducing a totally new award could be unpopular 'for fear of depreciating the system as a whole' by introducing too many decorations.[343]

However, reform efforts progressed speedily from September 1973-onwards when it became apparent, according to Milner-Barry, that 'all members of the Committee are in favour of the suggestion that the use of the British Empire Order for Gallantry should be discontinued and that a new one-class award should be established to take its place'.[344] Clearly, decision-makers had abandoned their previous hesitance about introducing new awards and potentially debasing the system. Furthermore, the reform process was sped up by the Committee's decision – learnt from past mistakes – to deal solely with the Order rather than including it in more far-reaching reforms involving the whole system. This was fortunate as the MoD simultaneously reemphasised their current hesitancy to re-evaluate rank-based operational awards, despite their enthusiasm for OBE reform. As one report by the DSS noted:

> The Services view that there should be no differentiation by status for [civilian] gallantry will obviously appear to be at variance with the present system of Service operational gallantry awards…This is a matter which the Services themselves would not be unwilling to review but is of course a separate issue and one to which a solution is liable to be fraught with difficulties and possible anomalies…nonetheless it is a matter which may well be pursued at some future date.[345]

Consequently, the reduced scale of reform increased its likelihood of success. Furthermore, this was bolstered by the extent of cross-governmental support for change, as opposed to the sole MoD-orientated reform attempts of the 1960s. As the Air Secretary noted, 'The omens for change may be rather more propitious now than they were six years ago in that the

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[342] Ibid, Minute from Milner-Barry, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals – The Third Degree of Gallantry/Use of the British Empire Order', 30 July 1973.
[343] Ibid.
[344] *TNA*, WO32/21618, Minute from Milner-Barry, 'The Third Degree of Gallantry: Use of the British Empire Order', 17 September 1973.
[345] Ibid, DSS to Milner-Barry, 'HD 7210', 3 September 1973.

suggestion is not now emanating from purely Service sources'.[346] As a result of the strength of consensus, therefore, the abolition of gallantry awards within the Order and their replacement by the single, classless, Queen's Gallantry Medal [QGM] in June 1974 passed without further controversy.

The abolition of gallantry awards within the Order and their replacement by a single-level and classless QGM in 1974 constituted a decisive move towards standardised meritocracy within the system. The last realm of British awards to be overwhelmingly dependent on the culture of a chivalric order – the legacy of previous centuries – had been replaced by a medal better synchronised with the rest of the system. The fact that these reforms had failed on three separate occasions across the 1960s, somewhat due to lack of interest outside the MoD, perhaps suggests the degree of complacency within the Labour government. On the other hand, the degree of cross-departmental interest and support within Heath's government underlines how far the Conservatives maintained an active interest in and spearheaded reform. The frequent letters that Milner-Barry referred to complaining about the Order – examples of which occurred within *The Times* – once again underlines how far medals remained the concern of a conservative public sphere, opposed to equating gallantry with celebrity, that spurred the government onto action. Reform can, therefore, be regarded as occurring within a 'conservative' sphere of debate. Once again, however, despite the clear interaction between state and public sphere demonstrated through *The Times* letters, it was the former which largely decided upon the extent and direction of reform, retaining significant conceptual direction of gallantry in the system.

This meritocratic standardisation process did not simply encompass the removal of class-boundaries from concepts of gallantry. The new wave of reforms also encompassed another previously segregated group: posthumous medallists. British gallantry awards – both civil and military – had a long history of discriminating against posthumous awards. As the Executive Committee of the Army Board wrote in 1978, 'It has been customary in the Services to recognise the brave feats of the living rather than the dead. This most likely stems from the time of the South African and First World Wars when life was held in less esteem and battle casualties were accepted to be heavy.'[347] Indeed, the degree to which this discrimination was clearly intended to promote a certain *kind* of heroism, serving state interests by inspiring others to risk themselves, arguably made British medals once again complicit in Goode and Frey's notion of 'social control'. As one MoD report admitted, 'It is considered (but one is unlikely to find the written confirmation anywhere) that the man who lives makes a better testator to

[346] Ibid, Air Secretary to the Service Secretaries, 'The Third Degree of Gallantry', 22 August 1973.
[347] *TNA*, DEFE 70/77, Draft Report of the Executive Committee of the Army Board, 'Posthumous Service Awards for Gallantry', [undated, 1978].

inspire others; the dead being passive do not set such an example. For this reason, the services have never considered it is necessary for posthumous awards.'[348] Consequently, the only awards that could be distributed posthumously were the VC and MID for operational gallantry and the GC and QC in non-operational circumstances. The wisdom of maintaining this consciously discriminatory system in favour of the living remained clear to many policymakers into the late-1960s.

In 1969 the British government conducted a review of posthumous awards following Australian complaints over medals policy in Vietnam. The subsequent report highlighted that, regarding recommendations for awards, 'undisputed facts are more often than not difficult to establish and there is a danger that circumstantial impressions that an act of great gallantry has been performed may tend to debase the currency', thus suggesting that posthumous awards were much more exposed to potential misjudgement due to the lack of verifiable evidence. On a cultural level, the report continued, 'The purpose of honours and decorations is fundamentally to reward the living. An extension of the present rules could have as its object only the gratification of the next of kin of those killed or, possibly, on incentive to recruitment. It is doubtful whether the former constitutes sufficient justification for altering a system.' Hence, it suggested that British concepts of gallantry had always revolved around the living and that any adjustment of this culture would have inappropriate results. Indeed, the report took pride in the 'austere dignity' provided by the current discriminatory culture. It also expressed fears over the potential difficulties encountered by applying similar standards in both posthumous and non-posthumous cases and claimed that 'There is no evidence of a sufficient public demand to justify a change in the rules' and hence recommended that posthumous rules remain unchanged.[349]

By the early-1970s, however, there appeared to be a growing awareness amongst policymakers that posthumous gallantry required better recognition. An example of this can be found in the evolving policy surrounding Queen's Commendations. Prior to 1971 these fourth-degree awards had been distributed at presentation ceremonies by a Lord Lieutenant, although the next of kin in posthumous cases had not been invited to attend. However, when General Gillett of the Central Chancery heard of an instance whereby three QCBCs – two of whom survived and one died – were to be awarded and the widow concerned wrote to the government asking that she receive the decoration 'for the sake of my late husband's memory', he proposed that next of kin be allowed to attend in future.[350] In considering the request, one

[348] Ibid, Report by MS3 to MS, 'Posthumous gallantry awards', 20 October 1976.
[349] *TNA,* HO 287/2628, 'Posthumous Military Awards – The Problems Associated with Extending the Rules of Eligibility', April 1969.
[350] *TNA,* HO 286/56, G.I. de Denny to Milner-Barry, 2 April 1971.

HO official admitted that, whilst some families may find attending the ceremony 'an ordeal and suffer distress', others 'might feel that their deceased relative is more highly honoured if the award is presented personally and might even consider that there is some injustice if another person, or persons, concerned in the same incident is presented with the award and they themselves received it through the post'. The official subsequently went on the endorse the request.[351] Moreover, another official noted that there 'can be no justification for denying the chance to do so to those who, with a feeling of pride, may wish to have the opportunity of attending a ceremony to honour the gallantry of their deceased relative. It is already current practice for the next of kin to whom all posthumous gallantry other than QCBC are made to receive the award at Buckingham Palace if they should wish to do so.'[352] Consequently, whilst posthumous awards were indeed distributed at most other medal investitures, the fact that civil servants only chose to amend the rules surrounding QCs in the early-1970s reveals a gradually increased awareness – identified by the reformist Heath government – of the injustice of discriminating against posthumous awards.

At the same time, however, the pace of change remained slow. The issue of posthumous gallantry was primarily regarded as a military concern – considering that the largest proportion of these awards went to servicemen – and, therefore, other interested parties felt compelled to follow the MoD's cautious pace over reform. There was, however, a growing unhappiness amongst many civilian departments that second and third-degree posthumous gallantry was poorly dealt with within the system, particularly following the abolition of posthumous AMs and EMs in 1971. For instance, when Superintendent Gerald Richardson was killed in Blackpool in August 1971 whilst attempting to tackle armed jewel thieves, there were many within the HD Committee who felt that his gallantry deserved more than a posthumous QCBC but potentially less than a GC. As Milner-Barry recollected, 'I eventually agreed, as did the rest of the Committee including Sir William Armstrong that, while on strict merits Superintendent Richardson might not have rated for more than a posthumous Commendation, the presentational difficulties justified our stretching the point. After a great deal of hesitation I told Sir Arthur Peterson that I was prepared to put forward the same [GC] recommendation in the present case, and give it my endorsement.'[353] Clearly, there was a need to fill the large gap in posthumous awards between QC and GC due to the potential public embarrassment of awarding perceivably low awards and having to resolve this by awarding the highest one.

[351] Ibid, Minute from R.W. Gaines, 18 January 1971.
[352] Ibid, Denny to Milner-Barry, 2 April 1971.
[353] *TNA*, DEFE 69/725, Milner-Barry to Sir Douglas Allen, 11 August 1976.

Nevertheless, despite this dilemma identified in 1971-72, this did not stop the HD Committee from rejecting a posthumous component for the new QGM in 1973-74. Indeed, when it was considered in policy discussions, Milner-Barry summarised that:

> It would not be possible to award the new Medal posthumously without making the George Medal, and military gallantry awards below the level of the Victoria Cross, similarly eligible. While this is a general issue which the Committee might wish to reconsider at some stage if the Ministry of Defence (to whom it is of primary concern) so advised, the balance of argument in favour of the existing policy, which is of very long standing, has hitherto been held to be convincing.[354]

The QGM had thus been the best opportunity to address the issues raised by Richardson's GC, and yet it had been passed over. This had evidently been due to the disproportionate influence of the MoD over posthumous civilian awards policy. As time would demonstrate, however, the extension of the Irish Troubles onto the mainland in the mid-1970s would once again highlight the need for revised attitudes to posthumous gallantry.

In 1976, as the Provisional Irish Republican Army [PIRA] intensified its bombing campaign against mainland Britain, two police Explosive Ordnance Device [EOD] disposal officers were being considered for gallantry awards: Major Donald Henderson for successfully disarming a bomb outside Lockett's Restaurant in Westminster and Captain Roger Goad for attempting to disarm the bomb which killed him outside a shop in Kensington. Following MoD preferences, Milner-Barry initially suggested that Henderson be given a GM whilst Goad receive a posthumous QCBC, even though their gallantry was indistinguishable apart from Goad's death. The MS wrote to the DSS confirming that he supported Milner-Barry's decision and, whilst admitting that Goad's case was 'complicated', maintained that the 'key factor, as in all matters pertaining to Honours and Decorations, is the maintenance of standards, and here we are greatly helped, as Sir Stuart Milner-Barry suggests, by our experience in Northern Ireland'.[355] The MS was referring to the fact that Army EOD officers who had died in Ulster had often been awarded the lower QCBC. There was, therefore, a general expectation that regardless of the Henderson/Goad case being one of 'civilian' gallantry, the HD Committee would follow MoD advice.

As the discussion continued, however, it was evident that the HO, under whose jurisdiction the matter largely fell, was unwilling to continually defer to the MoD. Sir Arthur Peterson of

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[354] *TNA*, WO 32/21618, Minute from Milner-Barry, 'The Third Degree of Gallantry: Use of the British Empire Order', 17 September 1973.
[355] *TNA*, DEFE 70/77, MS to DSS, 'Honours and Awards: Major D.V. Henderson and Captain RP Goad', 24 June 1976.

the HO claimed, according to Milner-Barry, that the award of a QCBC to Goad would 'cause great distress to…[Goad's] widow and would be generally misunderstood in the police force'. He therefore recommended that the Henderson/Goad case be used 'to reflect further on the general question of posthumous awards'.[356] Indeed, as Ryder has noted, a similar PIRA bomb attack on the London underground in March 1976 in which a train driver was shot dead whilst attempting prevent further carnage underlined the need for reform of posthumous awards.[357] Milner-Barry himself soon admitted that the 'arguments against having intermediate awards in posthumous cases are not entirely convincing' and appeared open to reconsidering the whole question.[358] Subsequently, the HD Committee decided to disregard MoD attitudes and award Goad a posthumous GC instead of QCBC in late-1976, thus raising him above Henderson. The MoD, clearly disgruntled that 'presentational difficulties', 'widow's distress' and 'misunderstanding' had been allowed to dictate policy, continued to oppose the use of intermediate posthumous awards. As a report in October concluded, 'it is considered that to introduce a system of intermediate posthumous operational gallantry awards at a time when the Services are not suffering casualties to any great degree will be seen by those both inside and outside the Services as a lowering of standards for these awards. It is a course that is not recommended.'.[359]

It was only in September 1977 that the HO finally submitted a request that the HD Committee review posthumous awards. In justifying their request, they once again raised the context in which the Henderson/Goad debate had been conducted, explaining that:

> With the increase in violence and terrorist activity in the UK, there is an increasing number of incidents in which civilians have displayed considerable courage and have been killed in the process. The Home Office has come to the view that as the QCBC may not be always appreciated as an award to the dead, all the civilian awards for gallantry should be available posthumously.

The application went on to state that 'The main argument for the proposed change is that in cases of bravery somewhat below heroism, it is invidious that the one who was killed should be eligible only for a lower award than the one who survived'.[360] In essence, by emphasising

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[356][356] *TNA,* HO 287/2628, Porter to H.B. Seaford, 18 Oct 1976. *TNA*, DEFE 69/725, Milner-Barry to Allen, 11 August 1976.
[357] Brigadier Stuart Ryder, 'The evolution of posthumous gallantry awards', *The RUSI Journal,* 144 (1999), 75-79 (p. 77).
[358] *TNA,* HO 287/2628, Milner-Barry to Allen, 11 August 1976.
[359] *TNA,* DEFE 70/77, MS3 to MS, 'Posthumous gallantry awards', 20 October 1976.
[360] *TNA,* HO 287/2628, Note from R.L.S., 'HD7279A, Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Posthumous Awards for Civil Gallantry', 20 September 1977.

the increasing inclusion of civilians within *military* conditions, the HO was asserting its right to a greater say in what had previously been an MoD sphere of domination.

There appeared to be two potential solutions to the dilemma of posthumous awards. The first was to allow all current medals to gain a posthumous availability or a second solution, according to the HO request, was 'to cut the link entirely with the normal gallantry awards, and to institute a new award, say a medal for valour, which would only be available posthumously; and would take the place of all other posthumous awards except the highest'.[361] Upon consideration, the MoD's DSS admitted that, regarding the former solution, the 'HD paper anticipates that terrorism and violence are likely to increase and the pressure to change the policy is therefore likely to become stronger, particularly as the police are so much in the public eye. It may therefore be preferable to meet the reality now on the assumption that a change of policy may well become inevitable before very long.' Regarding the latter solution, however, he emphasised that awarding a posthumous medal 'could become the norm for any loss of life in circumstances involving almost any degree of bravery', and therefore seemed to discourage this option on the basis of standards.[362] Ultimately, therefore, recognising that they remained in the minority around Whitehall and that alternative solutions could be notably worse, the MoD grudgingly accepted the HO's request for intermediate posthumous civilian awards in October 1977. Essentially, the MoD had been pushed into accepting a major revision to non-operational gallantry due to the weight of pressure brought to bear by civilian departments and also by the circumstances produced by PIRA operations in mainland Britain. Conversely, it was on the basis of increasingly *militarised* conditions that the HO legitimised its case. The proposal received royal assent on 9 November 1977.

The MoD soon realised that the revision of civilian awards had direct implications for posthumous military decorations and, accordingly, agreed to once again readdress the issue. Indeed, the problem gained renewed significance for the military as news of Captain Robert Nairac's gallantry, facing torture and death at the hands of PIRA in mid-1977, filtered into media headlines. As Tory MP Michael Grylls launched a public campaign demanding that Nairac receive the second-degree DSO, it was soon noted in the press that this Order was only available to the living and, moreover, that there remained no intermediate military awards to bestow upon him. The *Daily Telegraph* referred to 'a curious inadequacy in the system of military awards' which prevented Nairac from receiving the correct recognition.[363] Whilst Nairac's subsequent GC ended this potential controversy, it may have once again

[361] Ibid, Note from R.L.S., 20 September 1977.
[362] DEFE 70/77, Stanbridge, to Service Secretaries, 14 September 1977.
[363] Ibid, 'Inadequate honours', *Daily Telegraph*, 19 October 1977 [newspaper cutting].

reemphasised to the MoD the difficulties of maintaining only first and fourth-degree posthumous military awards.

The subsequent decision to make all civilian awards posthumous, however, forced the MoD to revise their attitudes more quickly and decisively. As they wrote to the HD Committee, 'It is appreciated that…anomalies may occur if there is no corresponding change in the rules governing military gallantry awards', and this appeared particularly apparent in the conditions of modern domestic counterinsurgency whereby the army often worked in close cooperation with the police.[364] As one initial report of 1978 predicted, policemen could be given intermediate posthumous medals whereas soldiers were only likely to earn MIDs despite equal gallantry.[365] The report went on the note that whilst discrimination in favour of the living had been established in a period when:

> …life was held in less esteem and battle casualties were accepted to be heavy. It is debatable if the same view prevails today… in this relatively quiet period when the chance to earn military gallantry awards is limited, there is likely to be pressure from the public and, inevitably, from next of kin that when servicemen are killed there ought to be, if appropriate, proper recognition, posthumously.

It summarised that 'If, therefore, Services were to leave the degrees for posthumous awards as they are today it is likely the Services will be regarded by the rest of the Community as not moving with the times'.[366] In subsequently weighing up the implications of conforming with new civilian standards, the MoD report concluded that 'the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of allowing the posthumous grant of the military operational awards'.[367] This recommendation was made on the basis that it would be easy to implement; it would allow the military to remain in cultural harmony with civilian society and it would remove current policy anomalies.

Collectively, by the mid-late-1970s another major element of meritocratic standardisation had been completed within the system. Medals in both the civil and military realm were now largely allocated according to the degree of gallantry displayed, rather than according to whether the recipient lived or died. Whilst major revisions only took place from 1976-onwards, it is also evident that the first indicator of changing sympathies developed in the early-1970s, under Heath's Tory government, over the QCBC. Posthumous reform was perhaps the one area in which the MoD was eventually compelled to follow the line adopted

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[364] Ibid, Note by Sharp, 24 October 1977.
[365] Ibid, Draft Report of the Executive Committee of the Army Board, 'Posthumous Service Awards for Gallantry', [undated, 1978].
[366] Ibid.
[367] Ibid.

by a civilian department, the HO, rather than taking the lead itself. Despite this, however, the influence of military attitudes and priorities is still evident. In terms of the timing of reform, the extent to which civilian ministries had deferred to MoD preferences for so long and considered posthumous gallantry of any kind to be a military sphere of influence, despite their pressing need for posthumous reform, demonstrates how far the system was 'militarised'. Even after the HO moved away from MoD advice, they still justified their need for posthumous civilian awards entirely on military lines, referring to the increasingly militarised role of police and other civilians in tackling the PIRA threat. Therefore, whilst on the one hand this episode suggests a civilianisation of military awards, on the other hand it continues to illustrate the influence of militarised priorities and interests.

This episode also provides evidence of a potential breakdown in gallantry award complicity in Goode and Frey's wider notion of 'social control'. The culture of discrimination against posthumous recipients had been part-predicated on a desire to inspire the living to emulate the gallantry of survivors. With the breakdown of this discrimination, therefore, an underlying agenda inherent within the system – an instrument of social control – also declined in favour of recognising gallantry solely for its own sake.

Having tackled class hierarchies and posthumous gallantry, there remained one final discriminatory element within the awards system yet to be embraced by meritocratic standardisation. Despite Irene Ward's relentless but failed efforts to obtain greater symbolic recognition for women within the operational range of awards by pushing for Szabo's VC, by the late-1960s women remained excluded from many military operational awards. Representation remained significantly higher in the civilian realm. By the early-1970s there was clearly an intensified awareness of the need for gender neutrality within civilian medal warrants. When considering the wording of the new QGM warrant in 1973, one MoD official highlighted that the rather segregationist words 'male and female' were used at several points throughout the document. He went on to ask whether the term was 'strictly necessary…particularly in view of the modern attitude towards equality of the sexes'. [368] Clearly there was a feeling that gender equality should now be taken for granted within civilian warrants. At the same time, however, women remained largely excluded from military awards and, indeed, famous female recipients were largely confined to memory of the two World Wars. A system of social control – advocating distinctly non-operational roles for women – remained intact.

[368] *TNA*, WO 32/21618, Major D.H.F. Selwood to MS3, 'The Queen's Gallantry Medal – Royal Warrant', 2 January 1974.

However, coinciding with discussions surrounding posthumous awards in 1977-78, the MoD decided to conduct a study into the potential removal of any remaining gender barriers, intended or unintended, to accessing military awards. This reform initiative resulted from two main events. The first involved the inability of male nurses – of whom there were an increasing number throughout the 1970s – to earn the Royal Red Cross [RRC] for medical gallantry. As one official noted, the RRC royal warrant specifically referred to 'She/her' which arguably excluded men.[369] Rather ironically, therefore, it was this attempt to make an award more accessible to men, as opposed to women, that helped initiate a broader review of royal warrants that discriminated on the basis of gender. As one report concluded:

> Having seen… [the report] about the reconsolidated warrant for the Royal Red Cross to include male nurses, PUS(A) said that we must make certain that the warrants for Gallantry awards, from the VC downwards, for the Services are so worded that it is clear that women as well as men are eligible.[370]

The other main factor responsible for the review was the coinciding re-evaluation of the active service role of the Women's Royal Army Corps [WRAC] in 1977-78. The late-1970s was a time in which the MoD was increasingly receptive to making certain operational activities available to women. For instance, by 1982 WRAC personnel were given small arms training and from 1984 certain instruction was integrated with male participants.[371] The extent to which it was anticipated that women would be more likely to win military medals as a result of enhanced active service duties in future had an important bearing on reform.

Accordingly, the various MoD service branches set out to establish the extent of gender discrimination within warrants. What was subsequently discovered constituted a patchwork quilt of ambiguity, discrimination and occasional accessibility.[372] N.F. Jarvis, the MoD official primarily responsible for the review, and his colleagues had been initially confident that 'although the warrants of several of the Gallantry awards are indeed worded specifically for male personnel, such awards can now be made to both males and females'.[373] However, upon further consultation with the CDS Ceremonial Office it was revealed, in fact, 'that where a Warrant specifically used terms such as 'men', 'his' or 'him', etc, a woman cannot technically be considered to be eligible'. Indeed, the CDS office response went on to observe that 'Experience has shown that more extensive redrafting is necessary to correct this than may at

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[369] *TNA*, DEFE 70/77, P.M. Adams to DS15c, 'Service Awards for Gallantry', 15 March 1977.
[370] Ibid, P.W. Smith to DS15c, 'Services Awards for Gallantry', 4 February 1977.
[371] See Rachel Woodward and Trish Winter, *Sexing the Soldier: The Politics of Gender and the Contemporary British Army* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 31.
[372] The MM and DSO already catered for female medallists within their warrants.
[373] *TNA*, DEFE 70/77, N.F. Jarvis to MA/DS Sec, 'Service Awards for Gallantry', 10 February 1977.

first appear to be required'.[374] Initial soundings had, therefore, highlighted the scale of the problem, with various warrants completely excluding women without the prior knowledge of some policymakers.

The inquiry went on to summarise the discrimination within the warrants as manifesting itself in two key ways. In relation to awards for ORs and NCOs – including the AFM, CGM, DCM, DFM and DSM – eligibility was defined as 'Warrant Officers, non-commissioned officers and men or equivalent ranks'. There were hence some warrants that specifically referred to the male gender as criteria for eligibility. Alternatively, with regards to officer awards such as the DSO, AFC and DFC, according to the report, they 'make reference throughout to the male gender although the actual eligibility criteria is defined by rank and no mention is made of their sex'.[375] In this instance, therefore, whilst gender did not directly dictate eligibility criteria, it played an important role throughout the warrant and arguably precluded women from accessing the award. What the military awards constituted, therefore, were differing levels of ambiguous gender discrimination.

However, policymakers remained divided on the necessity of change according to their predictions as to the likelihood of women engaging in distinctly operational activities and, accordingly, operational gallantry in the future. Many commentators continued to regard the chances of female operational gallantry as either slim or non-existent. For instance, one RAF official noted that:

> No woman has ever been recommended for any of the flying awards in question. The likelihood of a woman being recommended for a gallantry flying award…for a deed performed 'in action' is extremely remote indeed…In my view it is a possibility which can be disregarded. Only slightly less remote is the possibility of a woman being the subject of a recommendation for a non-operational gallantry flying award…I would be content to leave matters as they are, believing that if we ever wished to recommend a woman for one of these awards in the (distant) future a liberal interpretation of the warrant would be forthcoming. [376]

Similarly, Jarvis commented on air awards that, 'all are awarded for deeds carried out 'in action'; however, women by their conditions of service are precluded from such active service and should theoretically therefore have no opportunity to qualify. Are we correct in this assumption and if so is there any necessity to amend the Warrants?'[377] Clearly, according to

[374] Ibid, Major R.J. Gresty to DS15c, 'Service Awards for Gallantry', 14 February 1977.
[375] Ibid, Jarvis to the Treasury Solicitor, 'Service Awards for Gallantry', 13 April 1977.
[376] Ibid, G.L. Smallwood to DS15c, 'Service Gallantry Awards', 25 March 1977.
[377] Ibid, Jarvis to Service Secretaries, 'Service Awards for Gallantry', 11 March 1977.

these attitudes, there was no chance of women engaging in any future activities 'in the face of the enemy' which would justify any revision to the royal warrants, despite WRAC reform. On the other hand, however, another report demonstrated that other MoD officials did indeed anticipate the possibility of female operational gallantry. One note informed Jarvis that:

> ...it is envisaged that a situation could arise where a member of the Women's Services might in the field in action, say, in the Divisional Headquarters area during a period of mobile defensive operations so distinguish herself by her conduct that her example of leadership could warrant that a recommendation be made for grant of the Distinguished Conduct Medal.[378]

It was ultimately this advice – particularly relating to the emphasis on the revised Women's Services role – which eventually prevailed in the policy discussions, as key MoD officials recognised the new potential for women to earn military awards. As a final note by the HD Committee of June 1977 confirmed:

> …as the Women's Services develop and expand their roles, it is considered to be possible that in the future women will merit recommendation for the awards…by their service or actions. The Ministry of Defence therefore propose that in anticipation of this happening the rules governing the Service awards…should be amended to make women clearly eligible for consideration.[379]

Subsequently a Queen's Order was obtained to revise the warrants of the AFC, AFM, CGM, DCM, DFC, DFM, DSO, DSC, DSM and MC. By December the MoD was able to inform all Commanders-in-Chief that 'With effect…women are to be considered eligible for all gallantry awards. Any reference in royal warrants for awards containing words importing a reference to the male sex are to be taken as applicable to either sex. Royal warrants will be amended in due course.'[380]

The end of gender discrimination within British military medals clearly presented another step forward in the meritocratic standardisation of the awards system. As with the abolition of segregation on class or posthumous lines, gallantry awards could now be allocated solely according to merit rather than through gendered considerations. In theory, this development once again served to lessen the collaboration between gallantry awards and a 'system of social control'. However, the extent to which policymakers' attitudes had revealed enduring scepticism about the likelihood of women obtaining these operational medals indicates that

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[378] Ibid, MS3 to DS15c, 'Service Awards for Gallantry', 24 March 1977.
[379] Ibid, Note, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Eligibility of Women for Service Awards for Gallantry', [undated, June 1977].
[380] Ibid, Telegram from MoD to All Commanders-in-Chief, 2 December 1977.

this reform was perhaps more hypothetical than practical in its results. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest any notable increase in the number of female military awards by 1979, whilst the continued operational role of the WRAC remained limited enough as to make such awards unlikely into the near future. The extent to which female gallantry remained straightjacketed, both in terms of attitudes and officially sanctioned roles, ensured that in a gendered context gallantry awards still constituted part of a system of social control, dictating the limits of female gallantry, beyond the 1970s.

To conclude, by the late-1970s British gallantry awards had undergone a significant process of clarificatory and meritocratic 'standardisation'. In terms of clarification, the ambiguous mixture of service and gallantry which had previously characterised certain awards had been revised, whilst older notions of gallantry – the product of a previous generation of medals – had been largely reconciled with newer awards. With regards to meritocracy, the distribution of decorations based on social rank, gender or survival were, in most regards, officially abolished. However, the limits of this process were also apparent. The military retained its rank-specific awards, whilst recognition of women continued to be straightjacketed by their restrictive roles and the potential biases of policymakers.[381]

This standardisation process reflects an important element of the interaction between concepts of gallantry and the Sixties value shift. A common cultural frame of reference and political agenda of this transitional period, beginning in the late-1950s and continuing through the 1970s, was the drive towards 'modernisation' in various areas of British political, social, cultural and economic life. Accordingly, 'standardisation' had been one of several strands contributing to this umbrella concept intended to produce equality, administrative efficiency and rationality. It is clear that this process also affected the awards system. Indeed, the justifications used to advance standardisation periodically revealed a prominent awareness of 'modernity', its importance to 'the Sixties' and its progressive expectations. Policymakers spoke of 'a more modern approach to regard for the value of human life' or 'the modern attitude towards equality of the sexes' when considering medal reform.[382]

As mentioned previously, historians remain divided on whether this modernising impulse was driven by either state or society. In the case of standardised gallantry, it is evident that the impulse for reform often derived from a combination of both realms. For instance, on the issue of abolishing OBE gallantry awards, whilst the issue was initially addressed at the highest levels of government, it was subsequent complaints expressed through newspapers that

[381] The cautious approach to military medals policy was once again addressed during the Falklands War and reform once again rejected. See Brigadier Stuart Ryder, 'Don't wear that DSC ribbon, Bader told one of his heroes. Wear the DFC instead', *The RUSI Journal*, 144 (1999), 52-55 (p. 54).
[382] *TNA*, DEFE 70/77, MS3 to MS, 20 October 1976. WO32/21618, Selwood to MS3, 2 January 1974.

initiated the final, successful, reform attempt. On other occasions, however, reform appeared to be raised, debated and concluded at government level, with no public interest or input at all, such as in relation to posthumous reform.

What does, nevertheless, unite these disparate case studies is how far they occurred within a 'conservative' sphere of interest and debate. Although it is wrong to downplay Labour's role in conducting significant reform efforts in the mid-late 1960s and mid-late 1970s, it is evident that most of the key administrative dilemmas within the system were identified under the Tory governments of the late-1950s and early-1970s and it was, indeed, their agendas which dictated the nature of debate and reform throughout this transitional period. For instance, it was the Eden, Macmillan or Douglas-Home governments that first 'clarified' gallantry medals vis-à-vis service awards; who first considered a female VC and first considered abolishing rank-specific awards. Moreover, it was the Heath government who finally addressed the AM/EM transfer, abolished the OBE for gallantry, created the QGM and first revised posthumous recognition.

Furthermore, decision-making was frequently accompanied by extensive coverage and debate within the conservative media – particularly the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* – demonstrating the intellectual stake of conservative journalists and readership in concepts of gallantry even in periods of Labour government. The issue of awards reform was also maintained on the political agenda primarily by a range of Tory MPs, including Dame Irene Ward, Brigadier Smyth and Colonel Tufton Beamish. The standardisation and, to some extent, modernisation of gallantry was, therefore, primarily instigated by either Conservative governments or through an interaction between the conservative public sphere and their government. Therefore, whilst the standardisation initiatives such as the end to discrimination could be regarded as 'progressive' in nature it was, in fact, conservatives who seized the initiative in demanding reform in order to keep gallantry relevant. This again underlines the extent to which conservatives engaged constructively and proactively with the Sixties value shift.

This process also reveals much about the timing of the value shift, demonstrating the centrality of both the late-1950s and the early-1970s to evolving concepts of gallantry. Once again, this finding supports those historians who consider these years to be crucial moments of catalyst in the Long Sixties transition. Marwick's 'convergence model' of events, human agencies and other contributing factors can again be effectively mobilised in explaining the precise timing of transition. In relation to converging 'events', the incumbency of several pioneering Tory governments in both the late-1950s and early-1970s evidently held a significant bearing on policymaking. Further events in the form of significant policy deadlocks and failures in the

1960s perhaps explain further the flurry of re-energised activity from the early-1970s onwards. Interlinked with this, 'human agency' in the form of Edward Heath's personal interest in justice for medallists – clearly underlined in the AM conversion of 1971 – also converged to facilitate the early-1970s catalyst. Finally, the coinciding convergence of 'major structural forces' in the form of a broader 'modernisation' drive in both politics and society also explains the timing of reform, particularly in the earlier period. The wider emphasis of successive Tory governments on 'modernisation' throughout the late-1950s and early-1960s, as manifested in its economic, industrial and defence policies, clearly played a role. This is perhaps most evident in Prince Philip's numerous references to the general administrative streamlining of the MoD providing the ideal conditions for the total revision of awards from 1964-onwards. Overall, therefore, the timing of transition in concepts of gallantry can be explained by the convergence of numerous forces, which conservatives primarily acted upon.

Standardisation once again demonstrates that in many instances, such as OBE reform and AM abolition, change occurred due to extensive interaction between forces from state and society. At the same time, however, several other examples also indicate the state often retained a guiding influence over concepts of gallantry within the awards system. Policymakers did not always feel compelled to concede to public pressure. For instance, despite considerable popular support for Szabo's VC, successive governments never wavered in their refusal to contemplate change. Indeed, where the government considered it useful or necessary to retain an element of 'social control' over the system – such as rank-specific military awards or a preference for decorating women with 'civilian' awards – they continued to do so despite public opinion. Whilst Harper argues that a significant decentralisation of conceptual control occurred in relation to 'service' honours during the Sixties, the state continued to preserve a significant degree of guiding influence over 'gallantry' awards.

This does not mean, however, that standardisation was not politicised in this period. The decision to reform awards could become a matter of political point-scoring, as demonstrated by Heath's criticism of Wilson during the AM debates. Furthermore, the government was occasionally sensitive to public criticism, as witnessed during over the reform of OBEs in the early-1970s. Again, therefore, this somewhat confirms Smith and Mead's notion of British gallantry awards being subject to politicised agendas and considerations post-1945.

The standardisation process also reveals the continued disproportionate influence of the military over the awards system either in terms of the dominance of military figures or military ideology. Indeed, it was often the MoD which established the direction, extent and timing of reform, even within the non-operational, primarily civilian, sphere. They had spearheaded the segregation of 'service' and 'gallantry' within civil and military third and fourth-degree

awards, whilst also instigating three inquiries into civil and military medal allocation according to rank. Ex-military figures had also been at the forefront of many public debates surrounding both civil and military gallantry throughout this period. Colonel Naylor and Brigadier Smyth had debated Szabo's transfer to VC, whilst General de la Bere, Colonel Beamish, Commander Evans and General Cowley had extensively contributed to the issue of AM/EM transfer. In many instances, these issues impinged more heavily upon the civilian sphere and, yet, military or ex-military personnel had held considerable influence. In terms of prioritisation of military values, Ward's determination to 'elevate' female heroism through advancing women's presence within the military operational sphere also revealed how far martial gallantry was considered to hold greater respect and priority within society. The degree of military influence over medal policy, combined with the prioritisation of military gallantry within British culture, reveals how far the awards system was 'militarised' during this period. Indeed, how far these influences impacted upon non-operational awards suggests a further 'militarisation' of civilian gallantry.

Standardisation also has important implications for understanding the material culture of medals. Clarificatory standardisation had involved the recategorizing of various awards to either reconcile them with more modern notions of gallantry or alternatively to reaffirm their status as gallantry awards, as in the case of the British Empire range. Inevitably, however, some medallists felt negatively affected by these revisions, accusing the government of neglect by reducing their award to irrelevancy and confusion. These complaints, made primarily by KPMGs, AMs and OBEs, suggested a significant degree of alienation between medallists and their decorations through government-sponsored devaluation and, indeed, some offered to return their awards as a result. Once again, therefore, this episode illustrates how far state policies continued to impact upon the emotional investment attached to medals well beyond the point of initial investiture.

Finally, standardisation once again confirms the importance of 'collectivities' to British postwar hero culture. As previously highlighted through welfarisation, medal associations often projected important messages into the public sphere about the condition of British heroism and were often dealt with in the media as homogenous heroic communities. Consequently, the grievances thrown up by standardisation – neglect *due* to reform or neglect through *lack* of reform – were often dealt with in terms of collective grievances. For instance, AMs were conceived of by campaigners and journalists as a group left behind by a state and society fixated on modernisation, whilst the Szabo campaign promoted their efforts as an attempt to recognise neglected female military bravery more broadly. Such cases, in turn, often reinforced the underlying association between British heroism and contemporary decline: the

notion that modern Britain ignored and mistreated its heroic communities meaning, consequently, that their grievances needed continually raising and defending.

Having covered many of the dilemmas encountered within the internal machinery of the British awards system, subsequent chapters will consider the application of this system on the broader international stage, both militarily and politically.

Chapter 3

The 'Dirtification' of Gallantry

I

In the immediate aftermath of the failed British attempt to retake the Suez Canal from Egypt in late-1956 the *Daily Mirror* asked its readers, 'Who loaded the gun with a peanut? Whose courage failed? Certainly not that of the troops hurling themselves from the air and being shot at as they descended by parachute.'[383] The Eden government had been widely condemned within both the British public sphere and on the international stage for conspiring to wage an ill-judged and illegitimate war to maintain imperial influence in the region. As demonstrated by the *Mirror* article, the deception and carelessness of politicians was often contrasted in the media with the courage and skill of British servicemen in risking themselves during a militarily efficient, if politically foolish, war.

This sympathetic response to perceivably 'wasted' heroism during an unpopular conflict raises important questions about the nature of the interaction between concepts of gallantry and contentious wars. Suez was but one of many small conflicts undertaken by Britain during the 1950s to 1970s which arguably possessed a morally controversial or secretive label. Indeed, Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon has described Britain's campaigns in Palestine (1946-48), Malaya (1948-60), Kenya (1952-56), Cyprus (1955-59) and Egypt (1951-56) as 'dirty wars' as they 'defied any attempt to place them into the neat categories of black and white and were instead fought in the gray shadows of empire and morality'.[384] He goes on to justify this 'dirty' label as due to the 'illiberal measures' used to protect liberal imperialism during this period. These included government deception of international, metropolitan and colonial opinion, use of excessive military force against civilian populations, curtailment of human rights, use of clandestine operations and special forces.

These 'dirty wars' have important implications for assessing the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties. As a range of historians have noted, the Suez crisis hailed a new era in which the British public were increasingly willing to question the moral legitimacy of military action.[385] It follows, therefore, that gallantry medallists – who arguably stood at the moral, chivalric heart of war and its 'pleasure culture' – may have been simultaneously undermined

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[383] Cassandra, 'Smash and No Grab', *Daily Mirror*, 31 December 1956, p. 4. *Daily Mirror Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express> [accessed 25/05/16].

[384] Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame: Britain's Dirty Wars and the End of Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 4.

[385] Ian Taylor, *Media Relations of the Anti-War Movement: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 81. Paul Dixon, 'Britain's 'Vietnam syndrome'? Public opinion and British military intervention from Palestine to Yugoslavia', *Review of International Studies*, 26 (2000), 99-121 (p. 86).

and their standing lessened within society.[386] Alternatively, however, medallists may have appeared refreshingly noble alongside the discredited politicians responsible for these campaigns and thus retained their popularity. Furthermore, if the success of a military intervention was considered dependent upon its low profile, or covert nature, then the public interest surrounding gallantry medallists was perhaps even more troublesome. Any subsequent attempt to censor awards could lead to even more criticism and scrutiny from within the public sphere. The potential significance of dirty wars on concepts of gallantry is, therefore, profound.

Despite the large number of British military commitments during these decades, academic attempts to uncover their significance in relation to concepts of gallantry and heroism remain patchy. Occasional studies, such as those of Wendy Webster or Jeffrey Richards, have explored the impact of the Malayan or Kenyan emergencies on British heroism as depicted primarily through film. Both have identified how traditional conceptions of heroic martial masculinity were depicted as threatened by anti-colonial nationalism in films such as *The Planter's Wife* (1952), *Simba* (1955) and *Guns at Batasi* (1964).[387] Beyond this focus on fictional representations, there appears to be far more inquiry into the commemoration of heroism within former insurgent nations themselves through statues and other memorials which aim to rewrite local late-colonial histories and assert new senses of anti-imperial national identity.[388]

Even within the wider field of counterinsurgency [COIN] studies more generally, the link between low-intensity warfare and shifting heroic narratives is rarely made. Joshua Royner has explored the narrative pattern of perceived 'heroes and villains' at command-level: the common journalistic and academic assumption that a villainous and inefficient early-stage COIN commander rules with an iron fist and is eventually replaced by a later-stage heroic commander who appreciates the importance of 'hearts and minds' strategy.[389] Royner's focus on heroism is, however, the exception to the rule in COIN studies. Another field which occasionally advances research into this topic is the study of modern war commemoration and memory. For instance, Nataliya Danilova and Kaare Dahl Martinsen have both explored the symbolism surrounding deceased soldier repatriation from recent conflicts, such as Iraq and

[386] How far heroism was bound up with notions of chivalric morality is evident in Goebel, p. 197. Matthew Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), p. 257.
[387] Webster, pp. 569-72. Richards, p. 133. See also, Dawson, p. 216.
[388] Annie E. Coombes, 'Monumental histories: commemorating Mau Mau with the statue of Dedan Kimathi', *African Studies*, 70 (2011), 202-223. Shepherd Mpofu, 'Making heroes, (un)making the nation?: ZANU-PF's imaginations of the Heroes' Acre, heroes and construction of identity in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2015', *African Identities*, (2016), 1-17.
[389] Joshua Rovner, 'Heroes of COIN', *Orbis*, Spring (2012), 215-232 (p. 215).

Afghanistan, and its significance in a 'post-heroic' society.[390] These studies have, however, added little to understandings of how increasing public scrutiny and criticism of conflicts during the Sixties may have influenced notions of heroism and gallantry. Furthermore, none of the above have chosen to concentrate on, arguably, the main outlet of hero culture during COIN campaigns – the British awards system – and how medals policy may, or may not, have changed due to these conflicts.

Ultimately, this chapter intends to shed new light on the relationship between concepts of gallantry and Britain's dirty wars from the mid-1950s to late-1970s. It will do so by considering the extent to which international and domestic moral criticism of particularly brutal or covert wars had an impact on medals policy: a 'dirtification of gallantry'. The term 'dirty war' itself remains problematic. It is often poorly defined, emotionally charged and overused by commentators to describe a whole range of diverse modern conflicts. One of the most sophisticated definitions has been provided by M.L.R. Smith and Sophie Roberts. They argue that a 'clean war' can be generally measured by an official declaration of hostilities against a clearly defined enemy followed by rule-bound military operations targeting conventional fighting forces whilst preventing the deliberate targeting of the civilian population. Subsequently, 'dirty wars' usually feature no declaration of war and violence occurs without warning. The conflict is likely to be conducted without any agreed consensus as to rules and, consequently, the distinction between belligerent and civilian is likely to be consciously or unconsciously ignored. The conflict is also likely to be within a state rather than between states – targeting a specific portion of the population – and is defined by its brutality and covert activity.[391]

Whilst this definition has served to clarify a previously ambiguous concept, Smith and Roberts' heavy focus on South American COIN – where the term has been used most frequently – perhaps straightjackets it too much, making it difficult to detect all the necessary combined elements of 'dirty wars' in other conflict zones. Instead, Grob-Fitzgibbon's use of 'dirty wars' as more of an umbrella concept, in which significant yet varying traces of Smith and Roberts' definition feature, seems more appropriate in a British context. For instance, whilst the state versus state interaction and conventional fighting of the Suez Crisis would appear to limit the use of Smith and Robert's thesis, the extent to which Eden conspired with

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[390] Nataliya Danilova, *The Politics of War Commemoration in the UK and Russia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 2014. Kaare Dahl Martinsen, *Soldier Repatriation: Popular and Political Responses* (London: Ashgate, 2013), p. 79-80. A 'post-heroic society' is one in which there no longer remains a desire to replicate the 'great men' of the past. See Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era: History and Memory in Late Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 187.

[391] M.L.R. Smith and Sophie Roberts, 'War in the Gray: Exploring the Concept of Dirty War', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31 (2008), 377-398 (pp. 381-384).

allies to deliberately produce a military confrontation with Egypt, whilst deceiving Parliament and the public, suggests the episode can very much be considered a 'dirty war'. Indeed, Grob-Fitzgibbon labels Suez as 'perhaps the dirtiest of all Britain's dirty wars'.[392] For the sake of this chapter, a 'dirty war' is defined simply as one in which a notable combination of the key elements of Smith and Roberts' thesis variously occur: covert action, excessive force against ill-defined enemies and civilian populations, infringement of human rights, deception of public opinion and the presence of international scrutiny. These are classifications which, to varying degrees, encompass Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, Suez, Aden, Oman, Guiana, Borneo and Northern Ireland. Hence, the 'dirtification of gallantry' is the extent to which 'dirty' elements of these conflicts – and the subsequent shift in popular opinion – gradually encroached upon medals policy and, accordingly, concepts of gallantry as recognised through the British awards system.

Despite some pivotal changes brought about by the two world wars the British awards system had, on a far more consistent basis, been used to reward gallantry in small colonial wars since its inception in the mid-nineteenth century. From the relatively high proportion of VCs, DSOs, DCMs and Indian awards during Victorian campaigns through to the more diverse range of medals available in colonial conflicts post-1918, the awards system retained a close engagement with small wars. However, despite this wealth of experience, the British COIN campaigns and other military interventions post-1945 appeared to raise new challenges for the machinery of the system due to the distinct political sensitivities and fluctuating military intensities of these conflicts.

Most campaigns appeared to follow a similar pattern. Senior officers initially maintained a policy of bestowing non-operational (civilian) awards, such as the GM and OBE, in its opening phase: a time in which military commanders remained uncertain as to the intensity of hostilities and politicians were keen to downplay the significance of operations through the label of 'Emergency' policing as opposed to warfare.[393] This non-operational policy changed, however, as the intensity of operations increased and military personnel appeared increasingly discontent with 'civilian' recognition for operations of considerable duration and danger. Consequently, military commanders would apply for transfer to an 'operational scale' which provided access to 'military' awards, such as the MC and DCM, based on a ratio to the number of military personnel in theatre and an assessment of the danger. The adoption of an 'operational scale' also meant the establishment of a campaign medal or clasp for a General

[392] Grob-Fitzgibbon, p. 349.
[393] Declaring an 'emergency' rather than war was, according to Thomas, 'good politics'. It reduced international interest, denied the enemy PoW status and downplayed the conflict for metropolitan audiences. Martin Thomas, *Fight or Flight: Britain, France and their Roads from Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 137.

Service Medal [GSM]. Accepting this new scale was tantamount to public recognition that operations had intensified.

On a lower level, the process of submitting awards operated in a regular pattern. Usually, following an act of gallantry, a recommendation was made by a regimental-level officer and referred up the chain of military command. In the instance of non-operational awards there was more civilian oversight through the HD Committee. In the case of operational awards this was reduced significantly. Once the award had been extensively vetted a citation detailing the heroics that had justified it was produced and duly published in the *London Gazette*.[394] Indeed, this latter process symbolically re-enforced important principles resting at the very heart of British awards and hero culture: an emphasis on public transparency and a public right of access to detailed information on the medallist in order to celebrate their achievements. The importance of this culture of publicity had been enshrined in a resolution passed in the House of Lords in October 1917:

> That when any honour or dignity is conferred upon a British Subject, other than a member of the Royal Family, or the members of the Navy, Military or Permanent Civil Service under the Crown, a definite public statement of the reasons for which it has been recommended to the Crown shall accompany the notification of the grant.[395]

Whilst the said resolution did not encompass those in Crown service there was, nevertheless, a clear understanding that all military gallantry awards should be processed as transparently as possible. By the mid-twentieth century, despite some isolated examples of awards censorship in both the Second World War and Korea, a strong culture existed in which the media and the public felt a strong sense of entitlement to have access to medallists. Indeed, knowledge of their heroic achievements was, in a sense, considered the 'property' of the nation. This culture would, therefore, inevitably encounter difficulties as successive governments wrestled with the issue of transparency during the dirty wars of the 1950s-onwards.

Collectively, the machinery of the British awards system was theoretically capable of projecting certain key public messages in relation to military operations. Firstly, depending on which kind of awards were being issued, it served as a potential weather gauge as to the nature of conflict. In wars whereby 'operational' awards were granted, attempts by politicians to downplay the military elements of the conflict could be flustered. Secondly, the emphasis

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[394] This was not always the case. Awards such as MID and QCBCs were simply noted without citation.
[395] *TNA*, DEFE 69/725, Report by DSS to Defence Secretary, 'Gallantry Awards for the Special Air Service serving in the Dhofar', [undated, January 1973].

on publicity and transparency in the *London Gazette* could prove a problem when operations were of a controversial or secretive nature.

By the mid-1950s the British military had been consistently engaged in various forms of COIN operations for almost a decade, first in Palestine (1945-48) and then Malaya (1948-60). Neither had much bearing on the nature of awards policy or, in turn, concepts of gallantry. Indeed, despite the occasionally rocky relationship between the British Army and the media in Palestine over coverage of operations, there was little questioning of military heroics within the British public sphere. Perhaps the most likely figure to attract this sort of criticism, the highly decorated former Special Air Service [SAS] Major Roy Farran DSO, MC and two bars, best illustrates this point. In 1947, as commander of a controversial covert unit, he was court-martialled for allegedly murdering a 16-year-old Lehi supporter. Although he was acquitted, the entire episode served as a national and international magnifying-glass upon British dirty tactics such as the use of counter-gangs and assassinations. Clearly, however, this was not enough to prevent most mainstream British newspapers from providing him with a hero's welcome upon his return, nor to prevent Farran from running for Parliament in the General Election of 1950.[396]

Concepts of gallantry appeared equally uncontroversial in Malaya. As noted by Susan Carruthers, this was a campaign which, despite the employment of head-hunting Dyaks and collective punishment tactics, remained notably under-reported by the British media and, perhaps due to the Communist enemy, existing coverage appeared decidedly pro-British.[397] It was, therefore, perhaps unsurprising that the military quickly and successfully transferred over to an operational scale and campaign clasp in 1949 and awards were applied consistently and with little controversy throughout the campaign. As John Newsinger noted, military memoirs of the Emergency also appeared to follow a traditional heroic narrative of conquering perceived savage enemies and environments: whilst 'the participants in this dirty war…remained silent…what we have instead are 'hunters' tales reminiscences of a small patrol and ambushes that harried guerrillas in the jungle'.[398]

Indeed, the relationship between the Malayan Emergency and gallantry awards remained so uneventful that more controversy could be found surrounding what actually constituted 'gallantry' in an often-mundane campaign. In March 1953, the High Commissioner of Malaya was forced to remind his forces that recommendations for the KPMG and Colonial Police

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[396] David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War Against Jewish Terrorism, 1945-1948* (London: William Heinemann, 2009), p. 178.
[397] Susan L. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency, 1944-1960* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), p. 267.
[398] John Newsinger, 'The military memoir in British imperial culture: the case of Malaya', *Race & Class*, 35 (1994), 47-62 (pp. 55-56).

Medal [CPM] should only be made when personnel committed acts of bravery above and beyond normal duty. Prior to this, recommendations had often been received based simply on 'participation in an unusually successful action', 'an action in which an exchange of fire is made' or 'when the normal duty of those concerned is carried out without hesitation or difficulty'.[399] In this instance, therefore, the basic issue of reconciling the awards system with low intensity conflicts was more significant than the issue of dirty tactics. Furthermore, it could be argued that the far more conventional, and widely reported, military heroics of the Korean War (1950-53) overshadowed Malaya to a considerable degree during the early-1950s.[400]

The first episode to truly test the potential impact of dirty wars upon British concepts of gallantry was the Kenyan Emergency (1952-56). This was a campaign which received much more extensive media coverage and rooted itself much more deeply into British public consciousness than Malaya. There remained continual concerns within the public sphere as to the brutality of army COIN methods. For instance, when in 1953 the Army was made responsible for media situation reports, the Colonial Office was soon forced to push for less gung-ho accounts, discouraging the notion that hunting Mau Mau was considered light sport.[401] Concerns were also raised over the use of pattern bombing, severance of hands for suspect identification and the extensive use of torture and execution.

In these circumstances, with the media reeling from the military's perceived disproportionate response, it may have seemed natural for authorities to have avoided the process of moving onto an operational scale of awards: tantamount to confirmation of 'wartime' conditions. However, when General Sir George Erskine did indeed submit this request to the HD Committee in March 1954 his justifications revealed an entirely different mentality. Alongside standard explanations of 'intensified' operations and incidents of operational-standard heroism came the belief that 'psychologically the time has arrived for Kenya to be considered an operational area'. This psychological adjustment was desired of not only politicians and civil servants, but also of the media and wider public. As Erskine's justification continued, 'many of the uninformed criticisms now being directed against the armed forces are due to misconceptions of the tasks and duties of the Security Forces'. The transition to an operational scale was, therefore, viewed by Erskine as an effective method of publicly highlighting the military nature and scale of the Mau Mau threat in the hope of reducing criticism of military

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[399] *TNA*, FCO 141/7525, Private Secretary to the High Commissioner of Malaya to The Commissioner of Police, 25 March 1953.
[400] See, for instance, the level of media publicity surrounding Bill Speakman VC, in Hunt and Mulholland, chapters 6 and 7.
[401] Carruthers, pp. 152 and 174.

methods in 'extremely difficult conditions'.[402] It was endorsed based on one award per thousand servicemen every six months.

Subsequently it can be argued that, rather than shying away from using awards which confirmed the militarised nature of the Kenyan Emergency, the High Command instead embraced it. Fears of promoting the 'dirty' side of the conflict were overridden by a desire to emphasise the threat posed by the enemy. Erskine's report suggests that this attitude extended into Whitehall, with the Colonial Office 'very intimately concerned in the whole problem' and offering tacit support, whilst the HD Committee quickly endorsed the proposal.[403] In essence, the Tory government broadly supported and accepted Erskine's line.

Indeed, the extent to which gallantry awards remained relatively untouched by the moral dilemmas of Kenya can be demonstrated by citations published in the *London Gazette.* For instance, when on 9 October 1956 David Hill McCabe, commander of a Tribal Police Unit, was awarded a GM for his 'courage and outstanding ability to lead and inspire confidence in his men', there appeared no attempts to tone down his citation on the basis that his unit had 'accounted for more than 70 dead or captured', nor that he had commanded 'special teams of surrendered Mau Mau…using pseudo gang techniques in getting to grips with terrorists and providing intelligence for Security Forces'[404]. Although citations were seldom as detailed, they nonetheless refused to shy away from the real reasons for awards. James Douglas Wallace, described as a 'Field Intelligence Officer', was gazetted as GM for operations in the Rift Valley Province whereby he killed nine Mau Mau, captured seventy-eight and 'trained a number of teams of Africans', which may have once again suggested counter-gang work.[405] Therefore, it can be argued that, despite a media focus on allegedly dirty military tactics, these fears did not directly shape the nature of awards policy or, subsequently, concepts of gallantry over Kenya. Instead there was a conscious, reactionary effort to use awards to highlight the scale of the threat facing British servicemen.

The Kenyan example is important in several ways. Firstly, in relation to the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties, it demonstrates the willingness of the Tory government to confront friction between awards and liberal hostility over COIN tactics head-on. In this instance, however, rather than adapting to change, they adopted a reactionary stance. Gallantry remained 'above' this dirty war. Interlinked with this, the episode also underlines the extent

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[402] *TNA,* AIR 2/12430, Memorandum by the HD Committee, 'Kenya – Proposed Operational Awards, War Office Memorandum', [undated, March 1954].
[403] Ibid. Memorandum of the HD Committee, 'Draft Report: Kenya', 1 April 1954.
[404] David Hill McCabe, GM, *The London Gazette*, 9 October 1956, p. 5682. *The Gazette Online Archive* <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/46808/supplement/1295> [accessed 24/04/17].
[405] James Douglas Wallace, GM, *The London Gazette*, 1 May 1956, p. 2537. *The Gazette Online Archive* <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/46808/supplement/1295> [accessed 24/04/17].

to which the state remained intent on maintaining conceptual direction over medals policy despite this being potentially at odds with public opinion: playing up the military threat rather than shrinking from moral accusations of excessive military force. Thirdly, it confirms the 'militarised' nature of the policymaking process. In a conflict in which the government was keen to downplay its military dependency by declaring an emergency, the High Command not only overwhelmingly shaped policy but prioritised recognition of the British soldier and the challenges he faced over any wider government narratives of a civilianised peacekeeping operation. Finally, the extent to which a group of medallists, decorated after the grant of operational awards, were intended to send a political message into the public sphere about the challenges facing the Army, once again highlights the prominence of heroic 'collectivities' within British culture.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the Suez Crisis of late-1956. With Eden secretly conspiring with France and Israel to provoke a war with Egypt to retake the recently nationalised Suez Canal, the gradually revealed extent of back-room diplomacy and subsequent British withdrawal could have had a significant impact on state recognition of gallantry. Indeed, there appeared to be some reservations about awarding medals – either for gallantry or service – for a campaign ensnared in so many media and political allegations regarding government deception, conspiracy and British humiliation on the international stage. A memorandum from the Admiralty explained that:

> We in the Admiralty are not sure that it is politically desirable to contemplate honours and awards for the Suez Canal operations, the point being that the operations gave rise to a great deal of controversy, both at home and overseas, and although the officers and men concerned in the operations ought to be judged merely on the merit of their work at the instructions of the Government, and not on any international political assessment of the action of the United Kingdom, nevertheless a list of honours and awards might well stimulate further controversy. This is an issue which will obviously have to be settled on the highest ministerial plane.[406]

Furthermore, there were fears voiced within Parliament – perhaps due to the veil of silence covering the issue of awards in the weeks following withdrawal – that the government intended to reject the recognition of servicemen due to political considerations. On 28 February 1957 Martin Lindsay, Tory MP and a former Lt. Colonel, asked Macmillan 'why decorations have not been awarded to officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks

[406] *TNA*, ADM 1/30864, Memorandum by Sir John Lang and Rear-Admiral R.A. Ewing, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Operations in Egypt, 1956, Scale of Award Comment on H.D.5663', 25 February 1957.

recommended for gallantry during the Suez operations?' Although the PM assured him that the matter was under consideration he persisted with the question, 'Does my right hon. friend agree that it would be without precedent if outstanding gallantry during these operations was not recognised in the normal way?'[407] Similar fears of ill-treatment were reflected in a letter from retired Brigadier Brazier to a colleague in Whitehall:

> …[I] write to you on a subject which seems to have been relegated, or overlooked, by your Ministry…We have since seen honours awarded to footballers, Tom, Dick and Harry, but not a word of recognition for those who carried out active operations. It may, or may not, have been a wrong decision politically, but that is no concern to the sailors, soldiers and airmen. They did what was ordered, men were killed and wounded. What of a parachute doctor who carried on with his task on Gamal airfield, although wounded? A small but gallant body of men; why not acknowledge? If it has been decided to bury the whole affair in a conspiracy of silence, at least pay some public tribute to those who carried out the task laid upon them. You will need them again.[408]

Despite these fears, however, the commander of the Suez campaign, General Sir Charles Keightley, remained adamant that gallantry would be recognised on a normal basis despite the ongoing political controversy. As a memorandum of March 1957 revealed, Keightley wanted awards 'based wholly upon the hazards involved in the operation and the efficiency with which it was carried through, and…[not]…influenced by arguments about the wisdom or expediency of the political decision to undertake it'.[409]

Regardless of Admiralty reservations, a consensus quickly formed around Keightley's position. The various Honours Committees agreed with the position and no Tory government minister expressed any misgivings. Indeed, traditional recognition of British military gallantry, despite the ignominy of Operation Musketeer, became something of a political statement and cushioning effect upon wounded national pride, particularly within the media. As 'Cassandra' wrote in the *Daily Mirror*:

> I am receiving letters of great bitterness from the troops who were engaged on the disastrous Suez adventure. It was not THEIR fault that the whole hypocritical excursion has become covered with shame and ignominy. It was not THEIR fault that the British Cabinet ratted on its immoral plans. THEIR gallantry is not the less because

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[407] *TNA*, T 301/31, M. Lindsay quoted in, Extract from Hansard, 'Suez Operations (Decorations)', 28 February 1957.
[408] *TNA*, WO 32/17167, Brigadier Brazier to John Hare, 17 January 1957.
[409] Ibid, Draft memorandum by Norman Bruck, 'Cyprus and Port Said: Medals and Honours', March 1957.

> of the political incompetence that abandoned them half way through an expedition that never should have been begun.[410]

Both the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Express* also covered General Keightley's public tribute to his troops and news of impending medals with considerable zeal.[411] The latter newspaper ran an article titled 'Salute the Suez heroes' in which it celebrated that 'Britain's heroes of the two-day war that shook the whole world are named today'.[412] Indeed, the political messages associated with Suez awards became such that Whitehall soon became concerned that their decision to award medals may itself be interpreted as an attempt to deflect attention from the Suez scandal, thereby debasing the moral value of awards. As a HD Committee report concluded, 'they recognise that the question whether these political considerations should be set aside is itself a political consideration'.[413] By awarding too many medals the government would be guilty of using gallantry to paper over controversy. Too few medals and the government would seem embarrassed by gallantry in a scandalous campaign. Hence, they eventually settled on a cautious scale of 100 awards: 29 gallantry and 71 service awards.[414]

If it was clear that gallantry awards remained fairly unaffected by the 'dirtification' resultant of the Suez Crisis, the same could not be said of service medals. In December 1956 a meeting was held by the Chiefs of Staff to confirm that 'in view of the political circumstances of the operation there would be no question of asking for a campaign medal'.[415] This did not, however, prevent the military authorities from eventually agreeing in January 1957 to the creation of a campaign clasp for the GSM. This decision raised many problems. Unlike gallantry awards – distributed on an individual basis – the GSM was distributed to all servicemen involved in the operation and could hence be interpreted as more of a political statement. An initial whitepaper suggested that an 'Egypt' clasp should be added to the African GSM (1902) but, as this had been largely associated with small colonial wars, it was soon rejected on the basis that it 'may invite political objection' in a conflict which had raised such anti-imperial hostility.[416] Considering that a 'Kenya' clasp had been added to the African GSM during the Mau Mau Emergency, this rejection for Suez indicates how far authorities wished

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[410] 'Smash and No Grab', *Daily Mirror,* p. 4.
[411] 'Suez: Honours for men in the firing line', *Daily Mirror,* 13 June 1957, p. 7. *Daily Mirror Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express> [accessed 27/05/16].
[412] Express Staff Reporter, 'Salute the Suez heroes', *Daily Express,* 13 June 1957, p. 11. *Daily Express Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express> [accessed 26/05/16].
[413] *TNA,* WO 32/17167, Memorandum by Bruck, March 1957.
[414] Ibid.
[415] *TNA,* AIR 8/2125, Minute from A.C.A.S.(P)., 'Proposed Issue of the General Service Medal to Forces Engaged in Operations in Egypt 1956', 21 January 1957.
[416] *TNA,* AIR 2/14658, F.A. Jones to M.S., 31 January 1957.

to downplay colonial connotations. Consequently, a far more ambiguous 'Near East' clasp was added to the normal GSM (1918).

Furthermore, political issues arose over distribution of the clasp to Commonwealth nations whose citizens participated in British operations. Various member-states had opposed the Suez intervention and, subsequently, when the issue of GSMs for Commonwealth citizens was raised it caused considerable awkwardness for British diplomats. The Acting High Commissioner [HC] to India explained that he 'would advise most strongly against any approach to the Indian Government on this question', whilst that of South Africa responded that 'I should much prefer not to have to raise this issue with the South African Government now and as a matter of abstract principle'.[417] The HC to Pakistan similarly wrote that 'I should expect Pakistan Government to object strongly to the award of this medal to a Pakistan citizen'.[418] Resultantly, the Conservative government decided not to issue the medal to Canadian, South African, Indian or Pakistani citizens.

Suez is hence important in numerous ways. The difficulties encountered over GSMs serve to reinforce how far Suez gallantry awards remained 'above' the dirty political and international implications of the conflict. Despite initial fears that political ignominy would result in the neglect of gallantry, it became Tory government and military policy that gallantry awards would operate normally. Once again, the Conservative government was content to embrace a bold medals policy despite potential backlash and controversy. Once again, the notion of supporting British heroes in the midst of challenges thrown up by a dirty war – on this occasion deception of the public and international condemnation – demonstrates the importance of heroic 'collectivities' within the public sphere. When awards lists were published, the media depicted medallists as a heroic group in need of support, thus appealing to the conservative pro-military impulses of the British people, despite divided opinion on the legitimacy of the campaign itself. Furthermore, this episode once again underlines how far medals policy could be 'militarised'. The issue had been primarily debated within the MoD and Keightley's steadfast determination to grant awards seemed to decide the eventual outcome. Indeed, the issue had been decided in favour of military priorities – the recognition of servicemen – over more pragmatic political considerations. Policy was, therefore, militarised in terms of who largely dictated policy and their priorities. Finally, despite the extent of international and domestic criticism of Eden's policies, the government resisted the temptation to refuse awards and simply forget about an embarrassing episode. Their determination instead to recognise gallantry in the face of severe criticism ensured that it maintained overarching conceptual

[417] AIR 2/14658, Memorandum, 'General Service Medal (Army and Royal Air Force): Citizens of Commonwealth Countries Overseas', 4 November 1957.
[418] Ibid, Telegram from the UK High Commissioner in Pakistan, 4 June 1957.

influence over gallantry awards despite changing international and domestic opinions over military intervention.

Although operations in Malaya, Kenya and Egypt suggest how far awards policy – and indeed concepts of gallantry – remained relatively untouched by the dirty label attached to these campaigns, the insurgencies of the late-1950s increasingly demonstrated the growing susceptibility of the awards system to the pressures and criticisms produced by 'dirty wars'. The reason for this is difficult to pin down. Whilst gallantry remained 'above' the Suez crisis, many historians have pointed to the legacy of this scandal as a turning-point in public anti-war feeling and international scrutiny.[419] Indeed, the subsequent rise after Suez of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament [CND] and growing media criticism over suppression of anti-colonial nationalism in the late-1950s, as highlighted respectively by Burkett and Thomas, provide significant credence to this notion.[420]

There had been some early signs of this enhanced government sensitivity to public and international scrutiny during the Cyprus Emergency (1955-59). Once again, British troops were attacked in the international and domestic political and public sphere for excessive use of force, particularly in a conflict involving a European enemy, EOKA. This appeared to influence government policy as they considered granting a GSM and operational scale in April 1956. In making its decision the government had been forced to consider 'the political implication of declaring the Island an operational area'.[421] Indeed, as the Tory Colonial Secretary relayed to the Governor of Cyprus, it was feared 'that the Greeks might, consequent on the decision to declare Cyprus an operational area, also issue such a medal and claim that the Cypriots are waging a full scale war against the British'.[422] Whilst an operational scale was nevertheless granted, the British continued, according to Nick Van Der Bijl, to favour the use of non-operational medals throughout the conflict.[423] Furthermore, as the above author has noted, there was one instance whereby a George Medallist, after killing a number of EOKA, told journalists not to 'encourage the Cypriots to build up a [EOKA] hero by producing a British hero', thus demonstrating the extent to which medals could be regarded as politically inflammatory.[424] Despite this, however, the mechanics of the award system remained relatively untouched by the conflict.

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[419] Taylor, p. 81.
[420] Burkett, p. 43. Thomas, p. 215.
[421] *TNA*, AIR 2/14509, F.A. Jones to A.W.P., 11 April 1956.
[422] *TNA*, FCO 141/4333, Colonial Secretary to Governor of Cyprus, 25 July 1956.
[423] Nick Van Der Bijl, *The Cyprus Emergency: The Divided Island, 1955-1974* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2010), p. 75.
[424] Major Brian Coombe GM, quoted in Van Der Bijl, *Cyprus Emergency*, pp. 80-81.

The same could not, however, be said of medals policy during British deployment to the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman in the Jebel Akhdar War (1954-59). With the endorsement of the Sultan, Britain covertly intervened to maintain its oil interests in the region against the rebellious Imam of Oman, largely through the loaning of British officers and NCOs to the Sultan's forces. Despite the 'clandestine' nature of this under-reported campaign, as fighting in the region intensified in 1957 so did the spectre of distributing very public gallantry and service awards.[425] However, when three honours were indeed gazetted in November, the WO was able to reassure the FO that 'the awards will be included in the New Year's Honours List and there will be nothing to show any connection with the operations in Oman'.[426] Furthermore, whilst the accompanying nine MIDs required some minor reference to the Sultanate, the phrase 'during recent operations' was deliberately deleted to enhance ambiguity.[427] Clearly, these awards were likely to cause awkward questions to be raised publicly as to the extent and nature of the Conservative government's involvement in Oman at a time of intensified public and international scrutiny following Suez and, hence, the gazetting process was made as vague as possible.

Although this policy of partial censorship was temporarily abandoned during the major and well-publicised SAS operation to recapture the Jebel Akhdar mountain range in January 1959, it was reinstituted following victory.[428] Indeed, there was enhanced Tory government sensitivity towards public acknowledgment of military commitments in Oman – relating to either before or after SAS deployment – particularly due to increasing international scrutiny of British involvement by 1959. For instance, when in September the FO considered a batch of RAF awards it decided to reserve comment until nearer the time of publication on the basis that:

> In June this year, we agreed with the proposed citations in respect of awards to members of the British Land Forces and the Sultan's forces engaged in the Oman operations, but there may be a little more difficulty with the RAF. Cairo Radio has made great use of the earlier citations, and the operations by the RAF would be even more misrepresented by hostile propaganda. The position is particularly delicate at

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[425] Paul L. Moorcraft and Philip M. Taylor, *Shooting the Messenger: The Political Impact of War Reporting* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2008), p. 86.
[426] *TNA*, T 301/33, Brigadier Underhill to F.V. Jelpke, 27 November 1957.
[427] Ibid.
[428] Our Military Correspondent, 'Rebels Surprised', *The Times*, 9 April 1959, p. 13, in *The Times Digital Archive* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS219896969&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0 [accessed 19 February 2017].

> the moment because the Arab delegations at the United Nations are almost certainly going to try and make trouble about Oman.[429]

Gallantry award citations were, therefore, providing valuable ammunition to opponents of British intervention, both for regional propaganda purposes and within the wider international community. The fact that these citations were often for air operations added an additional layer of controversy due to the symbolism of imperial aggression closely associated with aerial bombing.

This issue of international scrutiny was intensified further when Whitehall considered instituting an ambiguously-framed 'Arabian Peninsula' GSM in December 1959. This proved problematic as the scale of its distribution clearly indicated the extended duration and nature of Britain's covert activities which the Conservative government remained keen to hide at the UN. As another note from the FO to the HD Committee explained:

> When publicity material is issued giving examples of exploits which have given rise to the award, I assume that there will be no reference to activity in Oman subsequent to the capture of the Jebel Akhdar in January, 1959. HMG have consistently said that the situation in Oman has been quiet since the rebellion ended at that time.[430]

Similarly, another note warned that:

> …we would need to consider carefully the terms of any public announcement about these specified operations. For example, we would see no objection to the Jebel Akhdar Campaign being mentioned, but…if public reference is made to RAF sorties, it would be desirable to avoid any wording that drew undue attention to the scale of RAF activities in Oman in 1958.[431]

Clearly, therefore, Tory politicians and civil servants remained extremely nervous that gallantry and service awards could reveal the extent of military operations in the region at a time when London was attempting to downplay involvement in the post-Suez international and domestic environment. The final GSM announcement consciously removed all mention of Oman and instead referred only to 'Aden Colony' and the 'Arabian Peninsula'.[432] Furthermore, the date of the official announcement was significantly postponed by the FO

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[429] *TNA*, T 301/33, Memorandum by Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals – Arabian Peninsula: Operations in Oman July 1958 to January 1959', 23 September 1959.
[430] *TNA*, AIR 2/14916, Extract of a letter from Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar to Knox, 9 January 1961, in Memorandum from Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals – General Service Medal: Arabian Peninsula', 11 January 1961.
[431] *TNA*, T 300/65, Hoyer Millar to Knox, 17 June 1960.
[432] Ibid, Knox to R.G.F. Way, 6 January 1961.

from late-1960 to mid-1961 as a result of ten Arab delegations wishing to discuss 'the question of Oman' at the UN General Assembly within this timeframe.[433]

Ultimately, the Jebel Akhdar War provides the first substantial evidence that gallantry awards no longer remained 'above' the controversies of Britain's dirty wars. Awards policy fell prey to the clandestine nature of this military deployment and the international criticism it inspired. Although the number of awards distributed was unaffected, the framing of these awards – except during the SAS intervention of January 1959 – significantly changed, with references to Oman substantially toned down or removed entirely. The Conservative government appeared increasingly willing to sacrifice the principle of public transparency based on political and security considerations.

These developments may have been symptomatic of a wider government anxiety about public and international responses to its use of military force following Suez. Thomas has noted the extent to which atrocity reports such as the Hola Massacre in Kenya and the Nkata Bay Massacre in Nyasaland, both in March 1959, had a profound impact on domestic and international responses towards British colonial brutality.[434] Indeed, the stance of socialist politicians, *The Observer* and the *Manchester Guardian* to these events left the PM, Macmillan, particularly embittered during this period.[435] It would, therefore, seem likely that the Conservative government became particularly sensitive about any public acknowledgement of covert aggression in Oman around 1959-60.

Although it has been demonstrated that the sensitivities of dirtification had been a consideration prior to this point, it is also evident that it was in the late-1950s that gallantry awards became increasingly susceptible to the complexities of dirty wars both in terms of domestic moral and international criticism. The result had been the partial use of censorship within the awards process to avoid critical attention, a practice which would expand during the 1960s.

These insurgencies – particularly Oman – are significant in other ways. Once again, they highlight the centrality of the Tory government in engaging with shifting domestic and international attitudes to military intervention as the Sixties progressed. On this occasion, rather than reactively standing firm, a government consensus recognised the political expediency of partially censoring awards. Secondly, whilst it is evident that medals policy was increasingly driven by a desire to avoid criticism – thus indicating the potential extent of

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[433] Ibid, Extract of letter from Way to Sir R. Stevens, 25 October 1960, in Memorandum from Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals – Naval General Service Medal; General Service Medal, Arabian Peninsula', 31 October 1960.
[434] Thomas, p. 215.
[435] Thomas, p. 216.

public influence – it is also apparent that pre-emptive or preventative measures, such as toning down citations, ensured that the Conservative government largely managed to avoid any public or political questioning of awards made. Consequently, the fact that the government was still able to decorate servicemen in the way it desired, largely free of criticism, indicates how far the state continued to retain significant direction over concepts of gallantry.

Furthermore, despite the extent to which censorship occurred primarily in consequence of foreign policy concerns, this development can also be regarded as a 'militarised' phenomenon. Rather than allowing dirtification to prevent the awards system from honouring British servicemen, censorship was imposed to ensure that military recognition went ahead as normal despite sensitive political conditions. The degree to which this process therefore prioritised military recognition, combined with the significant input of the WO in decision-making, ensured that changes to the awards system were essentially militarised in nature.

With the onset of the 1960s Britain increasingly abandoned its formal imperial responsibilities whilst simultaneously committing to maintain a military interventionist role on the world stage. Consequently, despite mass decolonisation, troops were committed to numerous conflict zones within the British sphere of influence 'East of Suez'. Some of these interventions, such as Kuwait (1961), Brunei (1962) and East Africa (1964) remained too short and limited in scope to receive any allegations of 'dirty' tricks. Others, however, such as Borneo (1962-66) and South Arabia (1963-67), quickly fell into the 'dirty war' category.

Initial evidence of ongoing government sensitivity towards dirtification during the 1960s was, however, evident west of Suez. Britain had been forced to increase its military grip over its South American colony of British Guiana in the run-up to independence. On 6 July 1963, the Coldstream Guards were called to help suppress political violence in Rose Hall Village, southwest of the capital, Georgetown. Guardsman Eden Barker was subsequently recommended for a BEM for singlehandedly arresting fifteen armed rioters in the settlement. During the same operation, however, other Guardsmen were allegedly involved in the controversial deaths of two Indians on the banks of the Corentyne river near the village. The proximity between the two incidents would later cause considerable difficulty in Whitehall.

In the months following the incident, Barker's recommendation was approved, a citation drawn up without controversy and the award received royal assent. However, the Coldstreams and colonial government soon realised that the incoming publication date of the *London Gazette* citation coincided very closely with an inquest into the two Coldstream-related deaths on the Corentyne. This proved problematic as the BEM would inevitably raise media interest in British Guiana at of time of considerable sensitivity. Governor Sir Ralph Grey complained that 'it is unfortunate that the incidents at Rose Hall Village, which resulted in the deaths of

two Indians as a consequence of acts by other members of the Coldstream patrol in which Guardsman Barker was in no way concerned, have attracted close ministerial attention'.[436] Grey was also reportedly 'anxious lest the publication of this citation should coincide with the inquest into the deaths of those who were killed in the Rose Hall incident – an inquest at which there will in all probability appear a serious discrepancy between the evidence of the soldiers and the police who were concerned'.[437] Consequently, Colonel Pemberton of the Coldstreams sought to arrange for 'the award to be held up'.[438] However, as the BEM had already received royal approval, it could not be postponed indefinitely and was soon causing considerable embarrassment to the WO.

The government thus attempted to adjust the citation in a quick attempt to avoid controversy. Initial surgery to the citation involved replacing the more emotive word 'disastrous' with that of 'grave', relating to the potential consequences had Barker failed to arrest the rioters.[439] One CO official further argued that the WO could 'tone down the citation or even (I think) reduce it to something like 'for brave conduct in British Guiana'', hence removing all details of the incident.[440] This adjustment was, however, not enough for the Governor as events escalated in Guiana. Grey explained that:

> Unless citation can be so non-committal as unlikely to get any publicity here considerable awkwardness is certain…Commissioner of Police remains convinced that story of police witness is to be preferred to that of the Coldstreams. Minister Ram Karran in public speech in Canye area…on Sunday last is reported to have claimed that British soldiers did nothing in Georgetown 'where party supporters were looted and raped and burnt out' but 'killed two on the Corentyne'. He demanded immediate departure of British troops. Although he and his colleagues would doubtless be perturbed if he were taken at his word Owen advises strongly against action that would add fuel to such flames as Ram Karran has kindled in the area.[441]

At a time, therefore, when accusations of brutality and neglect were being levelled at British forces, a celebration of gallantry was thought to potentially escalate the situation. Grey went on to admit that, 'I presume that reference to British Guiana in citation is unavoidable…the date alone would suffice to indicate to newspapers that they have a story about British Guiana'.

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[436] *TNA,* CO 968/746, Governor Sir Ralph Grey to J.W. Stacpoole, 23 October 1963.
[437] Ibid, Stacpoole to Mr Piper, 22 November 1963.
[438] Ibid.
[439] *TNA,* CO 968/746, D.M.A.L. to Stacpoole, 1 November 1963.
[440] Ibid, Stacpoole to Piper, 22 November 1963.
[441] Ibid, Grey to Colonial Secretary, 26 November 1963.

He nevertheless attempted to throw journalists off the trail of controversy by removing all mention of Rose Hall in the citation, referring only to an ambiguous 'area' of Guiana.[442]

As the deadline for publishing the citation approached, however, the WO appeared to be far more flexible over non-disclosure of information than perhaps Grey predicted. On 25 November, they openly admitted that the 'War Office are quite prepared to publish with non-committal citation or, if not, reasons why publication should be withheld': a direct acceptance of the principle of censorship if required.[443] In the end, however, civil servants felt confident enough to publish a very toned-down compromise citation on 20 December:

> For his courage and determination as a member of a patrol called to a disturbance in British Guiana on 6th July 1963, the brave conduct of this young soldier contributed to the restoration of Order and the prevention of further violence.[444]

Ultimately, therefore, the case of Barker's citation reveals various important developments within the functional machinery of the British awards system and, consequently, concepts of gallantry. Firstly, it underlines the extent to which colonial administrators, army personnel and Tory ministers and civil servants were all becoming increasingly sensitive to claims of military brutality and how gallantry awards could subsequently shed unwanted media attention on controversial military operations. When this example is contrasted with the rather carefree attitudes surrounding Mau Mau awards a decade earlier, the degree to which attitudes changed can be clearly detected. Secondly, this incident demonstrates the ongoing tendency to 'tone down' citations. This form of partial-censorship had been extensively practiced in Oman and this precedent clearly continued into the 1960s when deemed necessary. Moreover, WO correspondence suggests a willingness to withhold publication of the citation entirely, suggesting that complete censorship was regarded as a fairly uncontroversial step. Rarely had this option been considered, even in Oman, during the previous decade. By 1963, however, it was being suggested for a fairly low-ranking award in a very obscure colonial conflict, perhaps indicating the degree to which it was becoming acceptable within official thinking.

The degree to which the Conservative government and military took pre-emptive measures and ultimately succeeded in preventing the award from becoming a focus of controversy demonstrates how far the state continued to retain a significant degree of conceptual influence over gallantry amid dirty wars. Whilst the government feared public scrutiny of its policies, it ultimately overcame this and gazetted the award without controversy. Once again, therefore,

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[442] Ibid.
[443] *TNA*, CO 968/746, Draft Telegram from Brigadier W.E. Underhill to Colonel W.M.L Adler, 25 November 1963.
[444] Ibid, Colonial Secretary to Grey, 4 December 1963.

the Tory government had tackled the moral dilemmas of dirty wars head-on and had not shied away from acting decisively. Finally, the degree to which the WO was able to hold up the gazetting process and had a major influence in toning down the citation once again re-emphasises the importance of the military over this process. The fact that great pains were taken to ensure that recognition of Barker's achievements took place, regardless of the political risks, demonstrates how far the system was influenced by 'militarised' priorities.

How far Rose Hall was potentially indicative of wider developments can be illustrated through analysis of the Borneo campaign. British troops had been deployed as a deterrent on the Malaysian border against an aggressively expansionist Indonesia between 1962 and 1966. Whilst this conflict has often been categorised as a dirty 'secret war', various recent commentators have sought to clarify this application. Christopher Tuck has explained that 'Confrontation was not a 'secret war'. It is certainly the case that *a* secret war was fought in Borneo, that being cross-border activities of Commonwealth troops; but both Confrontation generally, and the fighting in Borneo specifically, were extensively reported on in the British press at the time.'[445] It therefore follows that the awards process often functioned normally for much of the campaign and medallists were often well publicised in the British media.[446] For instance, when a large list of operational awards was published in December 1966, the *Daily Telegraph* ran an article detailing gallant exploits in considerable detail. It included an MC to Gurkha Captain Purnasing Limbu for conducting a 'perfect' ambush which 'annihilated an enemy force', and a DSO to Gurkha Captain Christopher Pike, whose unit had 'killed 50 regular Indonesian troops in two fierce battles'.[447] Inevitably, there was also very extensive media coverage of the VC won by Corporal Rambahadur Limbu in Sarawak in 1965 and his subsequent five-week national tour of Britain in 1966.[448] On one occasion he visited the London Stock Exchange where stockbrokers ceased work and gave him a standing ovation whilst, in his own memoirs, Limbu recollects attending 'parties after parties' during the tour.[449]

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[445] Christopher Tuck, *Confrontation, Strategy and War Termination: Britain's Conflict with Indonesia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 208.

[446] The introduction of the Borneo GSM was front-page news in 'Borneo medal', *Daily Mail*, 18 September 1964, p. 1, in the *Daily Mail Historical Archive* <http://find.galegroup.com/dmha/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DMHA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EE1865540192&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>[accessed 24/02/17].

[447] Daily Telegraph Reporter, 'Gurkha Awarded M.C. for 'Perfect Ambush'', *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 December 1966, p.18, in *The Daily Telegraph Historical Archive* <tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/4RFtV9>[accessed 24/02/17].

[448] For instance, Arthur Cook, 'Gurkha wins first VC since the war in Korea 13 years ago', *Daily Mail*, 23 April 1966, p. 7, in the *Daily Mirror Historical Archive* < http://find.galegroup.com/dmha/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DMHA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EE1864048797&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>[accessed 24/02/17].

[449] Adkin, p. 108. Lieutenant Rambahadur Limbu VC, *My Life Story* (London: The Gurkha Welfare Trusts, 1976), p. 14.

In these instances Borneo awards remained largely uncontroversial whilst, in the case of Limbu's VC, gallantry was perhaps better publicised than at any time since the Korean War.

As Tuck has argued, however, there remained a highly clandestine element to the Borneo campaign which, arguably, did have a significant bearing on the awards system. This relates particularly to the cross-border activities which British forces launched against Indonesian bases during Operation 'Claret' from July 1964 to July 1966. One incident, in particular, suggests how far the new Labour government was willing to continue Tory policies and censor citations for these operations due to their diplomatic sensitivity. In 1966 Captain David Mitchell and Sergeant Clive Close, both serving with the Special Boat Service [SBS], were awarded the MBE and BEM respectively for particularly clandestine operations. According to his full citation, Mitchell 'planned and subsequently led a number of successful operations against the enemy, the sensitive nature of these operations meant that the planning and rehearsal for them had to be meticulous and nothing left to chance'.[450] Furthermore, as one report elaborated, 'on one [occasion] 2 men failed to reach the rendezvous due to a faulty canoe. He arranged for a successful RV. On another occasion some of his men failed to complete their tasks and so Mitchell went and did them after [on] his own.'[451] With regards to Close, he reportedly:

> …conducted a recon on an Indonesian held island and was tasked with placing beach gradient markers. He was close to being detected but succeeded in evading attention. However, he and his companion failed to make their RV and hence had to swim back to Malaysian waters before being picked up – having spent 4 ½ hours in the water.[452]

These awards were, therefore, considered extremely sensitive by London due to their involvement in cross-border activity. According to instructions despatched to the Commandant General, Royal Marines:

> The operations in question were of a highly sensitive and discreet nature and as such must remain Top Secret and only disclosed to the minimum 'need-to-know' officers. Accordingly the citations…are purposely brief and unilluminating as these could appear in the London Gazette and perhaps in the press…The greatest care must be taken to ensure that the Top Secret documents do not pass into the hands of any person not cleared for such material.[453]

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[450] *TNA,* ADM 201/144, 'Citation of Captain David Mitchell, RM, 3rd Commando Brigade, 1964/65'.
[451] Ibid, Note by Major J.F. Mottram, 10 June 1966.
[452] Ibid, Note by Mottram, 10 June 1966.
[453] Ibid, Lt. Colonel B.C.L. Tayleur to Department of Commandant General Royal Marines, 21 June 1966.

Indeed, these operations remained so sensitive that when a request was made to downgrade the 'top secret' security clearance in 1968, a couple of years after operations had ceased, the request was rejected outright.[454] The case of these two SBS awards therefore indicates that the Labour government was increasingly willing to employ partial censorship of awards relating to particularly secretive or controversial military operations as the 1960s progressed, thus following the precedent set by the Tories.

British operations in Borneo, therefore, demonstrate the continuing use of a hybrid awards policy first extensively practiced in Oman. On the one hand, the release of normal citations continued relatively unhindered during the campaign. However, as with the Rose Hall incident, there was evidence of an increasing readiness on the part of Whitehall to censor potentially sensitive awards. Whilst this often amounted to 'toning down' citations, as opposed to a complete ban on information, it still constituted a notable shift in attitudes from the 1950s and underlined the enduring reach of Tory government policies into the 1960s Labour government. The extent to which the government managed to avoid any criticism of its awards for highly sensitive cross-border operations also reveals how far the government managed to retain significant conceptual influence over the awards system despite changing domestic and international attitudes about the uses of military intervention. Finally, the extent to which policymakers preferred to recognise military gallantry through censored awards, rather than preventing recognition on the grounds of political expediency, once again demonstrates how far this process was militarised in terms of priorities.

The final campaign of the 'East of Suez' era, the Aden Emergency, serves to reinforce many of these conclusions. Troops were engaged in a diverse COIN campaign against Arab nationalists initially with the British objective of retaining their military presence in South Arabia and, from 1966-onwards, withdrawing in an orderly fashion. A 'special scale' of operational awards was granted for the mountainous Radfan campaign of mid-1964 without controversy despite government sensitivity to poor army-media relations during the expedition.[455] Indeed, there was far more controversy surrounding the failure to award an operational scale for intensified commitments in Aden's urban centres from 1965-onwards. The 1966 Army Act, perhaps anticipating the end of empire, had stipulated that operational medals could now only be awarded for campaigns in a 'foreign country', thus excluding

[454] Ibid, Lt. Colonel R.W.O'N. Collins to HQ Far East Land Forces, 'Operational Awards', 1 July 1968. Lt. Colonel Larry Trotter to Colonel Collins, 5 August 1968.
[455] *TNA*, T 301/36, Memorandum from Knox, 'Operations in the Radfan Area, Western Aden Protectorates, 13th April to 1st June, 1964', 24 November 1964. Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in Yemen, 1962-67* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011), p. 202.

activities in Aden colony.[456] However, by mid-1967, as a report to the HD Committee stressed, street fighting had increased 'on a scale which experienced officers had not witnessed since the 1939-1945 war' and, therefore, the Chiefs of Staff were demanding operational awards 'as a matter of urgency'[457]. The subsequent passage of fresh legislation revoking the previous ban in June 1967 was 'a great morale boost' to servicemen.[458]

This notable obstacle aside, the award system functioned fairly smoothly throughout the conflict. There appears to be little evidence that the more 'dirty' allegations levelled against British forces – from mistreatment of prisoners to a scorched-earth campaign – had much impact on administrative procedure. Gallantry medallists were as well publicised within the media as they had been in Borneo.[459] Indeed, perhaps an indication of the relaxed government attitude towards disclosure of information relating to Aden can be found in the case of Sergeant Bobby Bogan of the Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry, attached to Special Branch. He won a BEM in 1967 for his gallantry and leadership in highly innovative covert operations against Arab insurgents in the backstreets of Sheikh Othman in 1966. Consequently, the media painted him as a modern Lawrence of Arabia-style figure who, according to the *Daily Express*:

> …set his ambushes for terrorists working in the darkness. With his face blackened and his hair coloured to blend with the night, the Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry sergeant went stealthily into battle. To complete his undercover role he wore Arab costume and took a crash course in Arabic.[460]

As Aaron Edwards has noted, Bogan's fame was such that he even received his own comic strip in the popular magazine *The Hornet*.[461] Considering that he was a covert intelligence

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[456] Nick van der Bijl, *British Military Operations in Aden & Radfan: 100 Years of British Colonial Rule* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2014), p. 197.
[457] *TNA*, T 301/39, Note, 'Claim for Admissibility of Operational Awards for Gallantry and Distinguished Service in Aden State', attached to letter from DSS to Milner-Barry, 21 July 1967. DSS to Milner-Barry, 21 July 1967.
[458] Walker, p. 260.
[459] See for instance, 'Aden captain wins the MC', *Daily Mail*, 2 August 1967, p. 9, in the *Daily Mail Historical Archive* <http://find.galegroup.com/dmha/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DMHA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EE1864560954&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>[25/02/17]. 'Awards For Aden Soldiers', *The Times*, 18 September 1965, p. 10, in *The Times Digital Archive* <http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS169961778&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>[25/02/17].
[460] Express Staff Reporter, 'Sergeant Bogan, The Alley Cat Hero of Aden', *Daily Express*, 1 March 1967, p. 7, in the *Daily Express Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express> [accessed 15/05/15].
[461] Aaron Edwards, *Mad Mitch's Tribal Law: Aden and the End of Empire* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2014), pp. 112-113.

operative in an ongoing conflict, the extent of media coverage suggests that a more relaxed government approach to awards policy existed in Aden.

Ironically, the one famous instance of Aden awards censorship bred far more media interest than it avoided. It also developed not in the interests of covering up morally grey top-down government strategy, but to rebuke aggressive methods implemented independently of government approval. Throughout 1967 the Labour government and senior Army commanders had stressed the need for 'minimum force' when maintaining control of Aden's urban centres and, consequently, British troops often felt powerless in the face of a deteriorating security situation. This atmosphere was heightened when, on 20 June, the colonial police in Crater mutinied and killed eight British soldiers. This led to a complete British withdrawal from the city and a media outcry at national humiliation on the world stage.

Subsequently, when Lt. Colonel Colin 'Mad Mitch' Mitchell and his Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders retook the city in early-July with bagpipes skirling and pledged to maintain order with an iron fist, or 'Argyll Law', the regiment and its CO became overnight media celebrities.[462] However, the aggression with which Mitchell had restored control brought him into direct conflict with his political and military superiors who were cautious not to inflame the security situation or Arab international opinion more generally. By the time of British withdrawal in November, therefore, Mitchell found himself a popular hero within British society and an enemy of the political establishment.[463] This situation soon carried itself over into the awards system in 1968. Mitchell became one of the few battalion commanders not to be awarded the DSO in recognition of his leadership and the brave conduct of his regiment. This very public rejection by the establishment caused a serious media and public outcry. The *Daily Mail* asked its readers in a front-page story, 'Why was Mad Mitch snubbed?', whilst subsequent articles were filled with letters from angry readers demanding greater recognition for national heroes.[464] One letter perhaps summed up the mood:

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[462] Edwards, p. 1.

[463] For more on the author's views of Mitchell see, Matthew J. Lord, ''Mad Mitch', the media and Britain's final war of decolonisation: The place of the 'soldier-hero' in 1960s British society' (Unpublished MA by Research thesis: University of Leeds, 2014).

[464] Peter Duffy, 'Why was Mad Mitch snubbed?', *Daily Mail*, 24 January 1968, p. 1, in the *Daily Mail Historical Archive* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/dmha/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DMHA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EE1864565860&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>[accessed 26/02/17].

> Doubtless the man [Mitchell] himself dislikes all the publicity, but because he had the courage to speak out against the dreary Whitehall Civil Servants, must his bravery and great display of leadership be by-passed?[465]

Other newspapers, particularly conservative ones such as the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Express*, continued to propel the story and especially the collective insult to the Argylls. For instance, the latter paper reported that the Jocks felt 'their regiment and their colonel had been kicked in the sporran out of jealousy'.[466] Ultimately, however, this outcry from the largely conservative public sphere did not change the far more modest MID awarded to Mitchell instead.

Whilst awards policy in Aden was in many ways uncontroversial, the curious episode of 'Mad Mitch' once again reveals significant points about the interaction between gallantry and dirty wars. On the one hand, the government censored Mitchell's award due to his independent strong-arm tactics in a conflict where they demanded minimum force. This appears in strong contrast to the censorship of government-endorsed dirty tactics in other operations. Furthermore, the government's actions served to enhance public scrutiny of Mitchell's actions rather than deter them. On the other hand, however, the case of 'Mad Mitch' still demonstrates the Labour government's squeamishness over awards for the recognition of gallantry in a dirty war context: on this occasion, involving perceivably excessive use of force and international criticism. Whilst the precise circumstances of this episode may be different, therefore, the increasing political awareness within Whitehall as to the sensitivities of awarding medals for controversial campaigns remained the same.

The Mitchell case reveals several other significant points. Firstly, the government's determination to withhold a DSO from Mitchell and the Argylls reveals just how far it continued to retain conceptual direction over the awards system, despite the considerable groundswell of public and media pressure. The extent to which the government was able and willing to oppose public opinion demonstrates its degree of confidence and control. Secondly, this episode once again underlines the importance of gallantry to the conservative public sphere. In this case, right-wing newspapers not only sought justice for British heroes, but also

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[465] Letter from Jacqueline Hussey, in 'Letters: Disgusting this insult to Mad Mitch', *Daily Mail*, 26 January 1968, p. 4, in the *Daily Mail Historical Archive* <http://find.galegroup.com/dmha/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DMHA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=EE1864566246&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>[accessed 26/02/17].

[466] Express Staff Reporter, 'No medal for Mad Mitch starts an uproar', *Daily Express*, 24 January 1968, p. 1, in the *Daily Express Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express> [accessed 26/05/16].
See also, Daily Telegraph Reporter, ''Mention' Award for Co 'Insults' Argylls', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 January 1968, p. 1, in *The Telegraph Historical Archive* <tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/4RgoA7>[accessed 26/02/17]. Lord, p. 57.

wanted to use Mitchell for point scoring against Labour government COIN policy. This episode demonstrates how far gallantry remained a conservative emotive issue and priority in the late-1960s.

Thirdly, the degree to which the issue was not only about recognition of Mitchell, but also his regiment, once again highlights the importance of 'collectivities' in British hero culture. As with Kenya and Suez, this episode underlines the difficulties encountered by the government in dealing with the recognition of specific heroic groupings and how their subsequent decisions sent powerful messages into the public sphere, on this occasion confirming public fears that Britain no longer respected its heroes. Finally, the fact that this episode had been depicted in the media as one involving the neglect of *military* heroes on the grounds of *political* expediency – combined with the public clamouring for a revision of policy over Mitchell's DSO – again highlights the prevalence of military priorities within the British public sphere. This, to some extent, indicates a militarised popular attitude towards awards policy.

Britain's dirty wars of the 1950s and 1960s had a fluctuating and unpredictable relationship with concepts of gallantry. There is indeed considerable evidence of continuity in the functioning of this system despite the number of controversial or clandestine wars during this timeframe. In more instances than not, gallantry awards were recommended, considered, gazetted and publicised normally. Coincidingly, however, there is also significant evidence that 'dirtification' – the extent to which awards became affected by the domestic moral and international criticisms of 'dirty wars' – increasingly encroached upon the system. Until the mid-1950s Tory politicians and the military interacted with this pressure through a reactionary counter-policy of keeping gallantry awards 'above' these controversies, as manifested most strongly in Kenya and Egypt.

By the late-1950s, however, Tory politicians, civil servants and servicemen were increasingly adopting a more cautious and sensitive approach to this criticism, as demonstrated initially by the limited scope of military awards for Cyprus and, more especially, the increased resorting to partial censorship over Oman in the face of international scrutiny. The importance of this shift, spearheaded by the Conservative government, is evident in the continued reliance of successive governments – including Labour ones – on the toning down or censorship of sensitive citations throughout the 1960s, particularly in Guiana and Borneo. As the British military faced fresh challenges in Northern Ireland from 1969-onwards, however, the dilemmas thrown up by 'dirtification' became much more intensified and pressing into the early-1970s.

II

The British military commitments of the 1950s and 1960s had brought about some significant, if not largescale and all-encompassing, changes to the awards system. The following decade of conflict would, however, witness a far more decisive shift in government policy. Whilst renewed covert operations in Oman once again highlighted the difficulties of reconciling the celebration of heroism with clandestine military intervention, the coinciding events in Ulster – a divergence from usual COIN conditions – required the government to completely rethink its approach to the dilemmas of public transparency in medals policy during 'dirty wars'.

As Smith and Roberts have noted, the Northern Ireland Troubles possessed many of the core characteristics of a textbook 'dirty war': no declaration of hostilities, an emphasis on government secrecy and prosecution of military operations within the state against poorly defined enemies.[467] In this conflict British troops were no longer fighting in some distant colonial outpost but within the UK itself against rebellious British citizens. Furthermore, due to its proximity to the mainland and its unusual circumstances, there was considerably more media coverage, international scrutiny and public interest in events, particularly regarding the issue of Human Rights. Indeed, numerous historians have recently pointed to the 1970s as a landmark turning-point in increasing awareness of Human Rights issues – particularly relating to use of military force against civilian populations – which, accordingly, appeared to manifest itself in international and domestic responses to British military deployment in Ulster.[468]

Rod Thornton has painted a bleak picture of the British Army's initial operations in Northern Ireland from deployment in August 1969 to the imposition of Direct Rule in March 1972. He claims that, with a lack of police collaboration or political leadership, the Army was given freedom to use misjudged and heavy-handed strategies that escalated, rather than de-escalated, the Troubles.[469] Furthermore, neither the Army or politicians had any efficient strategy over public relations, whilst the Irish factions projected clear and well-considered messages.[470] Under these circumstances, the directionless British government feared its grasp over the public narrative of events was increasingly slipping away during the opening years of insurgency. It arguably stands to reason, therefore, that British concepts of gallantry and their culture of publicity became increasingly susceptible to the dilemmas of this dirty war. Not only could the promotion of such awards appear as a triumphalist celebration of state violence

[467] Smith and Roberts, pp. 381-84 and 387.
[468] For instance, Samuel Moyn, 'The Return of the Prodigal: The 1970s as a Turning Point in Human Rights History', in *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, ed. by Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2014), pp. 1-14 (p. 2).
[469] R. Thornton, 'Getting it Wrong: The Crucial Mistakes in the Early Stages of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland (August 1969 to March 1972)', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30 (2007), 73–107 (pp. 104-5).
[470] Thornton, pp. 100-1.

against its own people, thus inflaming pre-existing tensions, but could also lead to reprisals against medal recipients who would receive heavy media coverage.

It was soon clear that publicity attached to gallantry awards was indeed causing government concern over their control of information and public narratives. In December 1969 the Wilson government prepared to gazette the first medals for troops facing the Shankill Riots of October against the Loyalist community. Three soldiers from The Light Infantry Regiment were to be recognised from non-operational awards quotas. Lt. Colonel John Ballenden was to be given the OBE for his skilful command throughout the riot whilst Sergeant W.J. Power was to be awarded the BEM for repeatedly leading his men forward into the hostile crowd to lift ringleaders. Most importantly, however, Private Shawn James was to win the GM for remaining in an exposed position on top of an armoured vehicle for long periods of time as a marksman, neutralising rioters bringing firearms to bear on the Army cordon. On one occasion, he had his rifle shot away and he coolly reached for another and continued with his job.

Regardless of the restraint shown by soldiers during the riot, the messages projected by these awards – particularly James' sniping of rebellious citizens on British soil – presented a media relations nightmare in London, particularly in the context of domestic and international Human Rights scrutiny. Wilson immediately considered the citations to be inflammatory and decided on a significant curtailment of information provided to the *London Gazette.* One civil servant explained Wilson's attitude:

> The Prime Minister considers that there is a distinction between the Army's undertaking an active service role in the United Kingdom and its undertaking a similar role overseas. The circumstances in Northern Ireland were very special and quite unlike anything we have experienced in the United Kingdom in recent history. He considers that the handling of awards for gallantry in these unique circumstances requires unusually careful handling, and that it is quite sufficient to use the abbreviated or general citation…The Prime Minister has also asked me to say that if it is considered to be an essential feature of such awards for gallantry that detailed citations…have to be published, he feels it would be inappropriate to make any awards for gallantry in Northern Ireland regrettable though this would be.[471]

Consequently, a letter from 10 Downing Street to the Head of the Home Civil Service, Sir William Armstrong, detailed how Wilson had insisted on only a sentence-long citation outlined as, 'The following awards for gallant and meritorious service during the rioting in the

[471] *TNA,* DEFE 13/681, Michael Halls to Ned Dunnett, 18 January 1970.

Shankill district of Belfast in October 1969'.[472] Additionally, Wilson decided that the usual facilities for media relations – photo opportunities and interviews – were also to be banned.

This decision would, however, provoke immediate resistance amongst policymakers, particularly within the MoD. Considering the significant media focus on Ulster and the public transparency previously attached to most awards, many predicted considerable difficulty in dealing with the press following any announcement of blanket censorship. As one letter to Armstrong noted, 'we can foresee considerable difficulty with the Press. These awards, particularly the George Medal for Private James, are bound to attract considerable attention and interest on the part of the public and the Press.'[473] The Army Chief of Public Relations [CPR] similarly described the PM's decision as putting all concerned in 'an extremely awkward situation… [which] will doubtless lead to some very critical reporting'.[474] Furthermore, another MoD official advised that, 'we should make it crystal clear to No. 10, that while, of course, we accept the PMs decision, we are on extremely difficult ground with the Press, etc. No. 10 should be left in no doubt that, as facts are wheedled out and various theories advanced, we could, and almost certainly will, be in for a very rough ride.'[475]

Clearly, there was considerable division – particularly between the MoD and Downing Street – over what messages these gallantry awards presented to the media. On the one hand, as Wilson argued, gallantry awards could project a triumphalist and provocative message of British heroism against the Human Rights of rebellious citizens and should accordingly be censored. On the other hand, various government officials believed that censorship would do more harm than good. Thornton notes the 'crime of omission' in British media relations during this period: allowing anti-British rumours to circulate in the absence of explanations and substantial government information.[476] Some commentators accordingly feared that journalists would fill the void created by the censor with conspiracy theories that could suggest even further infringement of Human Rights. Concerns centred around the potential assumption that medal recipients were special forces deployed on covert operations which, if spread publicly, could have complicated the government's relations with the Irish factions. As one ministerial aide observed, 'as the citation gives so little away, we may well be asked whether these individuals were engaged on some secret operations and I think it will be worthwhile

[472] Ibid, Halls to Sir William Armstrong, 20 December 1969.
[473] Ibid, E.J. Dunnett to Armstrong, 9 January 1970.
[474] Ibid, Note from John Groves, CPR, 'Northern Ireland Honours', 20 January 1970, attached to a minute from A.D., 'Awards for Gallantry in Northern Ireland', 21 January 1970.
[475] Ibid, Minutes of B.A.E. Taylor, 'Northern Ireland Gallantry Awards', 21 January 1970.
[476] Thornton, pp. 100-101.

saying 'No''.[477] Moreover, it was feared that the absence of citations would result in the media questioning the legality of the incidents which occurred. As a letter to Armstrong observed:

> Their [the media's] suspicion that the Army is trying to hide something, either about the real merit of the actions for which these awards were won, or about the incidents themselves would be increased if any background information had to be given "off the record". If we are not forthcoming, the Press will almost certainly find out the facts for themselves.[478]

To prevent a media frenzy along these lines, therefore, many civil servants suggested that gazetting the awards in the usual way would be less damaging.

Secondly, the problem of how to keep a muzzle on not only the recipients, but also on their regiment and families also led many civil servants to draw similar conclusions. It appeared virtually impossible to instruct these various groups to keep quiet without the media noticing that they had been gagged and pointing to government embarrassment at the awards. As Taylor complained, 'I cannot see how we are going to keep a lid on the PR aspects of this; the members of the Battalion will talk [regarding] what instructions they were given; indeed the instructions themselves will provide leads to a Press which will be alerted to what looks like "hushing up". The PM should be aware of this.'[479] Another observer similarly noted that, 'We cannot…guarantee that all the men in the unit who might be approached give answers that are consistent with our official line, certainly without making it obvious that they have been muzzled'.[480] Clearly, therefore, the government feared accusations of gagging medallists and their surrounding communities, once again sending out messages of government heavy-handedness and failing to sufficiently respect heroism. Finally, it is also evident that the Labour Government became increasingly aware of their own potential unpopularity in the press if they started censoring awards. Rather cynically Taylor observed that 'a matter such as this is unlikely to gain the Government much credit in an election year'.[481]

Ultimately, therefore, Wilson reconsidered his decision and in late-January 1970 instead chose to publish fairly lengthy citations, coupled with photo opportunities and tightly supervised interviews. As one source described it, 'normality should be the key word'.[482] Instead of opting for direct censorship the government had thus decided on cooperating with and manipulating the media in the hope of indirectly influencing the direction of press coverage. Wilson was

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[477] *TNA*, DEFE 13/681, Note by A.D., 'Awards for Gallantry in Northern Ireland', 21 January 1970.
[478] Ibid, Dunnett to Armstrong, 9 January 1970.
[479] Ibid, Note by Taylor, 'Northern Ireland Gallantry Awards', 21 January 1970.
[480] Ibid, Minute from A.C.W. Drew, 30 January 1970.
[481] Ibid, Taylor, 'Northern Ireland Gallantry Awards', 21 January 1970.
[482] Ibid, Mr. Johnson to the Chief of the General Staff, 'Gallantry Awards in Northern Ireland', [undated, February 1970].

particularly keen to use this opportunity to steer public narratives of the conflict by stressing the restraint of British troops, in line with Human Rights sensitivities. For instance, in pre-prepared answers to the troublesome question of what had earned him the GM, James was to stick closely to the phrasing of his citation: 'neutralising the hostile fire under specific instructions'. As the CPR reiterated, 'It is considered most important that this phrase should continue to be used at the briefing and that there should be no reference to the killing which resulted from Pte. James's action'.[483] Furthermore, the fact that well over 1,000 rounds were estimated to have been fired at Army positions, whilst British troops returned fire with only 68 was particularly marked for emphasis in pre-prepared answers.

Indeed, it appears that the media was happy to convey this message. The *Daily Express* praised how James' 'cool courage cut down bloodshed on a night of horror', whilst most focused on his lack of concern when his rifle was shot away from him.[484] Additionally, one government report into the state of the headlines claimed that 'all papers have dealt soberly with the subject and the only quoted remark of Pte James…is innocuous. The Dublin papers have dealt with the story in a straight forward manner. I understand that BBC and ITV coverage in England and Ulster was favourable to us.'[485] Only a couple of disgruntled Northern Ireland politicians, Ian Paisley and John M'Quade, complained publicly.[486] Clearly the fine balance between cooperating as far as possible with the media whilst tightly gagging the public remarks of recipients was an effective formula for this period of the Troubles. The case of the Shankill awards would be cited in government files from 1970-1971 as the best way to deal with the media on citations.[487] To an extent, therefore, it was a landmark case.

Collectively, the period from 1969-1970 had seen the British government and military wrestle with the application of gallantry awards to a metropolitan insurgency. The debate had reflected concerns about control of the narrative being spun about British policy in Ulster, particularly in the new Human Rights context, and fears of losing control of this narrative through rumours of dirty tricks within the public sphere. Despite Wilson's initial reluctance, the government – cajoled primarily by the MoD – chose a successful path of cautious collaboration with the media. This, in turn, suggests the endurance of significant state direction over concepts of gallantry in Ulster. By anticipating the potential encroachment of 'dirtification' upon these awards – particularly relating to allegations of covert actions, illegality and disproportionate

[483] Ibid, Minute from John Groves, CPR, 'Answers to questions to be held against enquiry', 13 February 1970.
[484] Ibid, Frank Robson, 'So-cool soldier wins George Medal', *Daily Express*, 25 February 1970, [newspaper cutting].
[485] Ibid, Note, 'Northern Ireland Gallantry Awards', 25 February 1970.
[486] Ibid, 'Shankill 'battle' honours attacked', *News Letter*, 25 February 1970, [newspaper cutting].
[487] For example, in preparations for announcing Petty Officer Medical Assistant F.J. MacLaughlin's GM. See *TNA*, DEFE 13/837, Colonel J.J. Day to CO 45 Commando Royal Marines, 4 March 1971.

force – and subsequently adopting a well-reasoned strategy, the government had avoided media criticism and loss of influence over narratives of gallantry within the public sphere. The extent to which the MoD had an important role in the outcome of this policy, combined with the fact that these measures were intended to protect military recognition from criticism, once again underlines that this process was 'militarised' in terms of influence and priority. Moreover, despite the evident focus on James' GM, the degree to which these three awards were largely judged on their combined messages once again points to the importance of heroic 'collectivities' within the public sphere. It was considered that their *combined* censorship or otherwise would affect the messages radiating from the government into the public sphere.

Despite success in handling the gazetting process during the opening months of the Troubles, the awards system still projected, according to some government commentators, problematic messages which threatened government influence over media narratives of the conflict. As the campaign was regarded primarily as a policing action across its opening phase, non-operational awards had been issued through normal peacetime quotas, thus leading many within the military to complain about the dearth of medals available. The prospect of introducing an extra allocation of non-operational awards was therefore considered in February 1970 and rejected for several political reasons. Firstly, it was noted that any extra allocation would:

> …have to be specified as additional with a citation which would refer to Northern Ireland. This would draw attention to the fact that additional honours were being awarded in circumstances where, as far as I know, no additional honours have been granted previously. (Additional quotas have heretofore been granted only where the Army was engaged in active operations against terrorists, eg in Malaya, Cyprus and Kenya).[488]

Extra awards were therefore considered undesirable as they would draw unwanted attention to the Northern Ireland context within general honours lists and suggest that the conflict was evolving into a regular military counterinsurgency. Furthermore, the extra allocation was feared to 'provoke critical comment from the Home Office, who are under increasing pressure from the police authorities…that the proportion of honours available for the Police Force in proportion to its size is a great deal less than that available to the Armed Forces'.[489] Hence, as the government continually wished to emphasise the extent to which Ulster was a policing action in which soldiers were simply intended to act as 'common law constable' in support of the police and Human Rights, increased awards in favour of the Army would suggest military

[488] *TNA*, T 301/40, Memorandum, 'Northern Ireland' [undated, early-1970].
[489] Ibid.

prioritisation and emphasis.[490] Thus, what was described in one report as 'a pretty delicate topic' was rejected.[491] This debate over extra allocations once again indicates how far the government was concerned about the messages emanating out of the awards system: suggesting the intensification of a conflict they wished to downplay. As this was an issue of lists, the debate again demonstrates the continued importance of heroic 'collectivities' in conveying unwanted messages into the public sphere.

Throughout 1970 and 1971 the security situation deteriorated sharply. With the Army given freedom to indulge in more heavy-handed COIN methods at the expense of Human Rights by the newly-elected Heath government this, in turn, alienated the Catholic community and bolstered PIRA's insurgency. Correspondingly, the non-operational award framework became increasingly inappropriate for intensified conditions and by November 1971 the military had applied for a full operational scale. Controversially, however, the application requested that all awards – apart from the VC, GC and occasionally GM due to their status – be 'gazetted periodically without citations'.[492] The explanation offered by Major-General Chandos Blair was that the GOC:

> …strongly recommended that as the majority of citations are of such a nature that their publication could lead to reprisals against recipients or their families the citations should be withheld from publication and awards gazetted only for "gallant or distinguished service" or similar headings.[493]

The British military command in Ulster were, therefore, largely attempting to remove from the public sphere all information regarding acts of gallantry below the level of first-degree status. Whilst the issue of medallist safety was obviously of paramount concern, the previous correspondence of early-1970 over similar censorship proposals highlights the extent to which political concerns were also likely to have played an important role in this decision. Gazetting without citation allowed the state to award medals for operational gallantry deemed as possibly controversial or infringing Human Rights by the media or PIRA propaganda. Alongside safety considerations, therefore, the request was made by military personnel to preserve military recognition: a 'militarised' process.

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[490] Tony Geraghty, *The Irish War: The Military History of a Domestic Conflict* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 26.
[491] *TNA*, T 301/40, Memorandum, 'Northern Ireland' [undated, early-1970].
[492] Ibid, Defence Services Secretary to Secretary of State for Defence, 'Operational Scale of Awards for Northern Ireland', 15 November 1971.
[493] *TNA*, DEFE 13/682, Minute from Major-General C. Blair, 'Operational Gallantry Awards – Northern Ireland', 2 February 1972.

This once again caused resistance amongst those officials who supported continued public transparency. For instance, Milner-Barry responded that:

> I am not entirely happy about the suggestion that you intend to dispense with citations in all but VC and GC awards. This would not be in accordance with our past practice. I would hope that you may find it possible to adopt a descriptive citation for all gallantry awards where this is customary and an abbreviated citation only in those cases where there is a special security risk.[494]

Milner-Barry, therefore, questioned blanket censorship on the basis of medallist safety, suggesting that restrictions were only required when there was clear proof of danger to the individual. He clearly felt that these measures were an overreaction and excessive sacrifice of public transparency. Similarly, the Army CPR, for whom gallantry awards were a source of positive pro-British propaganda, was also hostile to the idea. He noted that, 'I am sure GOC has very good reasons for recommending as he has but I must confess I find his recommendation illogical'. Indeed, he went on to argue that the extent of television coverage during operations meant that soldiers hardly remained anonymous anyway and therefore citations made little difference to their safety.[495] His objections were, however, overruled.

Indeed, government opposition to the military's censorship proposals was, in general, much less vocal and formidable than it had been during the talks of 1969-70. The major escalation of the conflict across 1970-71 most certainly ensured that most objectors kept silent. The PIRA pledge to specifically target British soldiers following 'Bloody Sunday' on 30 January 1972, when Paratroopers shot 26 unarmed civilians in Derry, heightened the sense of danger posed to soldiers in the limelight, which inevitably had a bearing on decisionmakers. Indeed, a note from a chief advisor to the Defence Secretary, Lord Carrington, expressed particular fear that there would be considerable public and press interest in PARA awards following their actions on 30 January.[496]

Other developments may also have accounted for the general lack of resistance towards the proposals. As Liz Curtis argued, the period from 1971-onwards saw the new Heath government apply greater informal pressure on the media to ensure that they favoured the British in their news coverage coupled with increasing government debates about the possible

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[494] *TNA*, T 301/40, Milner-Barry to General Blair, 'Operational Scale – Northern Ireland', 15 December 1971.
[495] *TNA*, DEFE 13/682, John Groves, CPR, to Defence Services Secretary, 'Gallantry Awards – Northern Ireland', 27 January 1972.
[496] Ibid, R.A. Custis to Lord Carrington, attached to the minutes of Major-General C. Blair, 'Gallantry Awards – Northern Ireland', 4 February 1972.

use of direct censorship.[497] In this context it is perhaps unsurprising that politicians and civil servants may have become desensitised to an issue which had seemed such a seismic shift back in 1969-70. Coincidingly, Thornton has noted that the Tory government conceded to the military a considerable degree of policy-making freedom. This culture may have accounted for the lack of questioning of military proposals.[498] Finally, as General Blair observed, 'circumstances have now changed radically and the general public is educated to almost daily threats to reprisal against the Security Forces and are therefore unlikely to be surprised by, or opposed to, tighter security precautions'.[499] It was thus argued that public hostility to censorship had decreased in the general climate of crisis which developed during 1971-1972. Amid this notable public value shift, therefore, censorship could now be implemented with little popular opposition. Details were finalised on 9 February 1972 with Lord Carrington being informed that:

> …at a meeting with CGS…it was agreed in order to protect recipients of awards from reprisals: a) Recipients may have their citations read out to them…but neither the whole nor extracts may be copied. The citations will be kept in a secure location and graded RESTRICTED. b) Recipients of awards will be given a copy of their citation about a week after Investiture. Warnings will be given to recipients of the danger of releasing information in citations, according to the sensitivity of the subject.[500]

The Tory government had, therefore, finally taken the plunge and applied direct censorship to gallantry awards. From now on most citations would, except in the case of VCs, GCs and some GMs, only reveal the name and award of the recipient. No photos, details of the action, personal information or interview opportunities would be provided. When the first censured citations were announced in the British press there was surprisingly very little comment. *The Times* merely observed that 'The list does not contain the usual citation setting out the reasons for the awards, nor does it give the home towns of the men. The Ministry of Defence said last night that this was done in the interests of the security of the men.'[501] Indeed, there is little other evidence of media comment. The prevailing public mood of the time, as Blair predicted, combined with the self-regulation of the media, may explain this response.

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[497] Liz Curtis, *Ireland: The Propaganda War – The British Media and the Battle for Hearts and Minds* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), pp. 5 and 18.
[498] Thornton, pp. 84-85.
[499] *TNA*, DEFE 13/682, Blair, 'Gallantry Awards – Northern Ireland', 4 February 1972.
[500] Ibid, M.A./M.S. to Lord Carrington, 'Northern Ireland Awards', 9 February 1972.
[501] 'Honours for services in Northern Ireland', *The Times*, 24 May 1972, p. 2. *The Times Digital Archive* <http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/start.do?prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni> [accessed 26/04/15].

This seismic policy decision had major implications for the evolving relationship between British concepts of gallantry and dirty wars. First and foremost, it altered the fragile balance at the centre of the hybrid awards system which had existed during the 1960s: a system which had been capable of partial or full censorship in cases of extreme secrecy but which aimed overwhelmingly to maintain public transparency even in the most controversial campaigns. The blanket ban on citation publication from 1972-onwards completely changed the balance within this system. The emphasis on public knowledge and public celebration – a major element of British concepts of gallantry – had now been sacrificed to ensure medallist safety, to maintain secrecy and to avoid public scrutiny.

Once again, the radical decision to censor Northern Ireland awards underlines the prominence of the Conservative government in primarily wrestling with the interaction between gallantry and another aspect of the Sixties value shift – the moral interrogation of war. Much like previous Tory governments, that of Heath had been willing and able to adjust medals policy in a changing political and cultural environment to ensure that the system continued to run smoothly. Closely linked to this, the ease with which the government fully censored Irish gallantry awards reveals the extent of its direction over concepts of gallantry within the system. Since the opening phase of operations politicians, officials and soldiers had feared that gallantry awards would become increasingly susceptible to public scrutiny and criticism, with corresponding loss of government control. However, the government's withholding of medal information at an opportune moment in the Troubles continued to pre-empt any such development. The fact that the state, whilst remaining cautious, was able to award medals without criticism from the public sphere, despite the controversy of a dirty war, proves that it retained significant conceptual influence over gallantry. Moreover, the censorship process once again points to the influence of the military over the awards system. It was primarily to protect *military* recognition that publicity was sacrificed, and it was primarily soldiers who pushed for this change. Indeed, despite the restoration of police primacy and 'Ulsterisation' from 1975-76 when the Army took a backseat role, the military preference for censorship remained in place throughout the decade and beyond. In terms of the justifications and the personnel integral to censorship, therefore, this policy can be regarded as evidence of 'militarisation'.

If medals policy in Northern Ireland had reflected elements of dirty warfare – namely, state action against its own people – then the coinciding policy in Oman from 1970-1977 echoed rather different features of this kind of conflict: covert operations and foreign policy deception. London had become gradually embroiled in a new insurgency when the Dhofar Liberation Front [DLF] had begun targeting British bases in the region from 1962-onwards. However, it was the ousting of Sultan Said bin Taimur by Qaboos bin Said in a coup of July 1970 which

brought about extensive British military assistance to quell the insurgency. A British Army Training Team [BATT] was used to guide the Sultan's forces, whilst 22SAS was secretly deployed in a training, intelligence and combat role.

However, with the FCO specifically stressing the non-combatant role of British forces in Oman – both within the media and on the international stage – the issue of SAS gallantry soon became an extremely sensitive issue as the first recommendations reached Whitehall. Between September 1970 and July 1972, the Command-in-Chief UK Land Forces had collected seventeen recommendations, many of them specifically military or 'operational' in character, for SAS awards in Dhofar. As a report by the DSS inevitably noted, however, 'any announcement of operational awards for gallantry in action might be the source of some embarrassment' and, consequently, these awards had not yet been submitted to the MoD Honours Committee.[502]

By early-1973 this procrastination had become unsustainable for the Conservative government. There remained, however, considerable division between the MoD and the FCO as to the best way of recognising what the former viewed as distinctly *operational* gallantry whilst preserving Britain's clandestine policies in the region. The FCO 'expressed concern that publication of operational gallantry awards would involve official recognition of the actual extent of SAS involvement [in combat operations]' and hence recommended the provision of non-operational awards to emphasise the non-combatant façade of SAS activities. The Army Department at the MoD, however, responded that these medals 'would be an inadequate recognition of the services now being performed under active service conditions'.[503] The prospect of adopting operational awards under tight short-term censorship – kept secret from both the media and even the soldiers themselves – was subsequently raised and rejected on the basis that medallists were not under the same personal risks as those in Ulster, whilst operational success did not rest on the censorship of awards. Indeed, in considering the current censorship policies in Northern Ireland, the DSS noted that 'the case here [in Oman] is a quite different one. The reason for withholding gazetting in the present case would be that it would be embarrassing on grounds of foreign policy'.[504]

With operational awards considered almost non-negotiable according to the MoD and censorship less justifiable in the Omani context, a new compromise was gradually achieved. The Chief of the General Staff, Sir Peter Hunt, concluded that 'I do not believe it would be

[502] *TNA*, DEFE 69/725, Report by DSS to Defence Secretary, 'Gallantry Awards for the Special Air Service serving in the Dhofar', [undated, January 1973].
[503] Ibid.
[504] Ibid.

right for us…to press the FCO to agree to open publication [of operational awards]'.[505] In essence, therefore, the Army agreed to surrender public transparency and use abridged citations. Conversely, the FCO agreed to accept operational awards 'on condition that publication would be phased, to avoid undue attention…and that SAS affiliations would not be indicated'.[506] A compromise had thus been reached, allowing the Army to subtly reward SAS operational gallantry as medals slowly trickled through the gazetting process, whilst the FCO could credibly maintain that British troops were engaged in only a training capacity.

This system remained effective until the end of military operations in 1976. Whilst some Oman-related awards did receive some minor press coverage, there was no mention of SAS connections and little indication of combat involvement. For instance, when Lt. Colonel Peter de la Billiere's DSO was gazetted on 27 January, the citation spoke only of 'gallant and distinguished service in Oman' whilst his leadership of 22SAS between 1972-74 was omitted in favour of noting his home regiment, The Light Infantry.[507] Despite this government success, however, the issue of recognising SAS gallantry re-emerged in April 1976 when Sultan Qaboos announced his desire to recognise the contribution of a range of British military personnel, including special forces, to victory in the Dhofar War. When the prospect of a combined Unit Citation and distribution of the Al Sumood Medal (roughly translated to 'For Valour') was muted in recognition of SAS gallantry – and, by implication, a Dhofar ribbon worn on the upper sleeve of each soldier publicly acknowledging their role – there was immediate resistance from the FCO. As their Protocol department wrote to the DSS:

> Ministers have been consistently unwilling to draw attention to the role of the SAS in the Dhofar rebellion…I am sure that Ministers would be unwilling to…have the spotlight turned on the role played by the SAS. I suggest therefore that General Perkins [Commander of the Sultan's Armed Forces] should be discouraged from pursuing the idea of a Unit Citation for the SAS Regiment.[508]

However, with the FCO reassured that the Sultan 'clearly shares our view that publicity should be kept to a minimum', combined with an awareness that he would 'undoubtedly feel piqued'

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[505] *TNA*, DEFE 69/725, Chief of General Staff to Chief of the Army Staff, 'Gallantry Awards – Oman', 18 January 1973.
[506] *TNA*, FCO 8/2718, 'Proposed Sultanic Citation for 22 SAS', 20 December 1976.
[507] Citation of Lt. Colonel Peter Edgar De La Cour De La Billiere, MC, DSO, *The London Gazette*, 26 January 1976, p. 1295. *The Gazette Online Archive* <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/46808/supplement/1295> [accessed 24/04/17].
[508] *TNA*, FCO 8/2718, R.W.H. du Boulay to Air Vice-Marshal B.C.T. Stanbridge, 1 June 1976.

by British diplomatic refusals, the proposal became gradually more acceptable in Whitehall.[509] Indeed, the FCO soon concluded that:

> …the simple offer of the Sultan's Bravery Medal [Al Sumood] to the Regiment as such, for retention at Headquarters and without the wearing of any emblem and without publicity either in the UK or Oman would be unlikely to direct attention to the SAS role. To refuse this award might well endanger our good relations with the Sultan at a time when we are about to inform him of our intentions for the gradual run-down of the British military presence in Oman.[510]

On this subsequent understanding of the diplomatic imperative of accepting an award, combined with the relative media safety of doing so, the FCO finally accepted the proposal in December. With the CO 22SAS making his final visit to Oman in January 1977, it was thus suggested that the Sultan issue the medal in a 'quiet and unpublished ceremony' during this period.[511]

Ultimately, therefore, British awards policy in Oman reaffirms many of the findings previously drawn from Ulster. Once again it indicates the willingness of the Tory government of the early-1970s to resolve the tension between the awards system and dirty wars. By extending another form of censorship to the awards system, the government further advanced the flexibility with which the system dealt with these controversial conflicts. Secondly, Oman confirms the continued state influence over concepts of gallantry within the awards system. The FCO had feared considerable domestic and international scrutiny were the government to grant SAS awards – thus revealing the extent of operations. The fact that the Tory government worked out a compromise solution that succeeded in granting military awards whilst averting public attention ensured that it retained substantial influence over concepts of gallantry within the system. Thirdly, the extent to which this gazetting arrangement was brought about through the military's insistence on operational awards once again demonstrates how far any changes to the system where undertaken to preserve military recognition and priorities. Finally, the fact that problems in Oman largely centred around one regiment, the SAS, reveals the continued prominence of 'collectivities' to British hero culture. It was felt that collective SAS recognition, either through awards lists or the Al Sumood medal, would send out compromising messages about the scale of British military commitment. The fact that this was

[509] Ibid, D.E. Tatham to I.T.M. Lucas, 'Sultanic Award for 22 SAS', 15 July 1976. Lucas to Mr Weir, 'Sultan of Oman's Victory Medal', 11 October 1976.
[510] Ibid, Lucas to Mr Wier, 'Sultanic Citation for 22 SAS', 20 December 1976.
[511] Ibid, MoD to FCO Middle East Department, 'Sultanic Citation for 22 SAS', 5 January 1977.

avoided through drip-feeding awards demonstrates the importance and continued dilemma of heroic collectivities, and the messages they emitted, to government policy.

The period from around 1955-1979 witnessed successive British governments undertake a wide range of military commitments, many of which have been characterised by historians as 'dirty wars' for a range of reasons. These include dubious grounds for entering conflict; the scale of alleged atrocities and human rights abuses; excessive use of military force; ill-defined enemies; persecution of civilian populations and the use of propaganda, clandestine operations and deception. Indeed, at a time in which these morally questionable features of conflict where being increasingly challenged within the British public sphere, it stands to reason that notions of contemporary martial heroism and gallantry – concepts often at the moral and romantic centre of war culture itself – would be equally compromised.

How far British concepts of gallantry can be regarded as having undergone a 'dirtification' process during this period varies according to perspective. On the one hand, the moral legitimacy of gallantry awards within the British public sphere appeared to remain remarkably untouched by conflicts which often came under significant moral scrutiny. Indeed, the caution and skill of the British state in pre-empting such criticism, either through public insistence that gallantry remain 'above' controversies or by censoring citations, ensured that gallantry awards retained high public reverence throughout these decades. Considering that commentators have often alluded to the moral degeneration of medals in coinciding conflicts such as the Vietnam War, it can be convincingly argued that there was no comparable 'dirtification' of British gallantry.[512] Indeed, the widespread public support for medallists across this period suggests that there was a remarkably consistent media tendency to support bravery regardless of the wider military context. This appears to corroborate with recent studies of Iraq and Afghanistan that have indicated continued public reverence for soldiers despite revulsion for the wars in which they fight.[513]

On the other hand, whilst dirtification did not lead to a moral interrogation of British medals at public level, it did lead to significant preventative measures by the government that did have a major impact on concepts of gallantry. The increasing fear of politicians, civil servants and soldiers that awards would face criticisms at domestic and international level led to a growing dependence on censorship from the late-1950s onwards, thus sacrificing the culture of publicity and transparency that had previously surrounded the awards system. Accordingly, whilst the moral integrity of gallantry awards remained relatively intact through these dirty

[512] See Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), pp. 113-116.
[513] Danilova, p. 5. Richard Dannatt, *Boots on the Ground: Britain and her Army since 1945* (London: Profile Books, 2016), pp. 4-5.

wars, the mechanisms of state and public recognition did indeed change, with a corresponding impact on heroic commemoration. To this extent, therefore, Britain experienced a 'dirtification' of gallantry.

This process reveals much about the interaction between concepts of gallantry and the Sixties value shift. Again, it underlines the centrality of conservatives – in this case overwhelmingly Tory politicians and military personnel – in engaging proactively with a key component of the value shift: anti-war sentiment. The Eden and Macmillan governments, combined with their military advisers, were the first to significantly wrestle with the dilemma of awarding medals in controversial conflicts. The often hybrid, selective approach adopted by these administrations to censorship had a lasting legacy throughout Britain's wars of decolonisation. The Heath government and its military advisors then made a second major policy decision in totally censoring Northern Ireland awards. Clearly, Conservative governments remained concerned as to how the increasing moral interrogation of war would affect British awards and, hence, constructively took measures to allow the awards system to continue operating normally. Labour governments simply followed the Tory lead. Not only were the Tories at the centre of the transition, but the coinciding importance of the military – an institution with deep conservative values – further ensured that transformation took place within conservative parameters. Additionally, the degree to which conservative elements of the press, particularly the *Daily Express* and *Daily Telegraph*, combined with their readership, periodically focused on medal-related controversies such as Suez awards or Mad Mitch, also reinforces how the issue of dirtification took place within a conservative sphere of debate. In summary, the initiative over awards policy in dirty wars continually rested with conservatives throughout this period. How far they proactively engaged with the anti-war sensitivities of Sixties political and cultural transition accordingly demonstrates the degree to which conservatives could be at the forefront of reform in order to preserve the main essence of gallantry.

The key moments of transformation occurred around the late-1950s and early-1970s which, once again, downplays the centrality of the 1960s to this interaction. Again, Marwick's 'convergence' theory explains this development. Firstly, in relation to converging 'events' and 'human agencies', the coexistence of several particularly controversial wars alongside the incumbency of numerous Tory governments – fully engaged in matters relating to gallantry awards – in both the late-1950s and early-1970s inevitably had a bearing on the timing of transition. Secondly, 'convergences and contingencies' such as the rise of general anti-war sentiment – both domestically and internationally – around the late-1950s and a renewed emphasis on Human Rights in the early-1970s perhaps also explain the timing of changing policies. The convergence of these factors ensured that the late-1950s and early-1970s were moments of catalyst amongst longer-term evolution.

In terms of the momentum behind reform, whilst the public did not make the same direct contribution to medals policy shown in other chapters, change nevertheless clearly resulted from pressure at both state and, hypothetically, societal level. The potential hostility anticipated by politicians from the public sphere over medals for these campaigns was a major consideration in deciding to censor citations. Hence, the influence of both the state and the perceived influence of society were both important to reform. Nevertheless, the dirtification of gallantry also underlines how far the state managed to retain vital influence over concepts of gallantry within the awards system. Pre-emptive government measures ensured that the system continued to operate relatively normally, without hindrance, despite occasional public criticism of the military campaigns themselves. The extent of this state influence is perhaps best exemplified in its ability to run policies which were somewhat at odds with public opinion in Kenya, Suez and, in a different capacity, Aden. Whilst the government could, therefore, no longer expect unconditional public passivity over its use of military force from the mid-1950s, this scrutiny did not extend particularly far into the awards sphere.

However, despite important conceptual influence, the increasingly controversial political nature of military intervention, combined with how far the government felt obliged to revise medals policy accordingly, suggests that concepts of gallantry were increasingly politicised in this period. The fact that the government attempted to avoid international and domestic criticism during these wars confirms Smith and Mead's notion that gallantry awards were increasingly subject to political interests and agendas after 1945.

Dirtification also again highlights the extent to which medals policy and concepts of gallantry were 'militarised' spheres. Military personnel were overwhelmingly at the forefront of changes to the awards system during dirty wars, regardless of how far the government still attempted to maintain 'civilian' emphasis through police primacy and declaring internal 'emergencies'. Furthermore, the successive decisions to censor awards were made largely to protect *military* recognition for these campaigns. For instance, in Ulster the decision to censor awards in 1972 was dictated almost exclusively by the Army at a time when the police stake in the awards system was notoriously low. Moreover, this policy remained in place despite incoming police primacy across the mid-late 1970s. The measures adopted during these dirty wars can therefore be regarded as part of a 'militarised' process in terms of arguably disproportionate military influence over policy and the overwhelming prioritisation of military recognition over all other political considerations.

Finally, the dirtification of gallantry also points to the importance of 'collectivities' within British hero culture throughout this period. Lists of awards published during these dirty wars were thought by politicians to project important and often problematic messages into the

public sphere about the nature of campaigns and contemporary heroism. On the one hand a list of awards could be seen to reflect the military emphasis of a campaign which the government wished to downplay, as happened in Ulster during 1971. On the other hand, the absence of such lists was predicted to bring accusations about how the government neglected British heroes. Indeed, whilst the awards system functioned relatively normally throughout these conflicts, lingering periodic fear of neglecting heroic 'collectivities' and what this might, in turn, say about British national decline remained potent in the political and public sphere. In the case of Suez, these accusations were narrowly avoided by government action. In Aden, the snubbing of the Argylls led to considerable public anger which, in turn, was transformed into complaints about British decline. Whilst historians such as Webster have previously alluded to depictions of vulnerable, neglected heroic masculinity in fictional accounts of anti-colonial insurgencies, this study demonstrates that such feelings of neglect could also permeate current affairs.

Having explored the application of British concepts of gallantry within military operations, the final chapter will consider a wider remit still further, in the 'decolonisation' of gallantry awards across the British Commonwealth.

Chapter 4

The 'Decolonisation' of Gallantry

I

During her Hyde Park speech of 26 June 1956 in celebration of the VC Centenary, the Queen emphasised that the 'tradition of courage has in this century become the common inheritance of all citizens of the Commonwealth. In the past century, thirteen hundred and forty-four men have won the Victoria Cross…They were of different colours and creeds. They fought in many lands and with many different weapons. But their stories are linked by a golden thread of extraordinary courage.'[514] This speech neatly encapsulated the principal message at the centre of the series of public events, organised by the Conservative government, in celebration of VC heroism. The Centenary was not simply intended as a celebration of Britain's highest military award. It was also a very public affirmation that this medal lay at the heart of a shared Commonwealth conception of gallantry and heroism which, in turn, constituted part of a shared sense of 'Commonwealth culture'.

Since the creation of the modern awards system in the mid-nineteenth century British concepts of gallantry had been associated with the greater imperial project. As a high proportion of awards were distributed for valour in colonial wars and increasingly accessible to both coloniser and colonised, the British awards system not only became a chief source of recognition for imperial heroes, but also a leading advocate of the notion of a shared 'imperial culture'. Under British tutelage, this shared culture was defined by love of sportsmanship, democracy, law, pioneering spirit, industriousness and courage. Historians have, however, traced how imperial culture initially evolved and, ultimately disappeared from the public sphere of both colony and metropole following the increased rate of decolonisation after 1945. For instance, recent studies by Michael Dawson, Klaus Dodds and Peter Hansen, featuring a range of Commonwealth events throughout the 1950s, have each suggested that this shared imperial culture now had to co-exist uneasily with not only a new sense of Commonwealth equality, but also with increasingly incompatible, sometimes anti-imperial, notions of separatist national identity.[515]

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[514] *TNA*, HO 286/35, Copy of the Queen's Speech, 'Review of Holders of the Victoria Cross in Hyde Park, 26th June, 1956' [undated, 1956].

[515] Michael Dawson, 'Acting Global, Thinking Local: 'Liquid Imperialism' and the Multiple Meanings of the 1954 British Empire & Commonwealth Games', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23 (2006), 3-27. Klaus Dodds, 'The great trek: New Zealand and the British/Commonwealth 1955-58 Trans-Antarctic Expedition', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 33 (2005), 93-114. Peter H. Hansen, 'Coronation Everest: the Empire and Commonwealth in the 'second Elizabethan age'', in Ward, ed., 57-72.

Rarely, however, have historians correspondingly addressed the fate of shared concepts of imperial heroism and gallantry in this period of cultural transition. The above royal speech suggests a continued British determination to recognise a shared and modernised heroic culture during the 1950s political transition from Empire to Commonwealth. Yet, a range of coinciding developments throughout this timeframe suggest that both Britain and its former-colonies were struggling to maintain common cause over concepts of gallantry. By the time of the Centenary itself, India had long since cut its ties with British awards, Pakistan was in the process of following suit and British ministers feared that South Africa was also taking its first steps in a similar direction. In many cases, a clear justification for breaking with this system lay in strong fears of ongoing British ideological domination over concepts of gallantry at a time in which medals were increasingly viewed as indicators of independent national sovereignty. These developments and fears, therefore, perhaps demonstrate the limits of Britain's newfound Commonwealth ideology and the extent to which, regardless of the rhetoric, Britain's awards system remained distinctly 'imperial' in outlook. The clear policy ambiguities revealed during these years – a rhetoric devoted to new-found Commonwealth equality combined with underlying diplomatic tensions regarding the extent of continued British domination – therefore raises important questions about the conflicted ideological direction of British concepts of gallantry and 'Commonwealth culture'. This chapter, accordingly, traces how British medals policy interacted with the political and constitutional implications of decolonisation and, ultimately, how far concepts of gallantry 'decolonised'.

Indeed, the degree to which decolonisation is often identified as a crucial element of the Sixties transition whereby Britain adjusted to reduced international standing and, consequently, witnessed major changes to its politics, culture and society, ensures that analysis of the 'decolonisation of gallantry' is an effective way of further uncovering the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties. Current historiography focuses on two main questions: how far decolonisation impacted upon British culture and, if it did have a significant impact, whether this constituted more of a conservative or progressive response. Numerous commentators have followed Bernard Porter's assertion that the 'mass of [British] people, as they had all along, cared very little' about decolonisation.[516] Others, however, follow John MacKenzie's conviction that imperialism provided an important staple of British culture and that, accordingly, decolonisation had seismic implications for this culture.[517] In terms of the political direction of this response, historians such as Burkett have highlighted how the public response to decolonisation was often one of liberal anti-imperial relief, whilst others including

[516] Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1995* (Harlow: Longman, 1996), p. 347.
[517] John M. MacKenzie, ''Comfort' and Conviction: A Response to Bernard Porter', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36 (2008), 659-668 (p. 662).

Stuart Ward and Antoinette Burton have instead argued that British culture witnessed substantial conservative regret and pro-imperial nostalgia.[518]

By assessing the extent and nature of the interaction between concepts of gallantry and decolonisation, therefore, this chapters will further explore the simultaneous relationship between gallantry and the Sixties value shift. Decolonisation will be defined and explored in several ways. It will be gauged in a literal constitutional sense regarding how far Commonwealth nations broke away from the British system from the Pakistani withdrawal of the mid-1950s through to the partial Australian withdrawal of 1975. It will also be measured in relation to how far the British abandoned their ideological control over the system in exchange for more equal contributions from their Commonwealth partners.

The culture of rewarding gallantry through tokens and commemorative gestures was already deeply rooted within many precolonial societies which Britain came to dominate during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For instance, B.C. Chakravorty has explored the use of stone commemoration, symbolic objects, promotion, cash awards and other privileges within Indian culture to recognise acts of gallantry from the ancient to early modern period.[519] The implementation of a systematic and hierarchical system of medals and chivalric honours as the focus of gallantry recognition appears, however, to have been very much a British cultural imposition over time. Particularly within South Asian societies, British awards instilled and consolidated the concept of gallantry as systematically graded according to 'degree' of bravery; accessible to all soldiers in some capacity; continually commemorated as a visible addition to uniform in the shape of a medal and tightly associated with imperial authority in the form of service to the British monarch.

The evolution of the imperial system was piecemeal and slow. Indians were entitled to the Indian Order of Merit from 1837, the Indian Distinguished Service Medal from 1907 and VC from 1911. White colonial settlers were eligible for most British awards upon their creation. It was, however, only with the experience of the First and, to some extent, Second World War that British medals evolved into a fully formed hierarchical system of four levels and, with substantial imperial contributions to these total wars, colonial subjects received widespread recognitions within the awards system. With a whole range of gallantry awards now being applied on an empire-wide basis, the core concept at the heart of the system – gallantry itself – was increasingly promoted as an 'imperial' characteristic as well as a British one.

[518] Burkett, p. 3. Stuart Ward, ''No nation could be broker': the satire boom and the demise of Britain's world role', in *British culture and the end of empire*, ed. by Ward, 91-110 (p. 109). Antoinette Burton, 'India Inc.? Nostalgia, memory and the empire of things', in *British culture and the end of empire*, ed. by Stuart Ward, pp. 200-216 (p. 230)

[519] B.C. Chakravorty, *Stories of Heroism: PVC & MVC Winners* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1995), pp. 30-32.

Furthermore, due to the wartime circumstances in which the awards system expanded, the notion of a shared imperial heroic culture had a significant military emphasis.

Despite these grand ideals, however, in reality the machinery of the awards system and the direction of its ideological framework remained very much in British hands. This perhaps reflected the fact that the early British honours system had existed way before the emergence of empire and, indeed, it had embarked on its modern incarnation during the Crimean War, which was not a colonial campaign. Subsequently, whilst the British system had an extensively promoted imperial application, it may have been viewed first and foremost as a *British* project for *British* heroes in both the British political and public mind.

Although the Dominions were indeed 'consulted' on any change to the system, this often constituted a rubber-stamping procedure and hence the ideological and structural direction remained firmly in the hands of Whitehall. Indeed, when colonial states disagreed with elements of the system they were more likely to register opposition simply through refusing to recommend specific awards, such as Canada's refusal to confer certain British honours following the Nickle Resolutions of 1917 and 1919. Furthermore, the extent of royal prerogative over the imperial system ensured the centrality of British influence. With the Crown as 'Fount of Honour' signing through most awards, it was primarily left to British ministers to advise the monarch on the suitability of awards recommended from the Empire.

Moreover, royal prerogative ensured that Crown insignia featured on all gallantry awards regardless of where in the world they were conferred. Particularly within colonial territories in which no standardised system of gallantry recognition had previously existed this awards system may, therefore, have appeared to be yet another symbol of imperial cultural domination and imposition. Indeed, both Marc Vancraenbroeck and Osumaka Likaka have emphasised the extent to which the medal itself was a powerful symbol of colonial authority, often recognising the achievements of imperial soldiers over rebellious subjects, whilst indigenous populations 'had no say over the choice of the designs of medals and the meanings of embedded messages'.[520] In many ways, therefore, the seemingly outward-looking imperial system of gallantry awards remained very much a British dictatorship in both an ideological and administrative sense. The nature of this imperial control ensured that the awards system soon encountered difficulties as Britain struggled to adjust to new political realities after 1945. With the rise of newly independent post-imperial nations such as India and Pakistan, alongside increasingly confident older dominions such as Australia, Canada and South Africa, there was

[520] Marc Vancraenbroeck, *Les medailles de la presence belge en Afrique centrale 1876-1960* (Brussels: Bibliotheque royale de Belgique, 1996). Osumaka Likaka, *Naming Colonialism: History and Collective Memory in the Congo, 1870-1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), p. 8.

a growing eagerness to express newfound political and cultural freedom. These impulses soon affected Commonwealth attitudes to British awards.

The early-mid 1950s witnessed the first signs of growing tension between the imperial system and anti-colonial impulses in new Commonwealth nations. With India declaring itself a republic in January 1950 New Delhi established a series of completely independent awards, some of which sat ill at ease with British concepts of gallantry and soon confirmed to Whitehall the difficulty of interacting with a completely separate awards structure over which it had no control. For instance, the Indian Constitution placed a direct ban on citizens receiving 'any title from any foreign state' which, in practice, included many British honours.[521] This clear attempt to part with imperial class-structures or hierarchies caused particular irritation in Whitehall as many Indian citizens continued to serve the British Empire in Asia and Africa long after Indian independence and yet could not be properly rewarded. For instance, in late-1951 the British wished to award a BEM to Velagitham Rengasamy for rescuing British personnel during an ambush in the Malayan Emergency. However, they feared strong resistance from the Indian government if they proceeded. Consequently, it was decided to reduce Rengasamy to a fourth-degree award of KCBC which did not carry any post-nominals. Similar solutions were decided upon in other troublesome cases. In perhaps the most famous and well publicised Anglo-Indian disagreement over awards, London initially attempted to confer a knighthood on an Indian national following Tenzing Norgay's ascent of Mount Everest in 1953 and New Delhi once again refused. As Hansen has noted, 'Nehru's rejection of a knighthood reasserted Indian independence and incorporated Tenzing into the traditions of Indian nationalism that had rejected British honours as symbols of British domination'.[522]

The British encountered similar difficulties regarding conceptual disagreement and anti-imperial nationalist impulses within its own system as the increasingly self-assertive governments of both Pakistan and South Africa requested similar national decorations from 1951-onwards, this time within the British framework. In the Pakistani case, there was immediate British conceptual unease over the proposed 'Order of the Crescent' to replace senior awards at a time in which the new Tory government was increasingly aware of the inadequacies of other British orders and their need for reform. Addressing the question of where the Order would be positioned in relation to existing decorations, Knox responded rather dismissively that:

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[521] *TNA*, DO 35/3294, Attached extract from the Constitution of India, Section 18 Subsection 2, Minute from Sir Cecil Syers to Lt. General Sir Archibald Nye, 24 January 1951.
[522] Hansen, p. 64.

> [Regarding] the contention that Class I of the Order of the Crescent should be placed immediately after the VC and GC. The reply is, of course, quite simple, that the VC and GC should be used instead by Pakistan. An Order in the Commonwealth system is inappropriate for this purpose. Anyone can invent a series of Orders, I know that very well from my postbag. The great difficulty is to fit them properly into a system already well established.[523]

Nevertheless, the Pakistanis remained committed to these chivalric orders despite their perceived antiquatedness in London.

Another area of disagreement centred around the seniority of new awards within the official Commonwealth 'order of wear'. To promote their enhanced status as newly independent nations, the Pakistani and South African governments wished for their decorations to occupy senior positions within the British hierarchy. Karachi, for instance, desired that their Order of the Crescent be placed immediately after the VC and GC but before the prestigious Order of the Garter. The British, however, wishing to avoid placing the new order above those of historic lineage and prestige, explained to the Pakistani HC that such a request 'would, if adopted, give rise to considerable difficulty'.[524] The Conservative government did subsequently solve this issue by 'not including any of these awards in the official list and appending a statement to the effect that, under the regulations governing the awards, Class I of the Order of the Crescent is to be worn immediately after the Victoria Cross'.[525] However, it had once again underlined to the Tory government the difficulties in reconciling nationalist impulses with their hierarchical system.

Pretoria had similarly informed the British government in mid-1953 that all its new decorations, including the South African Coronation Medal, would take precedence over all existing British gallantry awards within the South African order of wear. This move inevitably angered British policymakers, particularly as PM Winston Churchill had already instructed that the rather minor Coronation Medal should be worn far down the medal hierarchy. As the CRO confirmed to Knox,

> …the effect of the Unions proposals is apparently that all these decorations and medals will be worn not only before the Insignia of all Orders of Chivalry but also before the Victoria Cross and the George Cross. In this respect the Union Government

[523] *TNA,* DO 35/3297, Knox to Dixon, 18 March 1952.
[524] *TNA,* T 333/86, W. Dixon to Brigadier M.A. Khanzada, 9 April 1952.
[525] Ibid.

> are going further than the Pakistan Government proposed in the case of their contemplated new Orders…The proposals are therefore…not very satisfactory.[526]

Indeed, the decision received considerable backlash from ex-servicemen and the media. The Secretary of the Johannesburg British Empire Service League, Major Judd, claimed that the policy to 'regard all British medals and decorations as 'foreign' has come as a great shock to service men'.[527] Fortunately, following 'bitter protests' by veterans' groups, by November 1954 the *Evening News* was able to report that they had 'good news from South Africa…that Victoria Crosses (already awarded) will remain the Union's premier decorations for the fighting forces. An order issued a day or two ago saying that South African decorations would take precedence over VCs was apparently due to a misunderstanding between two Government departments'.[528] The year or more it had taken to confirm VC seniority, however, suggests that Pretoria had indeed attempted to overshadow all British gallantry awards and had eventually made a policy U-turn. Despite this reversal, the problems faced over the order of wear had once again underlined to the Tory government the dilemmas faced due to increasing nationalist impulses within the awards system.

There was, however, even greater conflict over royal symbolism and constitutional jurisdiction over the new Pakistani and South African awards. The traditional feature of royal insignia upon medal designs and royal affiliations within medal titles had served to conceptually uphold the monarch as 'Fount of Honour' over all imperial awards. Within the postwar climate in which emerging nations wished to use their new gallantry awards as indicators of independent national identity and sovereignty, however, this perceived marker of continued British supremacy became a major bone of contention. In particular, the degree to which royal assent over imperial awards gave British ministers considerable influence over the medal recommendations of increasingly independent Commonwealth nations meant that the issue of royal authority was of particular sensitivity within negotiations.

The new Orders of the 'Crescent' and 'Pakistan' featured no royal affiliations in either their decoration designs or titles. As Charles Dixon of the CRO wrote to Brigadier Khanzada at the Pakistani HC, 'The insignia of Orders instituted by The Sovereign during the last two hundred years bear either the Crowned Effigy or Cypher of the Sovereign… It is suggested that you may care to invite the authorities in Pakistan to consider an amendment of the design of the insignia…on these lines.'[529] At the same time, however, the CRO recognised that such

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[526] *TNA*, DO 35/5001, Dixon to Knox, 16 January 1953
[527] Ibid, From our correspondent, 'South African Medals – Surprise at Precedence Decision', 7 October 1953 [newspaper cutting].
[528] Ibid, Untitled article, *Evening News* 26 November 1954 [newspaper cutting].
[529] *TNA*, T 333/86, C.W. Dixon to Brigadier M.A. Khanzada, 9 April 1952.

demands were likely to cause disquiet in Karachi given their increasing nationalist preferences. As Dixon noted:

> …any criticism of this kind was likely to be resented by the Pakistan Government, seeing that the Crescent is the main feature of the Badge of Pakistan and as such appears on the Pakistan flag and is part of the design of the Insignia of the proposed Order. It would be particularly difficult to give any reason for suggesting the change which would satisfy the Pakistan Government, since presumably the change was suggested on religious grounds. In any case I did not think that they would like the title 'Order of the Sovereign'.[530]

Once again, therefore, the Conservative government had reached a conceptual deadlock with Karachi, this time over recognising royal symbolic authority over Pakistani awards. Similar disagreements had been encountered regarding new South African decorations: The Castle of Good Hope Decoration, Louw Wepener Decoration, Cross of Honour and Southern Cross Medal replacing the VC, GC, MC and BEM respectively. In March 1953 Pretoria had to be reminded that all new medals 'instituted by the Sovereign should bear some emblem of the Sovereign, whether the Royal Effigy, the Royal Cypher or the Crown'.[531] The South Africans had, however, relented and integrated royal insignia. The Pakistanis, on the other hand, refused to concede and negotiations remained in stalemate.

Alongside tension over symbols, Karachi and Pretoria came into further conflict with London over the literal royal constitutional authority and administrative jurisdiction over their new awards. In March 1953 Karachi requested 'that the prerogative of creating and instituting decorations and awards may be extended in favour of His Excellency the Governor-General of Pakistan who should be authorised to create and institute decorations and awards and to sign the Warrants'.[532] This request clearly constituted an attempt to draw final decision-making authority on medals, and the concepts of gallantry which lay behind them, away from London and towards the Queen's representative in Karachi: in essence, giving Pakistan complete control over its own system within a wider British framework.

The British, however, remained adamantly opposed. As one official reported, informing Pakistani diplomats of British attitudes, 'I emphasised that the Sovereign's prerogative in this matter was absolute…and that in this matter of 'Orders' and honours generally the Palace were naturally extremely sensitive'.[533] Talks between London and Karachi subsequently

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[530] *TNA*, DO 35/3297, Dixon to I.L, 18 January 1952.
[531] *TNA*, DO35/5001, Note by the CRO, 'South African Decorations and Medals', March 1953.
[532] *TNA*, DO 35/3297, Khazi Nazimuddin to Sir Alan Lascelles, 18 March 1953
[533] Ibid, Gilbert Laithwaite to Rodney R. Sedgwick, 19 June 1953

reached deadlock and only slightly loosened when the Pakistanis declared their intention to form a republic in 1954. In the period before this took effect, however, residual tensions remained. As Minister of the Interior, Ghulam Ahmed, told one British diplomat in April:

> …there has been strong pressure in the Pakistan Cabinet to go ahead with the institution both of the Medal and of the Orders, on the ground that the Constituent Assembly was a sovereign body and perfectly free to legislate in a matter such as this. [The British] said that that was an entire misconception and that it would in any event be gravely disrespectful to Her Majesty for action of this type to be taken.[534]

By this stage, however, the British appeared solely concerned with restraining the Pakistanis during the final years in which they remained part of the British system before the establishment of independent awards in 1957.

In the South African case, the issue of royal jurisdiction resurfaced in February 1956 when the Governor-General's office wrote to the Queen's Private Secretary asking that she be 'informed' – rather than her permission sought – for the Governor-General to receive independent authority to create and distribute South African awards.[535] Unlike the Pakistani case, however, the British were surprised and rather embittered by this South African move to unilaterally usurp conceptual control away from London and what this, in turn, suggested about Pretoria's wider political ambitions. As Gilbert Laithwaite, formerly of the British HC in Karachi, wrote to the Palace, 'The proposals therefore mark a definite step in the direction of Republicanism and are greatly to be regretted. But, if the Union Government are bent on taking this action, it would be useless to raise any question about it, and to do so could only provoke controversy which would be most embarrassing to Her Majesty.'[536] The Eden government thus decided to accept the South African move but remained deeply unhappy about it.

The early-mid 1950s had, therefore, demonstrated to the British the difficulties of continuing to operate their awards system on a Commonwealth-wide basis. The Indian case had underlined the problems of working with an independent awards system which projected some distinctly anti-colonial principles, thus hindering cooperation. The South African and Pakistani tensions, whilst largely nullified when Karachi and Pretoria withdrew from the British system in 1957 and 1961 respectively, had, nevertheless, underlined the difficulties of attempting to accommodate the nationalist agendas of new nations within the existing British framework. The extent to which London had been unwilling to delegate conceptual influence

[534] Ibid, Sir P. Liesching to Major Edward Ford, 27 April 1954.
[535] DO35/5001, D.S. Preller, Secretary to Governor-General, to P.S. to Queen, 11 February 1956.
[536] Ibid, Laithwaite to Charteris, 23 February 1956.

to its Commonwealth partners, whilst also struggling to accommodate their ideas into the existing framework, revealed an enduring imperial psychology within Whitehall towards concepts of gallantry in which policymakers wished to retain both administrative and conceptual dominance. This had proven incompatible with new nationalist agendas and, hence, Karachi and Pretoria had both departed the system. Having found no satisfactory solution to adapting the awards system to newly emergent Commonwealth nations, however, the Conservative government gradually realised that it would need to project a new sense of equality and flexibility if their global system was to endure into the future.

This tense phase of British-Commonwealth negotiations over the future awards system once again underlines the importance of successive governments in engaging with shifting political and cultural circumstances related to the Sixties: in this case, decolonisation. Whilst this diplomacy reveals in many ways the stubborn inflexibility of the Churchill and Eden governments to sufficiently adapt to emerging Commonwealth needs, on another level it also shows their desire to retain these nations within the awards system and to accommodate new ideas as far as possible. This was particularly evident in government attempts to integrate the Order of the Crescent into the honours hierarchy and in their grudging acceptance of South African seizure of policymaking powers from the Crown. On this level, therefore, the Tories once again demonstrated their willingness to engage with changing ideas in relation to concepts of gallantry.

This episode also once again reinforces the extent to which concepts of gallantry, as constituted in the awards system, remained extensively in state hands during this period. Most of the interactions between London and Commonwealth governments occurred very much on a straight-jacketed diplomatic basis and, apart from South African public reaction to VC demotion, there appeared to be little momentum for reform from any public sphere. Indeed, with awards reform considered an integral part of the nation-building process by politicians in Pretoria and Karachi, it remained the priority of political elites.

Following the considerable difficulties encountered by British policymakers in integrating new nationalist impulses within the awards system during the early-mid 1950s, the second half of the decade and the early-1960s were characterised by an attempt by successive Conservative governments to adapt this system for a more modernised, culturally diverse, voluntary and equal Commonwealth culture. This clearly constituted an effort to anticipate and forestall any further nationalist discontentment and accusations of continued imperial domination, thereby safeguarding the global application of a shared awards system into the post-imperial future.

As noted above, the VC Centenary of June-July 1956 provides ample evidence of this intensified Commonwealth focus. Indeed, from the earliest stages of ministerial planning for the celebration, a key emphasis had been firmly placed by the Conservatives on making it a distinct show of Commonwealth unity. A letter to the Prime Minister from the MoD explains the organiser's thinking on the matter:

> We hope that these celebrations will develop into an important Commonwealth ceremony…It occurs to us that as your Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers is due to open on 27th June, you may care to link this with the Ceremony, possibly by attending the Service in Westminster Abbey on the 25th, and by attending the Parade in Hyde Park on the 26th. I feel you will agree that the whole Ceremony has great possibilities as a demonstration of Commonwealth solidarity and I should be glad to have your approval to our proposals.[537]

Indeed, it is evident that this political message was strongly and effectively projected throughout the celebrations. In relation to logistical prearrangements, London soon made it clear to Commonwealth nations that they would be attending the gathering as equal members of a heroic VC family and should pay accordingly. It was estimated that of the surviving VCs across the world 224 were living in Britain and 101 were living overseas and it had to be decided how to locate these VCs, who would pay for their expensive passages to Britain and their maintenance for the week.[538] There was a precedent on which to base Commonwealth financial arrangements for the celebrations. In 1929 the Prince of Wales had hosted a VC dinner in the House of Lords and on this occasion, it appeared that the British Government had paid the travel and maintenance expenses of all VCs, British and colonial. However, as T.A. Charlton of the Treasury Solicitor's Office noted, 'I think it could be argued that, the progress, since 1929, in independence of individual Commonwealth countries has been such that it would be invidious to expect the British Government to pay'.[539]

Clearly, therefore, the Tory government considered that financial contributions from all nations would make the centenary a truly Commonwealth event and hence it was decided that the British would only pay VC maintenance costs in London whilst the Commonwealth paid the travel expenses of their own medallists. Indeed, whilst there were notable initial grumbles from various Commonwealth states – particularly those in the process of establishing independent awards systems – by mid-1956 most had fully accepted the British proposals. On

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[537] *TNA*, WO 32/21757, C.N. to the MoD PPO's Committee, 'Centenary of the Introduction of the Victoria Cross', [undated] December 1955, [Appendix A] Draft Letter to Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden [undated].
[538] *TNA*, WORK 21/232, C.E. Key to E.F. Muir, 3 November 1955.
[539] *TNA*, WO 32/15921, T.A. Charlton to 'D.F.(a)', 'Centenary of the Introduction of the Victoria Cross', 10 October 1955.

an administrative and financial level, therefore, the Centenary could be interpreted as evidence of Commonwealth equality and unity.

This message was also reflected in the official imagery and rhetoric used in the centenary events themselves as public spectacles. The Hyde Park parade witnessed a high turnout of not only Commonwealth VCs but also of Commonwealth leaders. Out of the two-thousand seats provided for spectators during the parade, eight-hundred were reserved for Commonwealth visitors by the Tory government.[540] Moreover, the Queen's speech – the very heart of this event – emphasised unity through martial heroism. Advice from the War Office to the Palace speech writers stressed that:

> The Review is very much a Commonwealth affair...It has been won in many lands by sailors, soldiers and airmen from many races of the Commonwealth, and the deeds that have merited its award run like a golden thread through the tapestry of a century of the history of the Commonwealth…. It is fitting that so many visitors from the Commonwealth should be here to see the representatives of their countries take their place on parade with the bravest of our Commonwealth and Empire Family.[541]

Indeed, as demonstrated previously, the Queen chose to incorporate much of this language into her speech. Furthermore, a major exhibition of VC relics established at Marlborough House continued to emphasise the Commonwealth theme. As the Centenary organisers wrote to High Commissions, 'the Committee are of course most anxious to make the Exhibitions as representative as they can of the Commonwealth countries'.[542] Consequently, significant museum collections were loaned from Australia, Canada and New Zealand, whilst the opening ceremony featured a speech by Eden flanked by military representatives from across the Commonwealth.

The success and reach of the Conservative government's message is evident in how far the British media willingly projected it into the public sphere. Newspapers covered the airport arrival of various VC contingents from overseas and provided accounts of their heroism. For instance, the *Daily Mirror* focused on the emotional arrival of Indian Captain Pakrash Singh who was reunited for the first time with the British officer he had helped to save in Burma during the Second World War. The article did, however, also acknowledge the growing

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[540] *TNA*, WORK 21/232, Memorandum, 'Joint Services Working Party: Celebrations in Connection with the Centenary of the Institution of the Victoria Cross – Minutes of the Sixth Meeting Held at Lansdowne House on 19th March 1956'

[541] *TNA*, HO 286/35, 'Notes suggested as a basis for The Queen's Speech at the Victoria Cross Centenary Review in Hyde Park on Tuesday 26th June', [Attachment A] Sir Austin Strutt to Sir Michael Adeane, 'V.C. Review – 26th June', 16 June 1956.

[542] *TNA*, DO 35/6557, General Bishop to the Military Advisors of Commonwealth HCs, 'VC Centenary Exhibitions', 5 April 1956.

distance between Britain and India on awards policy by observing, 'Bert Causey greets Captain Pakrash, who wears his VC ribbon after the Indian Partition Medal. The VC is regarded as a foreign decoration and the national medal is worn before it.'[543] Commonwealth links were therefore recognised in this case, but with simultaneous recognition of post-imperial conditions. The *Daily Mirror* also managed to conduct interviews with New Zealand VCs as they arrived, whilst the *Daily Express* did the same with Australian medallists.[544] *The Times* similarly covered the reunion of Canadian VCs at a London luncheon hosted by Lord Alexander of Tunis.[545] In an article of 15 June it also elaborately projected the Eden government's message of Commonwealth unity by celebrating that:

> The Victoria Cross has had an influence beyond the intention perhaps of its founders. This has been in the welding together of Commonwealth sentiments through its extension, dating back to 1867, to Commonwealth and colonial forces. This is signified by the arrival of large contingents coming from all over the Commonwealth for the present celebrations. Even the fact that some members of the Commonwealth have now become republics will not entirely sever their fighting men from the possibility of becoming members of the great fellowship. The citizens of India, Pakistan and Ceylon can still win and wear the Victoria Cross, with the permission of their Government.[546]

Media enthusiasm for the Centenary was not simply confined to Britain. Throughout the former-colonies there was interest in local VCs travelling to London to celebrate the great Commonwealth gathering and anger when governments appeared initially hesitant to fund travel expenses. For instance, the Australian newspaper, *The Age,* noted the anger of ex-servicemen's organisations regarding federal government Olympic spending and yet hesitance to look after VC winners.[547] Other regional newspapers simply noted with dismay that various Australian VCs could not afford to attend.[548] Similarly, the *Cape Argus* group in South Africa

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[543] Anthony Burton, 'Singh, V.C., saved Bert's life', *Daily Mirror*, 21 June 1956, p. 17, in the *Daily Mirror Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express> [accessed 25/05/16].
[544] Betty Smith, 'Shy V.C.s say 'Ask our wives'', *Daily Mirror*, 12 June 1956, p. 4; 'The Faces of Brave Men', *Daily Express,* 3 June 1956, p. 3, in the *Daily Mirror Archive* <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express> [accessed 25/05/16].
[545] 'Canadians 'Confident in Themselves'', *The Times,* 3 July 1956, p. 9, in *The Times Digital Archive* <http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/start.do?prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni> [accessed 30/04/16].
[546] 'For Valour', *The Times,* 15 June 1956, p. 11, in *The Times Digital Archive* [accessed 30/04/16].
[547] 'New Protest Over V.C.'s', *The Age,* 18 April 1956, p. 3. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1300&dat=19560418&id=elVVAAAAIBAJ&sjid=mpUDAAAAIBAJ&pg=3342,2478035&hl=en> [accessed 05/06/16].
[548] 'V.C. Centenary Great Trip, But No Money', *The Central Queensland Herald*, 12 January 1956, p. 26. 'Ted Kenna can't afford London trip – V.C. left holding broom', *The Argus*, 10 April 1956, p. 1. 'Help for VCs', *The Central Queensland Herald*, 17 May 1956, p. 29. 'Decision Soon On VCs

called for public subscription to shame Pretoria into action.[549] There was also intense interest amongst Commonwealth journalists in covering particular VC trips to visit memorials of national significance. Journalists from *The Age* accompanied the Australian VC contingent to Polygon Woods as medallists visited the graves of comrades and relatives.[550] The Canadian *Ottawa Citizen* similarly featured news of the VC trip to the Dieppe Cemetery.[551] Hence, both the British and Commonwealth media effectively and vocally projected the message of Commonwealth unity into the public sphere. At the same time, Commonwealth journalists also projected their own distinctive military histories within the context of this Commonwealth event.

Ultimately, therefore, the landmark VC Centenary of 1956 provides evidence of significant efforts to transform British concepts of gallantry away from a London-centric, imperial understanding and towards a more outward-looking, all-embracing, equal and interactive Commonwealth concept. It also reveals much about the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties. This initiative had been driven by the Eden government, once again highlighting the degree to which Tory politicians increasingly spearheaded innovation in the realm of gallantry awards after their previous diplomatic difficulties. Once again, the interaction between gallantry and an element of the Sixties value-shift – decolonisation – was constructively driven by Conservatives. The extent to which this message was government-directed also once again highlights the significant role of the state in transforming British awards from an 'Imperial' to a 'Commonwealth' system. Whilst the public sphere embraced and promoted this message, it was overwhelmingly a state-directed initiative, indicating the prominence of forces 'from above' in cultural transition.

Furthermore, the fact that the VC – the Empire's premier military award – with all its associated connections to shared military history and culture had been selected to pioneer the new political emphasis on Commonwealth concepts of gallantry indicates how far this transformation was 'militarised'. The degree to which the WO had been central to organising the Centenary underlines the role of military personnel in translating the message of

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Expenses', *The Central Queensland Herald*, 23 February 1956, p. 5. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/79263896> [accessed 09/06/16].

[549] *TNA*, DO 35/6557, 'State delay in aiding Union V.C.s criticized', *Cape Argus*, 10 April 1956 [newspaper cutting].

[550] 'V.C.s Most Memorable Day of Tour', *The Age*, 20 Aug 1956, p. 5. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1300&dat=19560820&id=z4hVAAAAIBAJ&sjid=PZUDAAAAIBAJ&pg=6991,2738491&hl=en> [accessed 05/06/16].
Staff Correspondent, 'Battlefields of World War I at Peace', *The Age*, 10 July 1956, p. 2. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1300&dat=19560710&id=twdQAAAAIBAJ&sjid=jpUDAAAAIBAJ&pg=6838,1064361&hl=en> [accessed 05/06/16].

[551] 'Bringing War Dead Home 'Unnecessary'', *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 March 1957, p. 17. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2194&dat=19570311&id=dQYyAAAAIBAJ&sjid=GuMFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6158,2351591&hl=en> [accessed 05/06/16].

Commonwealth unity into public events. Moreover, the focus on the VC ensured that the idea of a shared Commonwealth culture of heroism was overwhelmingly explored through reference to the shared military past in both political rhetoric and media coverage. The VC Centenary also once again highlights the importance of 'collectivities' to postwar hero culture. The notion of a multi-racial Commonwealth brotherhood was at the heart of rhetoric throughout the celebration, used to promote the Tory government's message of a Commonwealth partnership of equals participating within a shared system of awards. Indeed, with the British government attempting to promote the voluntary and multicultural aspects of the modern awards system, the emphasis on a 'collective' VC community was more crucial than ever. Finally, whilst the public sphere did embrace the Eden government's message of Commonwealth unity, it is once again apparent how far this cultural transition was driven primarily from state level and, accordingly, how far the state retained significant conceptual influence over gallantry awards during the decolonisation process.

The rhetoric of 'Commonwealth' rather than 'Imperial' unity stressed at the VC Centenary had a lasting impact upon various non-state organisations concerned with gallantry awards, who endeavoured to build upon these revised links. Perhaps reenergised by the major success of the VC Exhibition in Marlborough House, the Imperial War Museum [IWM] continued to expand its Commonwealth medal exhibits to promote its participation in recent military conflicts. Whilst this project had indeed been initiated in the early-1950s, the accumulation of Commonwealth decorations and the encouraged participation of Commonwealth advisors in exhibits gained renewed momentum in the mid-late 1950s. Across 1955-56 the museum received a large number of exhibits from Karachi including a significant number of gallantry medals and portraits of Pakistani VCs.[552] Furthermore, in 1957 the IWM Director, thanking the South African HC for recent medal donations, stressed that:

> We are most anxious that the Union Defence Forces should be as fully and attractively represented in this Museum as possible. It was no doubt with this in view that it was re-enacted by the Imperial War Museum Act of 1955, that one of the members of its Board of Trustees should be appointed by the Government of the Union of South Africa.[553]

The equality and unity emphasised at the Centenary was, therefore, reinforced by a major commemorative expansion of Commonwealth heroism at the IWM and a renewed attempt to get Commonwealth governments involved in such exhibits. The military focus of the IWM once again indicates how far the intensified Commonwealth focus had a militarised emphasis.

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[552] *IWM*, Gen2/1/601/44/8, List of Exhibits from Pakistan Government, 1 February 1955.
[553] *IWM*, B 6/2, IWM Director to Military and Air Advisor, 22 November 1957.

The revitalised Commonwealth links were also strengthened by medal associations. The VCA – born out of the Centenary and receiving close government cooperation and sponsorship – had been established mainly, according to Smyth, 'to foster the ties of comradeship which bind the Members of the Association of different races and colours throughout the Commonwealth. This is done in various ways, by means of correspondence, Christmas cards, reports, etc., and by holding a reunion in London every two years.'[554] Subsequently, Smyth – the Tory MP and ex-soldier with strong ties to the government – had worked tirelessly through the early-1960s to increase Commonwealth attendance at the Association's biennial reunions. In 1960 the Air Ministry had assisted the VCA 'to help Commonwealth members with free seats in RAF planes on a 'fill-gap' basis' and further government pledges of logistical and financial support had been received in 1962.[555]

In 1964 the Association had also invited numerous Commonwealth Prime Ministers to attend the reunion dinner as it coincided with a major Commonwealth conference. As Smyth wrote to PM Alec Douglas-Home thanking for his assistance in the 1964 reunion, 'the attendance of Overseas members has been excellent and none of them can speak highly enough of the wonderful way they were treated and looked after by the Air Forces of New Zealand, Australia and the RAF'.[556] Clearly, therefore, from the late-1950s to the mid-1960s the VCA, with the assistance of the Tory government, built upon Commonwealth themes of equality and partnership through the connections maintained at their biennial reunions. The centrality of Smyth to this effort once again underlines the importance of military personnel to advocating the Commonwealth message, whilst extensive media coverage of these events ensured that the message of Commonwealth unity continued to be projected into the public sphere.

The new emphasis on a modernised and shared Commonwealth notion of gallantry was also reflected beyond the VC into the civilian sphere. Another non-state organisation, the RHS, decided in 1962 to extend its prestigious Stanhope Medal to its Commonwealth sister-organisations. As its chairman, Admiral Kekewich, explained to the Annual Court of the Society:

> …we have made an important innovation and one which will, I hope, indeed I am sure, still further link all lovers of their fellows – humanitarians if I may use the term – throughout the Commonwealth. The Gold Medal I have mentioned above is now available to all those Societies throughout the Commonwealth whose aims and objects

[554] *TNA,* WO 32/17828, Smyth to Mr Weir, 29 April 1960.
[555] Ibid, J.A. Drew to S. Redman, 6 April 1960.
[556] *TNA,* PREM 11/5100, Smyth to PM Sir Alec Douglas-Home, 17 July 1964.

> are similar to our own and with whom we have in the past worked in the closest co-operation.[557]

At the same time, the RHS's numerous other awards were extensively applied throughout the Commonwealth. In 1962 alone a Fijian, Malayan, Maltese, Mauritian, Northern Rhodesian and West Indian were all decorated by the society at a time in which many of these nations were newly independent Commonwealth members or on the verge of becoming so.[558] Clearly, therefore, the new emphasis on concepts of gallantry as part of a shared Commonwealth culture continued to be promoted by several non-government organisations in the aftermath of the Centenary. In some senses this process can once again be interpreted as having been 'militarised'. In the case of the VCA, not only were policymakers overwhelmingly ex-military personnel, but they based their Commonwealth unity on shared military history and culture. Furthermore, whilst the RHS was a civilian organisation, its policies were often defined by figures such as Admiral Kekewich with a military background. Additionally, despite the independence of these organisations, they all retained close links with the British state and, indeed, the VCA was often sustained by government funding. Once again, therefore, the emphasis on Commonwealth gallantry can be regarded as having been supported by the state.

Alongside non-government organisations, it was also evident that the Tory government continued to build upon the Commonwealth, often militarised, emphasis established in 1956. This can be demonstrated in the widespread and efficient application of this system to the Commonwealth's closely integrated military campaigns in Malaya, Brunei and Borneo in the late-1950s and early-1960s. As Robert Jackson has stressed, these were the first campaigns in which independent Commonwealth members cooperated on more of a equal basis.[559] Consequently, the Conservative government was arguably more sensitive regarding Commonwealth attitudes towards the functioning of the system. For instance, when the newly independent Malaysian government, and that of New Zealand, objected to the British withdrawal of an operational scale of awards in 1959 'for the reason that the emergency in Malaya is not yet considered to be over', the British grudgingly accommodated their views by extending it another six months.[560] As High Commissioner Sir Geoffrey Tory wrote to the HD Committee in March 1960:

> I think there is more to lose than to gain by pressing our arguments on this question; and having gone so far as to consult the Malayans we can hardly act unilaterally now

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[557] *LMA*, LMA/4517/A/06/061, Speech by Chairman of the Annual Court of the Society, Admiral Piers K. Kekewich, in RHS Annual Report, 1962.
[558] Ibid.
[559] Robert Jackson, *The Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation: The Commonwealth's Wars, 1948-1966* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2011), p. 1.
[560] *TNA,* AIR 2/15156, C.R. Duckett to PUS, 27 November 1959.

> in disregard of their opinion. I think our best course would be to make a concession to them on this.[561]

The inclusive policy adopted by the Conservative government during these campaigns may, therefore, also indicate how far they build upon their Commonwealth emphasis within the awards system following the Centenary and how far shared military links lay at the heart of their design.

How far the Tory government continued to build upon their Commonwealth emphasis can also be demonstrated in their concerted effort to remove the overt imperial language from within the awards system. The Royal Warrants of various military gallantry awards were revised during this period to remove outdated imperial terminology. In the case of the VC warrant, reviewed alongside the DCM and DSO in 1961, Air Ministry correspondence justified a new draft primarily 'owing to constitutional changes in the Commonwealth during the last nineteen years' before newly referring to the powers bestowed in ministers of 'any Member Country of the Commonwealth Overseas' to annul VCs when necessary. [562] Further tweaks were also made surrounding references to 'colonies' and 'other territories'.[563]

This tendency of replacing the 'imperial' language of the British system was advanced further in late-1963 when the Order of the British Empire received similar reform efforts. Apart from the functional dilemmas encountered in the Order, outlined in previous chapters, various notable events within the Commonwealth had drawn Whitehall towards addressing perceivably outdated imperialist messages. First and foremost, following the recent decolonisation of most British colonial possessions in Africa, Asia and the West Indies between 1960-63, there was a growing fear amongst London officials that new Commonwealth nations – a high proportion of whom had elected to stay within the British system – were unlikely to use their new allocation of places within the Order due to its imperial aura. The Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Robert Black, wrote on 27 December 1963 of the relationship between the newly-independent Singapore and the Order that:

> …the new political leaders and politicians were anxious to disassociate themselves from Honours the origins of which lay in Britain. Such people certainly shy away from the word 'Empire'; on the other hand, they see advantage (as so many dependent territories do) on association with the Commonwealth…Might it not be better to

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[561] Ibid, Letter from Sir Geoffrey Tory, 25 March 1960, quoted in Memorandum from Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals Operational Awards and General Service Medals, Malaya', 4 April 1960.
[562] *TNA*, AIR 2/15471, Memorandum by Norman Brook, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medal – Eight Hundred and Eighty Third Report: Victoria Cross', 4 July 1961.
[563] Ibid, D.K. Malony to J.V. Battersby, 25 November 1960.

> restrict future awards in the Order of the British Empire to people of the United Kingdom who serve their country at home or abroad, and to create for the Commonwealth, at some appropriate and stable time, a new Order by which the Sovereign may recognise members of the Commonwealth, including United Kingdom citizens, who have rendered service in the general interest of that loosely secured group of nations?[564]

Indeed, other coinciding events amid this report appear to have further justified reform. In January 1964, the CRO was confused and somewhat alarmed to learn that the Governor-General of newly-independent Sierra Leone was publicly reading out that authority for distributing awards derived from The Queen through the Commonwealth Secretary during OBE investitures. The idea that the CRO had total control over Sierra Leonean awards was not only constitutionally incorrect but also, rather harmfully, being publicly reaffirmed during each investiture. The CRO assumed that this mistake was 'no more than a carry over from colonial days' but had to indeed recognise the public damage already inflicted on the British system in Sierra Leone because of this error.[565] As the Governor-General observed:

> …the point which always seems to me particularly difficult for Sierra Leoneans is that all citations at investitures have to be publicly read out by the Governor General as emanating from the Queen through the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. This is probably more embarrassing and politically objectionable, from their standpoint than the title of the Order of the British Empire.[566]

Whilst this episode had not, therefore, constituted a direct challenge to the 'imperial' name of the Order – and the constitutional error was easily rectifiable – it had, nonetheless, directly underlined to Commonwealth citizens the remaining imperial ties which this Order supposedly sustained. Once again, therefore, the government had encountered another justification for injecting the Order with a fresh Commonwealth slant.

The impetus for reform was further bolstered by Whitehall's concern over an article in the Jamaican *Public Opinion* on 4 January 1964 which had launched a bitter attack over newly-independent Jamaica's continued participation in the British system. It asked its readers 'How can a patriotic Jamaican be honoured for services to the British Empire – a thing which is not only foreign but also extinct?' It then went on to claim that 'British honours cannot do justice to the value Jamaicans place on the services of other Jamaicans. If we are to have honours let

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[564] *TNA*, DO 161/345, Extract of letter from Sir Robert Black to Sir Hilton Poynton, 27 December 1963.
[565] Ibid, C.W. Dixon to D.J.C. Crawley, Governor-General, 27 January 1964.
[566] Ibid, Crawley to Sir J.J.S. Garner, 13 January 1964.

us have Jamaican honours.'[567] Whilst the British High Commissioner in Kingstown believed that the article 'need not be taken too seriously', Whitehall interpreted it as yet another justification for looking at change.[568]

Consequently, the CRO decided to launch an inquiry into the proposed removal of the imperial theme from the OBE. The resulting survey revealed a surprising degree of support for the continuation of the title 'British Empire' amongst Commonwealth nations. Whilst the HC in Ottawa claimed that 'the general attitude would be that Canada was not concerned [either way] at all', most of the old dominions remained unenthusiastic about a transition to an 'Order of the Commonwealth' which lacked the chivalric tradition and romance of the present title.[569] In Sierra Leone British diplomats claimed that there was 'no evidence that…[the title] had an influence on the Government recommending and accepting the Order', whilst in Trinidad there was 'no reason to suppose that the present title influences the Trinidad Government in recommending, or individuals in accepting, appointments in the Order'.[570] In Southern Rhodesia 'the majority of Europeans have a nostalgic regard for the days of Empire and would regard a change as regrettable'.[571] As a result of this support for continuity amongst a diverse range of Commonwealth countries, the Order remained in place.

This episode indicates how far the Conservative government had become sensitive to Commonwealth opinion over the perceived imperial legacy of awards by the early-1960s and their eagerness to revise this legacy to secure continued Commonwealth participation in the awards system into the future. One report, for instance, considering the benefits of a reformed 'Order of the Commonwealth', stated that one of its preferred outcomes would be an 'Order [that] would be acceptable to all schools of thought, politics, creed or colour'.[572] Moreover, other ministerial correspondence appeared to be similarly concerned with discussing whether 'a change would encourage those Governments which do not at present put forward recommendations for award of Honours to vary their practice'.[573] Therefore, it is clear that whilst reform was eventually dropped, this episode reveals how far the Tory government put effort into promoting a more outward-looking, Commonwealth system. Whilst London was

[567] Ibid, 'Extract from 'Public Opinion' January 4th, 1964 – The Honours List', attached to HC to Jamaica to Garner, 4 January 1964.
[568] Ibid, HC to Sir Saville Garner, 4 January 1964.
[569] Ibid, H. Lintott to Garner, 15 January 1964.
[570] Ibid, Report of the CRO, 'Order of the British Empire: Views of British High Commissioners', in Memorandum from Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals Order of the British Empire', 13 February 1964.
[571] Ibid, Memorandum of Knox, 'Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Order of the British Empire', 13 February 1964.
[572] Ibid, 'Proposal and evaluation of The Order of the British Commonwealth', [undated], attached to David Ennals MP to Cledwyn Hughes, 18 February 1965.
[573] Ibid, Hughes to Ennals, 3 March 1965.

somewhat responding to complaints from within the Commonwealth public sphere, it should be noted that the momentum behind reform came primarily from within Whitehall and, indeed, the issue remained neglected within the British public sphere. Again, therefore, this episode indicates the centrality of the state to modernising concepts of gallantry – as concentrated in the awards system – in the context of decolonisation and, accordingly, how far gallantry remained influenced by state direction.

Despite the degree to which the British appeared intent on promoting an updated Commonwealth system, there is substantial evidence to suggest that most changes were cosmetic in nature and that, in essence, the system remained as dominated by London in both a conceptual and administrative capacity as previously. Following the departure of South Africa from the awards system in 1961, constitutional arrangements had returned to their original state: a normality in which royal consent surrounded by the advice of British ministers meant that the system remained heavily London-centric and British dominated. Indeed, there was no further attempt by London to devolve authority to individual Commonwealth governor-generals on the model advocated by Karachi and Pretoria: a federalised system in which a multicultural cluster of nations could express their own concepts of gallantry within a wider British framework. The extent to which the system continued to be controlled primarily from London ensured that accompanying concepts of gallantry did not reflect the new 'Commonwealth' emphasis promoted in British rhetoric.

Evidence of this continued British domination can be found in their rather imperious and high-handed attitude to dismissing Commonwealth grievances with the system whilst implementing their own reforms without particularly extensive Commonwealth consultation throughout the late-1950s and early-1960s. On an ideological basis, for example, the timing and nature of 'welfarisation' in the late-1950s was dictated largely on a British timetable. In November 1955, the New Zealand government had asked London whether it would consider extending the VC annuity to commissioned ranks for the first time and the response came back that 'this idea would get no encouragement from the United Kingdom'.[574] The matter was subsequently dropped until the British themselves decided to review these benefits between 1957-59 and, subsequently, all Commonwealth nations committed to the British system complied with London's decision to accept an annuity increase. An even more substantive indicator of British high-handedness could also be found in the growing diplomatic dispute with Australia and New Zealand over the Polar Medal. Whilst this medal was not strictly a 'gallantry' award, neither was it a standard 'service' medal and, indeed, its precise purpose was increasingly disputed throughout the 1950s. It was, however, widely distributed to Commonwealth

[574] *TNA,* DO 35/6557, Geoffrey Simmons to General Bishop, 22 November 1955.

research expeditions based on enduring harsh environmental conditions, performing with outstanding technical skill and due to the duration of trip. Its significance in this instance lies in what it reveals about British constitutional thinking in relation to Commonwealth awards.

In 1956 Canberra had submitted fifteen recommendations to London for the Polar Medal and, as they passed through the Whitehall machinery on the way to the Palace, three recommendations had been rejected by the British on the basis that they did not fulfil the criteria of the Royal Warrant. As an Australian official, John Lavett, later wrote to the Foreign Office, Canberra had been angered by what it subsequently perceived to be 'the intervention of some United Kingdom authority, whose identity, moreover, we did not know, between the Australian Government and Her Majesty the Queen [over honours]'. Upon further inquiry, it had been revealed that the rejection had come from the Polar Medal Assessment Committee [PMAC]: an all-British organisation responsible to the First Lord of the Admiralty. As Lavett continued, 'we had never been informed of its existence, and as you will see, it had deleted our recommendations without reference to us'.[575] Canberra therefore feared that Whitehall was dictating which Australian awards were acceptable and compromising Australian right of access to their monarch.

Indeed, Australian fears of British domination were further confirmed in September 1959 when Foreign Secretary Lord Home informed them that, whilst they could bypass British ministers and appeal directly to the Crown in relation to awards, The Queen 'would naturally wish, before signifying her approval, to be assured that the award would be in accordance with the conditions prescribed in the Royal Warrant…and that the person concerned possessed qualifications of the standard for recognition of which the medal had been instituted'.[576] In essence, Home confirmed that The Queen would still seek the advice of her *British* ministers in deciding Australian awards and this prospect, according to Lavett, 'occasioned…[Canberra] some concern'.[577] Matters were made still worse when further Australian medal recommendations were rejected by PMAC in both July 1960 and January 1961. Relations had deteriorated to such an extent that when the British suggested integrating Australians and New Zealanders into PMAC in 1962 they refused on the grounds that 'it seemed to us difficult in particular to ensure that our views would be given full weight, any more than they had been in the past'.[578] Indeed, this fear appeared to be soon confirmed when Canberra asked London to consider the establishment of a new 'Antarctic Medal' in May 1964 and was rejected

[575] *TNA*, FCO 57/23, 'Difficulties between Australia, New Zealand and UK over the Polar Medal culminating in a revised warrant, 1967 Jan 01-1967 Dec 31', John L. Lavett to Dr. Brian Roberts, FO, 21 March 1967.
[576] Ibid, Letter from Douglas-Home quoted in Lavett to Roberts, 21 March 1967.
[577] Ibid, Lavett to Roberts, 21 March 1967.
[578] Ibid.

outright. According to one British civil servant relations had ‘deteriorated seriously’ to such an extent that it resulted in very public disputes at the Brussels Third Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting of 1964. Hence, by January 1965 dialogue had broken down entirely.

The significance of this episode therefore lies in what it reveals about enduring British domination of the awards system and how far this was beginning to cause disillusionment within the Commonwealth by the early-1960s. Whilst the Tory government was making significant cosmetic revisions to provide awards with less of an imperial identity, the degree to which British ministries used their proximity to the Crown, as ‘Fount of Honours’, to guide and standardise the system along their own designs reveals the endurance of a deeply rooted imperial psyche as opposed to truly embracing the more open and interactive system emphasised in public rhetoric and imagery. To this extent, therefore, concepts of gallantry had not decolonised by the mid-1960s.

Collectively, the period from around 1955 to 1964 witnessed a significant transitional phase in the decolonisation of British concepts of gallantry. The early-1950s had underlined to the British the difficulties of accommodating the new nationalist tendencies of emerging Commonwealth nations within their imperial awards system. As a result of conceptual and administrative disagreement various nations departed the system. Consequently, perhaps in anticipation of further divisions in future, the Conservative governments of the late-1950s and early-1960s embarked on a series of initiatives to make the imperial awards system more relevant and suitable to the modern Commonwealth: emphasising a more equal, diverse and voluntary participation in a shared conceptual framework of gallantry awards. This transformation was often militarised in nature, both in terms of the notable contribution of military figures to modernising the system and the new focus of Commonwealth unity around shared military heritage. Whilst government reforms, combined with the initiatives of non-government organisations, may have enhanced the political acceptability of a system characterised by imperial rhetoric and symbolism, the transformation was largely cosmetic. Indeed, the key conceptual and administrative domination at the heart of anti-imperial grievances – highlighted by Pakistan and South Africa – remained largely in place and would lead to greater tension in the late-1960s and 1970s.

II

In November 1966, one British delegate to the Fourth Consultative Meeting of the Antarctica Treaty in Santiago described Australia and New Zealand as having ‘taken up nationalistic attitudes more akin to Argentine and Chilean policy than to any spirit of Commonwealth

cooperation'.[579] It was soon discovered, much to the surprise of Whitehall, that this tension over broader diplomatic issues had been primarily due to the deadlocked negotiations over the future of the Polar Medal following the breakdown of talks with the new Labour government in January 1965: an episode which one FCO official described as having aroused 'exceptionally strong anti-British feelings' in both countries.[580]

Whilst the deteriorating relations experienced in this field may have been the exception rather than the rule in the mid-1960s – a time in which the Tory government had recently gone to great lengths to emphasise Commonwealth equality within the awards system – it was, nevertheless, an indicator of the growing nationalist sentiment amongst traditionally loyal Commonwealth nations over awards. Indeed, the extent to which Australian PM Robert Menzies, according to one British official, 'very nearly decided to make this a constitutional issue with the UK Government', demonstrates how strongly Canberra regarded this issue as emblematic of potential wider problems within the award system as a whole.[581] In the late-1960s and into the early-1970s this increasing nationalist tendency would radically overthrow any remaining British attachment to preserving and controlling a global system of gallantry awards as it had done a decade earlier.

Having realised the damage inflicted by Labour's detachment from the Polar dispute between 1964-66, and how far both Canberra and Wellington were becoming increasingly entrenched about preserving their influence over awards policy, the Wilson government attempted to repair relations. In early-1967 they invited Australian and New Zealand members to join the currently all-British PMAC to help direct policy. The response was not, however, overtly positive. One Canberra official reported that the Departments concerned were 'very sensitive of matters of Australian status', and that 'in relation to honours and awards generally, there would be an outcry in Australia if they [the public] knew the extent of London procedures in relation to Australian recommendations throughout this whole field'.[582] They hence remained cautious, demanding 'sufficient voice in the committee to ensure that our point of view would be taken into account in the Committee's deliberations'.[583] They also demanded full access to The Crown – bypassing British checks – over recommendations if a compromise could not be achieved.[584] The New Zealanders rejected the idea of membership entirely and suggested instead the establishment of three separate national committees in order to 'remove any of the

[579] *TNA*, FCO 57/23, Dr Brian Roberts quoted in M.W. Atkinson to Mr McTear, 'Antarctica and Anglo-Australian Relations', 12 April 1967.
[580] Ibid, Roberts to Mr Edmonds, 5 April 1967.
[581] Ibid.
[582] *TNA*, FCO 57/23, G. de Q. Robin to Rear-Admiral G.S. Ritchie, The Hydrographer of the Navy, 'Polar Medal, 3 February 1968.
[583] Ibid, John L. Lavett to Roberts, 21 March 1967.
[584] Ibid.

problems of representation and safeguarding of national wishes which might arise from the establishment and decisions of a central assessment committee'.[585]

Essentially, both nations were primarily concerned with reducing British influence over their medal recommendations through the gazetting process. Whilst London accepted the New Zealand proposal in early-1968, it did so grudgingly and with a clear determination to retain some coordinating influence over the system. As Sir Vivian Fuchs of the PMAC wrote, the arrangement 'would be cumbersome and not necessarily workable. For the above reason I think the United Kingdom committee, when it includes Australian and New Zealand representatives, should be charged with the responsibility of bringing to the notice of the other committees any marked deviation from the standard.'[586] With the British concession, however, the conflict ultimately ended.

The importance of the Polar Medal episode is manifold. Firstly, it provides the first significant evidence that supposedly 'loyal' Commonwealth nations were willing, by the mid-late 1960s, to increasingly challenge British domination of the system and to pursue rival national interests. Rarely before had the British encountered such bitter disagreements with loyal Commonwealth nations over its leadership. From a British perspective, this event was also significant in that it highlighted the potential for disagreement with its Commonwealth partners over matters of constitutional procedure and the ideological direction of awards policy. The extent to which London was surprised by the seriousness of the dispute and its capacity to sour diplomatic relations suggests major complacency over automatic assumptions of Commonwealth deference. Although the dispute was successfully concluded, it did constitute one of several increasingly similar episodes across the late-1960s which may have demonstrated to the British the difficulties, if not incompatibilities, of maintaining a global system of gallantry awards in the post-imperial age.

This episode also reveals much about the interaction between gallantry and an important element of the Sixties value shift: decolonisation. Whilst the Tory government had been guilty of carelessness in disregarding Commonwealth opinion in relation to the Polar Medal, they had nevertheless attempted to rectify the situation up to 1964. The disinterest and neglect of the incoming Labour government led to much more serious deterioration of relations between 1964-66. Although the issue was eventually resolved, this episode again demonstrates the detachment of Labour from engaging constructively with the politics of decolonisation. Furthermore, this episode also once again indicates how far the fate of the Commonwealth awards system was dictated at state level. The dispute over the Polar Medal had significantly

[585] *TNA*, FCO 57/23, R.F. Nottage, New Zealand HC, to Ritchie, 9 February 1968.
[586] Ibid, V.E. Fuchs to Ritchie, 'Polar Medal', 5 January 1968.

damaged Commonwealth relations in the awards sphere and yet there was little attention paid to it in the British or Commonwealth public sphere. This once again illustrates how far the decolonisation of concepts of gallantry was primarily driven at diplomatic level.

Indeed, the growing tension between Britain, Australia and New Zealand was similarly evident in the arrangements surrounding Commonwealth gallantry awards during the Vietnam War (1965-73). With the Wilson government refusing to commit troops to the conflict, Britain found itself in the unusual position of administering gallantry medals for operations in which it had no direct involvement. Indeed, the notable absence of British military participation would have a notable bearing on how British awards were perceived in Canberra and Wellington.

Despite steadily increasing Commonwealth military involvement in Vietnam from August 1962 onwards, it was not until November 1966 that initial requests were received in London for the establishment of a joint operational scale of awards for Australian and New Zealand forces. Up to that point, as Australian PM Harold Holt wrote to the Governor-General, 'awards for acts of gallantry by our servicemen… [have been] submitted to Her Majesty as they occur', meaning an incredibly slow administrative turnaround in London on individual awards.[587] The establishment of an operational scale was hence intended to speed up the rate and scale of awards which would be submitted, in bulk, to the Palace. Soon, however, the efficiency of the British system was called into question by both the Australian media and prominent veterans' associations. In February 1968, *The Sydney Morning Herald* highlighted that:

> There has long been dissatisfaction among Australian Servicemen at the clumsy and out-of-date system whereby awards to Australians for gallantry in the field have to run the gauntlet of the Commonwealth Relations Office in London. It is more than ever anomalous that this should be the procedure in a war in which Britain is not engaged. The main overt ground for dissatisfaction is that the need to refer awards to the CRO holds them up unnecessarily. In the case of higher decorations this delay is nothing short of disgraceful.

The newspaper subsequently demanded that, as there was 'no reason why the matter should not be within the full competence of her [Majesty's] Australian Ministers', Canberra should be given 'complete autonomy' in gazetting awards.[588] In essence, this meant handing over full constitutional control to the Governor-General. These concerns were bolstered further when, according to their journal, the Returned Services League [RSL] national congress of October

[587] *TNA*, T 301/38, PM Harold Holt to the Governor-General of Australia, 21 November 1966.
[588] *TNA*, FCO 57/27, 'Courtesy of London', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 1968 [newspaper cutting].

1967 'threw up widespread and almost unanimous criticism of the procedures and rules governing the awards of medals for gallantry'.[589] The report criticised not only the lengthy gazetting process, which they claimed could take up to twelve months to complete, but also other British policies including the limitations on posthumous awards and acceptance of foreign honours. It went on to observe that:

> Commonsense tells us that in the years ahead we are unlikely to be fighting beside the British. Times have changed, commitments have changed, and procedures should change. The system of considering awards must be streamlined too, to make it more speedy and eliminate the unnecessary delay in referring them to London.[590]

The article subsequently concluded by recommending the creation of a committee to discuss the desirability of an independent Australian awards system which would not only address administrative defects, but also reflect the new post-imperial realities of Australian nationhood. Whilst ministers in Canberra were, according to one report, 'quite relaxed' over media criticisms, the RSL was a 'powerful organisation' which, it was predicted, might force Canberra to act.[591] Whilst notions of a shared military heritage and a collective Commonwealth military brotherhood had been at the heart of British efforts to maintain a united awards system, Australian recognition of increasingly divergent military destinies, combined with British neglect of Commonwealth servicemen, were now being mobilised against a united Commonwealth system. Militarised justifications were thus being used by ex-servicemen to criticise a militarised system.

Realising that the administrative arrangements through which the CRO submitted Australian awards had, according to one official, been 'used as yet more stick with which the ill-disposed were assaulting the British connection', Whitehall quickly secured further delegation of royal authority to the Australian Governor-General in April 1968 and extended this to the New Zealanders upon request in November.[592] Under this new devolved power the two nations were, in essence, given complete independence over their awards procedure, thus speeding up the processing time to fourteen days and cutting both the CRO and The Crown out of this process for the remainder of the Vietnam War. Indeed, administrative procedure functioned relatively well despite initial Australian complaints that the British had authorised the new

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[589] Ibid, 'Challenging an old British tradition', *The RSL*, [undated, 1967], attached to PM Hewitt to Robin Blair, 15 March 1968.
[590] Ibid.
[591] *TNA*, FCO 57/27, Hewitt to Blair, 15 March 1968.
[592] Ibid, Hewitt to A.L. Mayall, 25 July 1968.

devolved powers without clearly informing them, leading the Canberra government to 'look rather foolish' when they learned the news through *The Sydney Morning Herald.*[593]

Despite the resolution of yet another Commonwealth conflict by 1968 over issues of sovereignty and the administrative viability of a joint awards system, these tensions continued to significantly impact upon British thinking towards the desirability and endurance of a global concept of gallantry. Once again Whitehall had been made aware of intense Commonwealth sensitivity over British ideological and administrative influence in the field of gallantry awards, particularly in a war featuring no British contribution. Much like the Antarctic disputes recently concluded, the current system had bred vocal anti-British feeling in the Commonwealth public sphere.

Vietnam had to a notable extent also underlined in Whitehall the growing ideological rift between Britain and its partners over broader concepts of gallantry. This was slowly apparent from the first application for an operational scale in late-1966 when the Australian military had asked that their number of air awards be calculated according to operational flying hours as opposed to number of personnel involved. Milner-Barry had responded that, 'when this arrangement was suggested by the Australian Chiefs of Staff in connection with operations in Malaysia, the [British] GOC in Chief did not consider it to be a very satisfactory method, and it was not adopted'.[594] However, in a campaign in which there was no British leadership or involvement, London felt obliged to defer to Australian and New Zealand wishes.

Similarly, there was growing ideological division over the issue of 'foreign decorations'. It had long been British policy that Commonwealth nations should refuse any awards from non-Commonwealth allied countries to prevent duplication of medals, avoid setting awkward diplomatic precedents or confusion over 'order of wear'. However, with Australia acting in close cooperation with the US and South Vietnam, many public commentators began to criticise this policy. The highly influential RSL, for instance, noted in its journal that:

> Australian troops in Vietnam say that this rule of refusing non-British decorations is a major cause of friction with the Americans and the Vietnamese, and it is a source of disappointment for Australians themselves, who hold in high regard a number of Vietnamese and US awards, and would be proud to wear them.[595]

Moreover, the *Sydney Morning Herald* likewise claimed that this 'exceedingly mean policy' had 'cost many Australians well-earned recognition in the Second World War, the Korean War and the war in Vietnam' and that 'there is no good reason at all why Australians should

[593] Ibid, Hewitt to Blair, 18 June 1968.
[594] *TNA*, T 301/38, Milner-Barry to B.H. Heddy, 31 January 1967.
[595] *TNA*, FCO 57/27, 'Challenging an old British tradition', *The RSL*, [undated].

not be allowed, in the present war, to receive and wear decorations which their Allies wish to confer on them'.[596] Despite this significant pressure, however, the Australian government maintained British policy over the ban. The Australian Defence Minister wrote to the RSL maintaining that:

> …the rules are sound and consistent, and have been so proven over many years. The reasons behind the limited conditions for the acceptance and wearing of foreign decorations is that our servicemen are wearing the Queen's uniform and are fighting in defence of Her Realm, it is Her Prerogative alone to grant honours in recognition of gallantry in Her Service.[597]

Despite Canberra's continued adherence to British policies over foreign decorations, however, the awards system had once again come under attack by powerful public voices with significant lobbying powers. The British had also been made aware of yet another ideological bone of contention within the Commonwealth on a principle over which they remained steadfastly resolute and refused to adapt. The issue of foreign decorations also once again illustrates how ex-military personnel used emotive and militarised notions of neglected heroic 'collectivities' to attack antiquated British doctrine. Whilst such collectivities had been used to emphasise the unity of the Commonwealth system during the 1950s, Vietnam medallists were being depicted as distinctly *Australian* and neglected by an increasingly distant foreign power.

Whilst the Canberra government had refused to act over foreign decorations, this would not be case over yet another ideological dispute which the RSL had raised in its offensive of 1967-8. Their journal article had also criticised the lack of posthumous awards available within the British system meaning that some of the most heroic sacrifices of the Vietnam War were going unrecognised for 'some unknown traditional reason'.[598] Once again, therefore, the neglected heroic collectivity was mobilised by the RSL. Indeed, by the late-1960s the only posthumous awards available were still the VC and GC of first-degree gallantry and the MID and QCBC of the fourth-degree. When the RSL wrote to the Australian Prime Minister on this issue in late-1967 they had received a defensive response listing many of the key arguments often mobilised by Whitehall in support of the current system: the potential for devaluing current medals and the impossibility of admitting posthumous members into the chivalric orders which constituted a core element of second and third-degree recognition.[599]

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[596] Ibid, 'Courtesy of London', 16 February 1968 [newspaper cutting].
[597] Ibid, Letter from Defence Minister Fairhill, quoted in, 'Challenging an old British tradition'.
[598] Ibid, 'Challenging an old British tradition', [undated].
[599] Ibid, Letter from E.J. Bunting [undated] quoted in 'Challenging an old British tradition'.

As early as August 1967, however, the Australian government had been quietly questioning London about the possibility of broadening the awards system to encompass more of a posthumous element. Whilst initial queries had been brushed off by Whitehall with textbook responses, by July 1968 Canberra was becoming more insistent. As one Australian HC official reported to the CRO:

> I have had a pretty strong letter from the Prime Minister's Department in Australia telling me that the PM has had equally strong representations to him regarding posthumous awards which are apparently limited to the VC, GC, MID and QC. Hitherto, the Australian Government has leant on the advice which had previously been received from the British Ministry of Defence. However, this advice is being seriously questioned in Australia.[600]

The Wilson government's response to this move was to immediately reassert conventional doctrine, emphasising that 'the primary purpose of decorations is to reward the living', that the dead could not be appointed to chivalric orders and that 'the selection of persons to receive awards posthumously would perforce frequently be based on such slight knowledge of the circumstances that it could amount to little more than guess work'.[601] In essence, therefore, the Labour government rejected any Australian move in favour of posthumous gallantry recognition.

This was not enough, however, to deter Canberra from again submitting fresh requests in October 1968 that roused new anxiety in Whitehall that the Australians might act unilaterally in changing the system if no consensus was reached. As one CRO official wrote, 'I doubt whether we ourselves ought to suggest to the Australians that they should seek The Queen's approval for a policy so widely different from our own. On the assumption that the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence would stand firm, The Queen would be put in a position of having to accept a double standard for these honours or of having to reject the proposals by her Australian Ministers.'[602] In order to avoid such an eventuality, however, Milner-Barry advised that the best course was to 'deploy at length all the arguments that have been canvassed…and to hope that when spelt out in full they may convince the Australians that there is no future in what they propose, and that in any case they would only land themselves in difficulties if they were to institute a system of posthumous awards'.[603] However, by November the ideological divisions appeared so entrenched that ministerial correspondence was raising the prospect of solving the deadlock through an independent Australian system,

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[600] FCO 57/22,, J.L. Knott to Sir Morrice James, 3 July 1968.
[601] Ibid, Mayall to Knott, 12 July 1968.
[602] Ibid, Mayall to Air Vice Marshal A.H.C. Boxer, 28 October 1968.
[603] Ibid, Milner-Barry to Boxer, 'Posthumous Gallantry Awards', 11 November 1968.

although official British policy maintained that this option should be 'avoided if at all possible, since the general policy of the Government was to maintain existing forms of relationship with Commonwealth countries wherever possible'.[604] Fortunately for London, however, the Australians relented and accepted the British verdict on posthumous awards for the time being. This episode had, however, illustrated the Labour government's unwillingness to compromise.

One final ideological tension to arise out of the Vietnam War potentially furthered the sense of rift. In 1970, the MoD in London launched an investigation into the four Australian Victoria Cross's awarded for the conflict to, according to one official, 'see if the standard for the award had been lowered during recent years'.[605] The presentation of recent citations had raised the suspicions of civil servants who decided to undertake a comparative analysis of Australian citations of the Second World War in order to assess a potential deterioration of standards. One pattern which soon received British criticism in their subsequent report was the Australian tendency of emphasising the medallist's military background in citations. Whilst one Australian officer had claimed that 'we like to do this [background]; we're a big country but a close family. We Australians want to feel associated with the act', the British had responded that this detail had 'nothing to do with the award and are to English standards irrelevant'.[606] The report went on to note that this background had made one citation 'over-embellished', whilst another possessed 'too many clichés and a great lack of detail'.[607] It was hence concluded, regarding Australian citation writers, that the 'theme of poor expressive capability…[was] the cause of comment on the standard of the current Australian awards', rather than any general deterioration in gallantry.[608]

However, one out of the four VC citations was indeed judged to be under the expected British standard. Warrant Officer Kevin Wheatley had received the award posthumously for choosing to remain by a dying comrade, rather than escape, during a large Vietnamese assault in November 1965. The British report subsequently concluded that there were:

> …examples where the award has clearly been given as a symbol of valour rather than for a particularly brave act…It is possible WO Wheatley's award fell into this category. The Australian Forces at the time of Wheatley's recommendation had been fighting for some 9 months in Vietnam in very adverse conditions and had suffered many casualties in the senior NCO/WO ranks. In retrospect it would be fair comment

[604] Ibid, 'Posthumous Awards: Note of a meeting held by Sir James Dunnett 14th November 1968', 18 November 1968.
[605] *TNA*, WO 98/10, Lt Col (MS3) to MS, [undated, 1970].
[606] Ibid, 'An analysis of the last your awards to members of the Australian Forces', Annex B to LM to 68/Gen/9854/MS3 dated 1970.
[607] Ibid.
[608] Ibid.

> to say that Wheatley's award was not up to today's standard, and the incident is out-of-line with the standard of the last three awards.[609]

In this case, therefore, the British believed that Canberra had used Wheatley's VC as a symbol of Australian sacrifice more generally at a time of heavy casualties. However, as this was not up to British standards, the report subsequently considered what action London could take to steer Canberra in a different direction in future. It concluded that, as Wheatley's award had been gazetted four years previously, it was 'completely improper' to comment on it in 1970. Furthermore, since 'the Australian Government may refer recommendations for the VC direct to The Queen and are not bound to any standard for the award', it was agreed that the MoD should remain quiet and simply offer subtle advice to The Palace as occasion arose.[610]

Ultimately, whilst the British chose not to act over Wheatley's VC or what was perceived to be poorly justified Australian citations, the fact that the MoD conducted an inquiry into the issue demonstrates the importance placed on the suspected decline in standards. Once again, it highlights an increasing awareness within Whitehall that, to some extent, there was a growing ideological rift between London and Canberra over concepts of gallantry. Australia had awarded one VC to commemorate a broader national sacrifice in Vietnam, whilst a pattern in their citations had demonstrated a reliance on background information and stock phrases which, London believed, hindered justification for the awards. Whilst this episode did not lead to open conflict between the two countries it was, nevertheless, yet another indicator of the ideological rift between Britain and Australia over concepts of gallantry and how far this could cause future problems.

Collectively, therefore, the period from 1966-70 proved a decisive landmark in underlining to both Britain and its closest Commonwealth partners the difficulties of maintaining a joint system of gallantry awards in a post-imperial era of increasingly divergent national interests. At a time when Australians and New Zealanders were beginning to embrace the idea of new national identities away from the British fold, the constitutional arrangements and ideological direction of the British system became increasingly viewed as an outdated relic of the colonial past. The ability to decide the principles surrounding gallantry, combined with control over the recommendation and gazetting process – free from British interference – became viewed particularly within Australia as a right of independent nationhood. This feeling was intensified by the Vietnam War in which Australia and New Zealand appeared to be taking an independent and bold foreign policy stance for the first time in a conflict without British participation.

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[609] Ibid.
[610] Ibid.

From a British perspective, these years had similarly underlined the potential incompatibility of British and Commonwealth attitudes. For the first time London had witnessed a strong and sustained challenge to its ideological and administrative leadership of the system by those it had considered to be its most loyal partners. Whilst the British were willing to concede on some issues that had raised Commonwealth anger, such as Polar Medal policy, the devolution of power to Governor-Generals and some of the calculations surrounding operational scales, it was unwilling to concede on other areas of principle. Indeed, the extent of deadlock reached over posthumous awards had led correspondents within Whitehall to seriously discuss the prospect of Australia establishing its own independent system. Furthermore, no solution was ever reached on either this issue or that of foreign decorations. Ultimately, therefore, the ideological and constitutional tensions experienced during this period may have persuaded Commonwealth nations as to the desirability of establishing their own gallantry awards whilst also casting doubt in London as to the desirability and feasibility of maintaining a joint system over which they had primary ideological and administrative control into the future.

Vietnam has important implications for understanding the interaction between gallantry and a crucial element of the Sixties value shift: decolonisation. The relative intransigence of the Wilson Government throughout the conflict in addressing Commonwealth grievances once again underlines how far progress in reforming British concepts of gallantry primarily occurred under the Tories as opposed to the inactivity and disinterest of Labour. Despite heavy criticism throughout the war and the strain this put on the Australian government, the Wilson government made little effort to compromise on major issues such as posthumous and foreign decorations.

Vietnam also once again indicates how far the process of decolonisation was ‘militarised’ in nature. As demonstrated previously, shared military heritage and commitments had formed much of the bedrock of British attempts to produce a modernised Commonwealth concept of gallantry and this had appeared to resonate strongly with its partners in the 1950s and early-1960s. Correspondingly, Vietnam – a conflict lacking traditional British military commitment and in which the awards system had seemed divisive and inflexible – had proven equally powerful in correspondingly underlining conceptual divergence through a military lens. Australian ex-servicemen in the RSL had, along with the media, depicted Commonwealth soldiers as abused by an antiquated and out-of-touch British awards structure and had recommended its replacement with an Australian system which could more effectively recognise sacrifice in Vietnam. In terms of the personnel involved and the narrative they spun, therefore, this episode proves how militarised the decolonisation of gallantry had become.

Interconnected, Vietnam also has important implications for understanding hero culture. If the VC Centenary had demonstrated how mobilisation of a military brotherhood or heroic 'collectivity' could effectively emphasise Commonwealth unity, Vietnam proved that use of a similar heroic collectivity – perceivably neglected Australian Vietnam medallists – could be effectively used to sow division. The notion of poorly treated Commonwealth soldiers became a significant and emotive theme in Commonwealth media coverage. These communities were, therefore, important to conveying messages into the public sphere. Finally, Vietnam also demonstrates how far the decolonisation of gallantry remained overwhelmingly a British state, rather than public, concern. Whilst the Commonwealth public sphere had some notable impact on growing tensions between London and its partners, the British media remained detached from the issue. The extent to which medals policy was substantially decided at state level therefore once again demonstrates how far conceptual influence over gallantry remained with the British state, with cultural change significantly driven 'from above'.

By the early-1970s, despite the relatively smooth operating of the British system in the later years of the Vietnam War, Australia and New Zealand appeared to be at a crossroads in their approach to gallantry awards. Initially, following the tensions of the late-1960s, there appeared to be an intensified Commonwealth attempt to influence the direction of the British system in order to gauge whether the system could accommodate their new national priorities. Correspondingly, there was also an enhanced British effort to facilitate this move. Indeed, following years of policy blunder and stasis under the Labour government, the arrival of the Conservative Heath government would lead to revitalised interaction with Commonwealth partners in order to address many of the grievances raised in the 1960s. At the same time, however, the prospects of establishing independent national awards systems became increasingly realistic and desirable for both sides as the 1970s progressed.

A significant reason for the growing appeal of independent systems – alongside the impetus provided by recent tensions over Vietnam – came from ongoing developments in Canada. The Canadian relationship with the British system had always been somewhat distinct from that of Australia and New Zealand since it had not been entwined in any British military cooperation since the Korean War. Furthermore, Ottawa had a distinctive history of rejecting elements of the British honours system stretching back to the Nickle Resolutions of 1917-19. Nevertheless, the successful establishment of an independent Canadian awards system under The Crown in March 1967 set a new precedent which was eagerly observed by other Commonwealth nations. As the Canadian PM, Lester Pearson, announced in Parliament, 'practically every sovereign country has such a system, which it uses as a means of recognising merit or gallantry, or distinguished public service. I believe that recognition of this kind can strengthen

national pride and the appreciation of national service'.[611] The motivation for the system therefore resonated with similar nationalist agendas within the Commonwealth.

Initially, the Order of Canada featured only one gallantry award, the Medal of Courage, which was intended to sit within the existing British framework, replacing the GM. However, in March 1968 Pearson decided to take Canada out of the British civilian system entirely and create a whole series of independent Canadian gallantry awards. The civilian Cross of Valour, Star of Courage and Medal of Bravery were thus adopted in 1972 to replace the GC, GM and OBE. As Canada was not engaged in any significant military operations during this period, Ottawa decided to retain British military awards until a time was reached whereby it became necessary to readdress the issue during the Gulf War of 1990-91.

The emergence of an independent Canadian awards system between 1967-72 naturally had a significant bearing on both British and Commonwealth approaches to the future of a joint system. From a British perspective, the gradual nature of the successful transition towards an independent Canadian system softened the blow of a potential wider Commonwealth move away from British awards. The successful establishment of the Order of Canada in 1967, initially in cooperation with British honours, followed by its further separation in 1972 had slowly allowed Whitehall to come to terms with the fact that an independent national system, under nominal royal sovereignty, could effectively coexist alongside its British counterpart. Whilst this had been envisaged in negotiations with Pakistan in the mid-1950s, the Canadian system was the first to prove successful and make the prospect of a similar system implemented in New Zealand and Australia a less daunting and, arguably, a more desirable prospect in resolving recent tensions. Similarly, both Wellington and Canberra took note of the success of the new system and recognised two potential precedents – either 1967 or 1972 – upon which to model future awards.

Ultimately, as a consequence of this development and also recent ideological conflicts, the Heath government's thinking in the early-1970s was defined by a dual policy of renewed interaction and compromise with Commonwealth ideas in order to retain as much of the global system as possible, combined with a pragmatic acceptance that encouraging the 'Canadian alternative' would better allow London to retain its standards and principles in the longer term if Commonwealth demands proved intolerable. This policy, therefore, demonstrates how far London prioritised its own ideological domination of the system over the survival of a global conception of gallantry.

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[611] Prime Minister Lester Pearson quoted in Christopher McCreery, *The Canadian Honours System* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2005), p. 56.

There is indeed plenty of evidence to suggest that the Conservative government made considerable efforts to maintain Commonwealth ties and, consequently, integrate new Commonwealth ideological preferences within the system during the early-1970s. As one CRO official noted in July 1972:

> …we are not keen to hasten the institution of even a perfectly legitimate Australian honours system…since I understand that The Queen wishes them to continue using British honours for as long as possible, in order to maintain this link with Britain.[612]

Moreover, both Canberra and Wellington remained eager to discover the feasibility of maintaining their new national self-interests within the existing British framework and, consequently, increasingly engaged with Whitehall on awards policy with greater intensity.

An example of this increased two-way traffic can be demonstrated in renewed efforts to remove indicators of 'imperial' or 'British' domination during the early-1970s. In October 1971, the Tory government agreed to a New Zealand request that winners of the BEM should be 'sounded' – following the procedure for other awards – as to whether they wished to receive a medal which, as PM Norman Kirk later claimed, 'has rather anachronistic connotations'.[613] A similar request was subsequently made and granted to all the Australian States in October 1972 after the Governor of Victoria asked for the procedure to be replicated and the Governor of Western Australia wrote to the FCO claiming that reform would be 'highly desirable'.[614] Further evidence of how far the British were increasingly willing to consider Commonwealth needs can also be found in the policy considerations surrounding the new award intended to replace the OBE for gallantry. When in late-1973 the title 'British Gallantry Medal' was considered for the new award, it was quickly pointed out by Milner-Barry that 'it would probably be best to steer clear of the designation 'British' in a Medal which one hopes may be acceptable to some members of the Commonwealth'.[615] Clearly, it was hoped that this medal would be used by Commonwealth governments.

Finally, the recurring problem of the imperial connotations surrounding the OBE were raised again in Britain during the early-1970s with a clear objective of placating the Commonwealth. Following questions in Parliament during 1972 criticising its survival, followed by increasing New Zealand requests for its revision in 1974, the idea of transferring to an 'Order of the

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[612] *TNA*, FCO 57/364, Mayall to Mr Hickman, 12 July 1972.
[613] *TNA*, FCO 57/256, Mayall to Adeane, 29 September 1971. *TNA*, FCO 57/598, Prime Minister Norman Kirk to Governor-General of New Zealand, 12 December 1973.
[614] *TNA*, FCO 57/364, Governor of Western Australia Major-General Sir Douglas Kendrew to Home, 28 August 1972.
[615] *TNA*, FCO 57/485, Memorandum from Milner-Barry, 'The Third Degree of Gallantry', 17 September 1973.

Commonwealth' was once again considered in detail. The PPS to the PM noted to Milner-Barry that:

> …I agree that the present title is not seriously regarded as having imperialist connotations in this country, it is nonetheless an anachronism, and is clearly regarded as such in other Commonwealth countries more strongly than here… For us it is an honourable relic or a disagreeable reminder (whichever way you look at it) of the past; for much of the Commonwealth it still has a nasty colonialist or imperialist smell about it.[616]

Whilst it was nevertheless decided to retain the OBE on the basis that a name change to 'Commonwealth' could potentially also appear offensive or redundant in future, the extent to which the Tory government was willing to consider a change because of Commonwealth sensitivity once again highlights their appetite to retain a strong global system.

Indeed, the spirit of cooperation and compromise was manifested most strongly in the case of negotiations over New Zealand honours from 1973-75. In late-1973, PM Norman Kirk wrote to London suggesting a number of reforms to the British system in order to satisfy, according to one civil servant, the 'desire that New Zealand as an independent nation under the Crown should be seen to have access to the same range of honours as are available in Britain, and not in this respect appear to be a second class nation'.[617] His requests included greater access to senior chivalric orders; that future awards quotas be administered solely by Wellington; that the gazetting process be sped up by direct access to the Palace and that some independent New Zealand awards be established on the pattern of the Canadian 1967 model. He also wished that the title of the OBE be revised. The moderation of these proposals – particularly that Wellington wished to remain predominantly within the British system under royal sovereignty – was immediately met with relief and support by the Heath government. The FCO claimed that the requests appeared to be 'reasonable and well-founded' and that 'there would be advantage in maintaining, so far as possible, existing ties such as this, rather than seeing the New Zealanders establish a totally independent system'.[618]

The Conservative government thus acted speedily to meet New Zealand aims as far as possible. It was soon agreed within Whitehall that Wellington should gain greater access to senior honours and greater independent control of their own quotas. The Queen's Private Secretary, Sir Martin Charteris, also agreed that 'it is very understandable also that New

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[616] *TNA*, T 343/86, R.T. Armstrong to Milner-Barry, 'Title of the British Empire Order', 1 February 1974.
[617] *TNA*, FCO 57/598, Blundell to Charteris, 'Honours', 8 July 1974.
[618] Ibid, K.W. Kelley to Mr de Courey-Ireland, 'Honours for New Zealand', 9 January 1974.

Zealand should wish to have some specifically New Zealand elements included in the honours system as it applies to them, and I am sure that we ought to do everything that we can to help in this way'.[619] Subsequently, the Queen's Service Order [QSO] was established without difficulty in 1975 as the first independent New Zealand honour within the British system. Whilst an element of this Order was originally intended to replace the BEM for Gallantry within the New Zealand sphere, Wellington confirmed that the new British QGM would satisfy its needs and hence the QSO remained a purely service award. Furthermore, London quickly 'agreed that [NZ] Government and the Palace should use Minister of Foreign Affairs' cypher services when necessary to ensure that awards could be made within a week rather than weeks or months', thus speeding up the gazetting process as requested.[620] Finally, the New Zealanders also received increased access to senior honours.

The speed and success of negotiations had also been the result of what one British civil servant described as 'quiet New Zealand pragmatism': the ability to compromise on aspects of staunch British principle.[621] For example, Kirk had requested that the title of the OBE be once again revised to remove imperial sentiments. When Charteris responded that 'this is one [point] on which I would very much hope that New Zealand would not press us', before explaining that imperial connotations would lessen over time and that an Order of the Commonwealth might seem similarly dated in future, Wellington surrendered its objections.[622] Similarly, whilst it had been suggested that New Zealand honours should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General rather than the Palace, Kirk himself announced that 'he wanted no more talk about the Governor-General having authority to dish them out' and that 'any medal that did not come from The Queen herself would not be considered worth in New Zealand'.[623] Hence, the British did not face the same difficulties experienced with Pakistan and South Africa over Crown jurisdiction, thus assisting the speed of negotiations. Finally, when Kirk suggested to London that New Zealand awards be transformed into a five-tier system and Charteris responded that 'we think that four degrees of gallantry are sufficient to recognise the broad categories into which gallantry awards are separated', the idea was quickly dropped.[624]

The case of New Zealand honours therefore underlines the extent to which the Conservative government was willing and able to facilitate and interact with new Commonwealth ideas surrounding concepts of gallantry in the new nationalist context post-Vietnam. The result had

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[619] Ibid, Notes of Sir Martin Charteris for a meeting with Sir Denis Blundell, 'New Zealand Honours', [undated, 1974].
[620] Ibid, Note by P.G. Millen, New Zealand Cabinet Office, 'Honours System in New Zealand', 16 February 1974.
[621] *TNA*, FCO 57/256, F.B. Wheeler to K.W. Kelley, 18 January 1973.
[622] *TNA*, FCO 57/598, Notes by Charteris, [undated, 1974].
[623] Ibid, Curle to Charteris, 14 February 1974.
[624] Ibid, Draft letter from Charteris to the Governor-General of New Zealand, [undated, 1974].

ultimately been the retention of New Zealand inside the British system, despite some commentators claiming that the QSO 'could be the first step in developing an Honours system with a distinctly New Zealand flavour' much like the Canadian model.[625] At the same time, these negotiations also reveal the limits of British compromise over concepts of gallantry. There were indeed numerous occasions in which Whitehall concluded that New Zealand should adopt an independent Canadian model if agreement could not be reached on non-negotiable principles. For instance, when the idea of multi-level independent New Zealand honours existing within the British system was muted, the British responded that:

> That kind of situation could possibly lead to us getting the worst of both worlds, and rather than that it might be better for the New Zealanders to institute a wholly independent and distinctive system of their own, just as the Canadians have done.[626]

Moreover, when Wellington similarly requested that their Queen's Police Medal for Meritorious Service be upgraded to the status of its gallantry equivalent, London similarly responded that 'we cannot undertake that the outcome will be favourite so far as the United Kingdom is concerned. We think, therefore, that it may be well be best for them, as they themselves suggest, to go their own way in this matter.'[627] Such disagreements demonstrated that, whilst London was willing to engage with the Commonwealth on many ideas, when these partners heavily impinged upon British principles the Conservatives preferred to encourage a move towards separate systems rather than fight for continued cooperation. The extent to which Wellington was willing to continually exist within the confines of the British system, however, prevented a split. However, the British had clearly also warmed to the Canadian system as a viable alternative under The Crown. New Zealand continued to use British civil and military gallantry awards throughout the remainder of the decade and again reaffirmed its commitment to the system in late-1985, the government claiming that 'the only issue seems to be the quantity rather than political implications of British honours'.[628] New Zealand only created its own gallantry awards in 1999.

The extent to which the Heath government was willing to encourage the establishment of independent Commonwealth systems, instead of fighting to retain existing links, can be recognised more thoroughly in the case of Australia. Coinciding with the sober and satisfactory compromises reached with New Zealand, the contrastingly tense and emotive Anglo-Australian relationship of the same period demonstrated that when diplomatic relations

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[625] Ibid, Blundell to Charteris, 'Honours', 8 July 1974.
[626] Ibid, Notes of Charteris for a talk with Blundell, [undated].
[627] Ibid, Milner-Barry to Curle, 17 July 1974.
[628] *TNA,* FCO 57/256, P.G. Millen to Sir Philip Moore, Private Secretary to Queen, 11 October 1985.

appeared to be increasingly strained by the awards system, the British were far keener to sever ties.

For decades Australian awards had been submitted on both a Federal and State basis to the FCO before reaching the Palace for royal approval. Increasingly, however, Whitehall appeared to note with concern the growing hostility with which these constitutional arrangements – and British awards more generally – were regarded following the electoral surge of Gough Whitlam's Labor Party on a mandate of Australian nationalist, anti-imperial, policies. For example, in late-1971 the Labor-held State Governments of Tasmania and South Australia ceased to submit British honours and in August 1972 the latter declared its intention to establish independent state awards outside royal sovereignty. Whilst the Heath government was able to deter this move by reaffirming that such awards 'would not be officially recognised and should not be worn in conjunction with properly instituted honours', these actions against the British system marked the beginning of a long process which would finally result in the establishment of an independent Australian system.[629]

With the prospect of Labor winning the December 1972 Federal elections on a manifesto which included the abolition of British honours, London became increasingly fearful for future Australian participation within the British system. For instance, the FCO discussed with Charteris the potential for Whitlam to immediately cancel the incumbent government's New Year's Honours recommendations should he win the election which, it was predicted, would 'do a lot of harm'.[630] Therefore, when Labor did indeed win the election and Whitlam soon publicly announced the cancellation of the previous Coalition's honours, anxiety rose in Whitehall. A note to the Foreign Secretary predicted that 'there may be a terrible tangle about Australian honours', to which he replied 'yes, this is full of possibilities'.[631]

Feelings were intensified further when Whitlam publicly announced in January 1973 that the Australian states were still British colonies in terms of their constitutional and legal arrangements and, therefore, Canberra aimed to sever all remaining ties, including State Governments' ability to appeal separately to the Crown on the issue of awards. This, in turn, caused a constitutional crisis. Despite Whitlam's desire to remove British honours, various State Governments began to staunchly defend their right to independently recommend awards and, according to London predictions, would do so in ever increasing quantities by filling the void in Australia's award quota opened up by the cancellation of Federal recommendations. The degree to which Britain was constitutionally attached to the Australian States meant

[629] *TNA*, FCO 57/364, Douglas-Home to Sir Mark Oliphant, Governor of South Australia, 24 August 1972.
[630] *TNA*, FCO 57/362, Mayall to Charteris, 22 November 1972.
[631] *TNA*, FCO 57/364, Note to Foreign Secretary, 11 December 1972.

London predicted a deterioration in Federal relations were the Palace to endorse these enhanced State awards. As the FCO wrote to the Governor-General:

> You will know better than I what Mr Whitlam's reaction would be if a consequence of his decision to make no Commonwealth recommendations were to be as many Australian honours as before, all recommended by a few States Premiers.[632]

Whilst this issue was resolved by only allowing State recommendations to fill a regulated number of the overall Australian awards quota, the crisis once again demonstrated to the Heath government the diplomatic tensions which could arise from existing constitutional arrangements over awards. The liability of these constitutional links did not, however, disappear.

On 28 March 1974 Whitlam wrote to Heath declaring his intention to establish an independent Australian awards system including gallantry medals: what Charteris described as a decision 'to go the whole hog (or kangaroo)'.[633] When Whitlam subsequently despatched officials on a fact-finding mission to London to discuss the proposals, the FCO recommended that the Canadian 1972 model 'worked very well' and it was quickly concluded that this arrangement would be 'the most likely outcome'.[634] However, problems quickly emerged when the non-Labor states of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, suspecting another Federal attempt to infringe their rights, began lobbying The Crown to resist any effort by Whitlam to establish an independent system. As State Premier Cutler of New South Wales informed his Governor-General, 'service to the community in all fields can be adequately recognised by the existing system of Royal Honours and Awards which has [a] long and honourable history. No convincing arguments have been produced in support of suggesting change.'[635]

This placed the Conservative government in the awkward position of having to either agree to Whitlam's request for an Australian awards system without the consent of the States – combined with rejecting future State recommendations for British awards – or agreeing to the operation of a joint system whereby both Australian and British awards ran simultaneously, which proved unpopular in both London and Canberra. Consequently, British policy aimed to encourage as much consensus as possible between Canberra and the states. According to FCO notes, during talks between the returning Harold Wilson and Whitlam in London on 19-20 December 1974, the British aimed to 'ensure that any new Australian Order is uniting rather

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[632] *TNA*, FCO 57/471, FCO to Governor-General of Australia, [undated, 1973].
[633] *TNA*, FCO 57/599, Charteris to Lord Bridges, 6 December 1974.
[634] Ibid, Curle to Charteris, 25 April 1974.
[635] Ibid, Premier Cutler to Governor of New South Wales, 19 December 1974.

than divisive'.[636] However, London remained unwilling to immerse itself further in Australian constitutional affairs, thus angering Whitlam who according to the FCO, 'expected HMG to get him out of any problems with the States'.[637] Once again, therefore, London found itself in a situation whereby its diplomatic relations were strained on the basis of awards policy.

The matter only appeared to resolve itself when Whitehall suggested a 'phasing out' period for British honours in the states and Whitlam believed that he could persuade all but Queensland and Western Australia to endorse his new system.[638] The new Order of Australia, closely based on the Canadian 1972 model, was established in February 1975 and featured a Cross of Valour, Star of Courage and Bravery Medal to replace the British GC, GM and QGM. British and Australian civilian awards would operate concurrently until Canberra announced it would no longer recommend imperial medals in 1983.[639] As with the Canadian system, however, Australia retained British military awards until 1991.

Negotiations over the Australian awards system once again, therefore, reveal much about British concepts of gallantry in relation to a global framework during the early-1970s. As previously illustrated, there is significant evidence that the British government wished to retain Australia as part of its own system as much as possible. At the same time, however, the Conservative government was clearly unwilling to fight for this system when it faced sustained challenges that, ultimately, began hindering broader diplomatic relations with Canberra. There is limited evidence throughout the entire diplomatic exchange of 1972-74 to suggest that London remained committed to keeping Canberra within the British system and, indeed, far more evidence that Whitehall seemed contented with a separate Order of Australia along Canadian lines.

Moreover, the eagerness with which London wished to end its constitutional obligations to the states over awards similarly suggests British acceptance of an independent Australian awards system. Diplomatic correspondence with Canberra was littered with references desiring this outcome. For instance, the Foreign Secretary wrote to the PM in mid-1974 expressing that, 'if we could, it would clearly be best to relinquish our role vis-à-vis the Australian States completely', whilst the British line at the Wilson-Whitlam meeting of December emphasised that 'the United Kingdom Government have no wish to continue to be involved in Australian

[636] Ibid, Brief for the PM from the FCO, 'Talks between the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Australia – 19 and 20 December 1974: Australian Honours', 10 December 1974.
[637] *TNA*, FCO 57/600, K.M. Wilford to SWPD, 'Discussion with Mr Whitlam on Constitutional Questions', 20 December 1974.
[638] *TNA*, FCO 57/599, Charteris to Bridges, 6 December 1974.
[639] Nick Metcalfe, *For Exemplary Bravery: The Queen's Gallantry Medal* (Woodstock: Writers World, 2014), p. 48.

constitutional matters. We should gladly relinquish our remaining involvement in them if we could properly do so'.[640]

Collectively, British negotiations with both Australia and New Zealand reinforces the notion of a dual policy, largely dictated by the Conservatives, of retaining some Commonwealth ties and discarding others in relation to the awards system. This not only demonstrates how far the interaction between gallantry and decolonisation was dictated by the Tories, but also how far this process was dictated at diplomatic level. With little British public interest in the constitutional ramifications of decolonisation upon gallantry awards, the shape of the future awards system was dictated largely by the state.

The extent to which the Tory government made little effort to persuade other Commonwealth nations to stay within the British awards system during the 1970s reveals how far they had abandoned the notion of a single shared global network recognising common heroic standards. Whilst there had been several early departures from the system during the first major phase of decolonisation, including Malaysia in 1960 and Zambia in 1965, a significant proportion of other Commonwealth states left following the major departures of Canada and Australia: Jamaica and Trinidad in 1969; Singapore and Rhodesia in 1970; Cameroon in 1972; Malta in 1975; St Lucia in 1980 and Sri Lanka in 1981. There appears to be little evidence to suggest that the British government went to anywhere near the same lengths to retain these Commonwealth members within the joint awards system. This, in itself, demonstrates how far the British had abandoned the concept of a global system by this period. Indeed, the extent to which these separatist nations adopted chivalric orders – out of step with modern British ideology – illustrates how far Commonwealth ideas on recognition of gallantry had diverged.

Despite this crumbling of the Commonwealth awards system at state level, it should be noted that the non-government organisations, who had built upon the spirit of unity forged in the 1950s, continued to advocate this message beyond its utility by the government. Brigadier Smyth's VCGCA continually campaigned for greater Commonwealth representation at its biennial reunions and by 1968 had negotiated RAF flights to pick up VCs from across the world, something which the Commonwealth Affairs Minister reportedly described as 'a unique contribution to Commonwealth Relations'.[641] Smyth remained a key advocate of Commonwealth unity. As he recollected, 'it was always a thrill to meet the buses arriving from the airport at the Royal Commonwealth Society…on the first Sunday morning of a reunion week, with their excited crowd of mixed races and colours'.[642] Whilst Commonwealth

[640] *TNA*, FCO 57/599, Brief by the FCO for the PM, December 1974.
[641] *TNA*, WO 32/17828, Commonwealth Affairs Minister quoted in Smyth to Healey, 29 December 1969.
[642] Smyth, *Milestones*, p. 275.

attendance at biennial events declined from the mid-1970s due to travel difficulties, a concerted effort was made by the Association to revive attendance from 1978-onwards.

Similarly, the RHS attempted to maintain Commonwealth links rekindled by the Stanhope Medal extension of 1962. In 1969 the Society sought the help of the Royal Life Saving Society of Canada to increase Stanhope applications.[643] By 1971 the Chairman reminded members that the 'President of the Royal Humane Society for Australasia had expressed the wish for closer links' and, accordingly, the British RHS made all Commonwealth members visiting the UK honorary members for the duration of their stay.[644] Ultimately, therefore, whilst the state dominated system of shared Commonwealth awards was falling apart, some links endured and were arguably enhanced by non-state organisations. At the same time, however, these organisations held strong ties to the British state, including funding, and hence their pro-Commonwealth stance was likely to have received government blessing.

How far British concepts of gallantry can be said to have 'decolonised' during this period depends on the application of this term. On the one hand, various Commonwealth members continued to use the British system, or elements of it, until the end of the century. This suggests that on an official, literal basis, the framework of a global system partially endured beyond the 1970s. The British also never abandoned their significant conceptual influence over the system in favour of a more federalised approach. The degree to which they continually exerted a highhanded control over those nations remaining within the system also suggests a partially enduring 'imperial' psyche. On the other hand, however, the British consciously attempted to move away from this mentality through stressing modern Commonwealth themes over older imperial ones within the awards system. Furthermore, the fact that by the 1970s the British finally accepted the breakdown of any remaining notion of a coherent global community, united in a shared recognition of heroism, indicates that on a deeper level their aspirations and preferences had indeed decolonised in relation to gallantry. The extent to which they were willing to encourage Commonwealth states to depart the system by the early-1970s indicates that they were no longer willing to fight for a global concept of gallantry in its original 1950s blueprint.

In summary, by the late-1970s the British awards system had undergone two crucial transitions in response to the end of empire. The difficulties encountered during the early-mid 1950s in attempting to facilitate the nationalist impulses of newly-independent Commonwealth nations – leading to the departure of India, Pakistan and South Africa – persuaded successive Tory

[643] *LMA*, LMA/4517/A/01/01/029, Minutes of the 1969 Stanhope Gold Medal Meeting, 2 December 1969.
[644] Ibid, Minutes of Committee Meeting, 2 November 1971.

governments of the need to reform British gallantry awards to reflect new post-imperial realities. The late-1950s were therefore characterised by a renewed emphasis on a modern Commonwealth awards system reflecting the equal and voluntary nature of broader 'Commonwealth culture'. However, the tensions which nevertheless emerged during the 1960s over the functioning of this system – particularly during the Vietnam War – continued to underline the difficulties of maintaining Commonwealth awards in a post-imperial age. Subsequently, British concepts of gallantry underwent a second transition as a new Tory government adopted a more pragmatic hybrid policy of encouraging pliant members to remain in the system whilst urging others to leave. The degree to which the British no longer aimed to retain control of a global, outward-looking awards structure illustrates that their concepts of gallantry had, to a significant degree, decolonised.

The nature of these transitions again reveals much about the interaction between concepts of gallantry and the Sixties value shift. Once again, it reveals how far this transition was primarily facilitated by pioneering Conservative governments in both the late-1950s and early-1970s who chose to engage constructively with ongoing political and cultural change in order to maintain the relevancy of gallantry. Eden had been notably involved in the decision to make the VC Centenary a Commonwealth-dominated event and it was under Macmillan and Douglas-Home that the VCA was able to fund Commonwealth-inclusive events whilst the imperial language of the medal warrants had been revised. Following the 1960s Commonwealth tensions often fuelled by a complacent and disengaged Labour government, the Heath administration of 1970-74 went to significant efforts to address the growing impasse within the system and ultimately formulated the hybrid policy adopted by successive British governments for the remainder of the century. In essence, therefore, the decolonisation of gallantry occurred within a conservative sphere of thought and action.

It is also clear that the timing of cultural transition occurred around two main catalyst points in the late-1950s and early-1970s within a longer-term evolution. Marwick's 'convergence' theory once again proves useful in explaining the pace of change. As noted above, the convergence of 'human agencies' in the form of several particularly engaged and pioneering Tory governments during these two timeframes was crucial in providing the momentum behind reform. Beyond this, the junction of important 'convergences and contingencies' in the form of new cultural forces within the Commonwealth also dictated change. The wider emergence of decidedly anti-imperial national identities in Pakistani and South African political spheres in the late-1950s and in Australia in the early-1970s explains evolving attitudes. Moreover, in terms of converging 'events', the acceleration of literal decolonisation in both these periods – with most major colonies made independent in the first timeframe and smaller remnants such as Fiji, Tonga, Bahrain and Qatar becoming independent in the second

perhaps also provided momentum. Finally, 'major forces and constraints' which converged within the awards system during the mid-1950s and 1960s and accumulated great tension and discontent within the Commonwealth, such as Pakistani withdrawal and the Vietnam War, also explain the subsequent reforms which took place in the late-1950s and early-1970s. Again, therefore, the timing of transition can be explained by the convergence of a range of factors which pushed Conservative governments into facilitating change.

Furthermore, this transition highlights the extent to which an interaction between concepts of gallantry and the Sixties value shift – in this instance, decolonisation – had been dictated largely at state level, thus indicating the extent of state conceptual direction. Whilst the periodic agency of the British and Commonwealth public sphere in revising concepts of gallantry should not be downplayed, the ideological and constitutional course of the Commonwealth awards system had been largely guided at state level and, in most instances, the British public appeared completely detached from these disputes. Indeed, public opinion appears to have featured surprisingly little in the calculations of policymakers. To this extent, therefore, the decolonisation of gallantry appears to comply more with Bernard Porter's notion of a British culture detached from the impact of decolonisation, than MacKenzie's notion of a major cultural transformation.[645] Accordingly, the degree to which the fate of imperial gallantry awards was heavily entangled with the constitutional high politics of decolonisation also once again confirms Mead and Smith's notion that medals were increasingly subject to political interests and agendas after 1945.

As other chapters have revealed, however, this does not in turn suggest that the British public were disengaged from concepts of gallantry. As highlighted earlier, the British awards system had arguably always been associated primarily within the public psyche with *British* heroism first and foremost. There were, after all, notably more British recipients than overseas ones: at the VC Centenary there were 224 British and 101 Commonwealth medallists. As a result of this weighting, combined with the fact that British medal standards and categories changed very little as a result of decolonisation, it is perhaps understandable that the public detected little change in the awards system and failed to take much notice.

This chapter again illustrates how far the transformation of British concepts of gallantry was often 'militarised'. Imperial awards had always featured a heavy military emphasis and hence it was predictable that the Conservative government wished to project the new message of an equal Commonwealth system primarily through military lens. Accordingly, outlets such as the VC Centenary, the VCGCA and the numerous military joint-operations were some of the central ways in which the government's message was projected. In these ventures, the MoD

[645] Porter, p. 347.

and ex-military personnel inevitably played a significant role despite Commonwealth relations being the primary concern of the CRO and FCO. It was, correspondingly, Commonwealth military concerns in Vietnam which decisively underlined to Australia and New Zealand the need for a new approach to gallantry awards. If shared military heritage had been crucial to the Commonwealth system, then the clearly divergent military destinies confirmed by Vietnam proved its undoing. Finally, ex-military figures had also played a notable role in the rise and fall of Commonwealth gallantry through the campaigning of the VCGCA, led by Brigadier Smyth; the RHS, led by Admiral Kekewich and the influential Australian RSL. The extent to which military culture, collaboration and personnel had a significant bearing on the fate of Commonwealth awards demonstrates that the decolonisation of gallantry was a 'militarised' process.

Finally, this chapter reveals much about the 'hero' in the decolonisation process. Historians including MacKenzie, Sebe and Jones have all focused on how decolonisation led to revisions of the heroic icons of the past in order to apply them to new, often anti-colonial, cultural relevance. The overwhelming focus of their studies has been renegotiated cultural memory and legacy. This chapter, however, indicates how contemporary medal communities – heroic 'collectivities' – and the current affairs that surrounded them, continued to have an enduring role in revising the relationship between 'the hero' and imperialism. The VC global community was used as a tool through which British governments attempted to project the revised emphasis from 'Imperial' to 'Commonwealth' heroism. This once again underlines the importance of heroic collectivities during the Sixties value shift; the degree to which they were rooted in contemporary reality rather than memory and, also, how far they were used to project certain messages into the public sphere regarding modern heroism. Furthermore, how far Australia's Vietnam medallists were later depicted as a neglected community – harmed by Britain's antiquated medals policy – illustrates how heroic collectivities also contributed to the fall of the British system, with all their associations to declining Commonwealth cooperation and diverging cultural values. Heroic collectivities can once again, therefore, also be linked to notions of British neglect and decline.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this thesis has been to assess the way in which a largely conservative, state-orientated and often militarised concept – gallantry – interacted with the Sixties 'value shift' assumed to have taken place within British society from the mid-1950s to late-1970s. In so doing, it strove to shed new light on the nature, extent and timing of this cultural transition. It is subsequently evident that concepts of gallantry did indeed absorb significant elements of this cultural change and, in so doing, underwent their own transformation within cautious and carefully regulated conservative parameters. Consequently, the postwar era – previously neglected by most historians – was pivotal to the evolution of concepts of gallantry with British politics and culture.

Gallantry interacted with elements of Sixties cultural transition in several ways. Firstly, at a time in which public expectations of heightened living conditions and social security were rising alongside the rapid expansion of the Welfare State, gallantry underwent simultaneous partial 'welfarisation': the process through which medallists were increasingly rewarded for their heroism through continual financial recompense, as well as symbolic gratitude. Moreover, in a culture increasingly fixated on modernity and modernisation, gallantry went through a 'standardisation' process which served to streamline and ultimately update British awards by injecting into them significant meritocratic principles and conceptual clarification.

Furthermore, at a time when military intervention was becoming more controversial and unpopular both within Britain and internationally, gallantry underwent a process of 'dirtification' whereby the heavy publicity attached to medallists gradually disappeared to protect concepts of gallantry from the moral controversies and clandestine activities involved in Britain's dirty wars. Finally, at a time in which society was forced to come to terms with decolonisation and reduced international status, Britain's imperial awards system simultaneously crumbled and the emphasis on a shared Commonwealth culture of heroic values collapsed. Despite these significant transformations, however, the concept at the heart of gallantry – primarily state-endorsed service to the Crown, the nation or community – remained firmly in place and, indeed, 'gallant' acts of heroism remained remarkably consistent. Essentially, whilst those decorated for gallantry and the way in which they were recognised may have changed, the nature and quality of the actions considered 'gallant' remained largely the same.

There is a crucial explanation for this coinciding continuity and change. As had been demonstrated throughout this thesis, the reform of British concepts of gallantry was pioneered overwhelmingly by a 'conservative community' consisting of successive Conservative governments, back-bench Tory MPs, military and ex-military figures and organisations and,

also, the right-wing media. It is evident that conservatives held a significant emotional stake in British gallantry awards and the concepts of gallantry invested in them. Consequently, to retain their value, relevance, widespread public acceptability and conceptual integrity in a changing culture, they spearheaded elements of progressive reform. At the same time, whilst Labour was indeed crucial in enacting certain reforms, they were often following the agenda already set by Tory governments. The significance of the interaction between concepts of gallantry and the Sixties value shift, therefore, lies in how a conservative community pushed a concept in which they had a considerable emotional stake in a somewhat progressive direction. The extent of this conservative 'possessiveness' towards gallantry is somewhat mirrored in a recent study of American notions of heroism. William Graebner, exploring these notions post-Vietnam, has emphasised how right-wing politicians have thoroughly mobilised heroic discourses to attack the supposed weakness of their liberal, permissive opponents.[646] Whilst the charged political agenda central to this US study largely differs from the UK, the extent of conservative domination of heroic discourse during the mid-late twentieth century is indeed similar.

The findings of this thesis regarding British conservativism is distinct from the swathes of historiography which have traced how progressive forces had themselves swept away traditional values, much to the distress of the conservative public sphere. It conversely supports the findings of historians such as Bulpitt, Davis and Black who have stressed the prevalence of 'progressive', 'liberal' or 'radical' Conservatism in mid-twentieth century Britain, whereby Tory politicians engaged constructively with seemingly progressive policy issues such as welfare or education reform, immigration, devolution or European integration.[647] Indeed, Tory policy towards medal reform particularly concurs with Bulpitt's notion of 'Conservative statecraft' in which Tory government's pioneered supposedly liberal policies in order to preserve long-term 'Conservative' goals: in this instance, maintaining the traditional essence of gallantry within the awards system.[648]

These findings, in turn, shed light on the timing of the Sixties value shift in relation to concepts of gallantry. It is evident that the key turning points of transition occurred primarily in the late-1950s and the early-1970s under several particularly industrious Conservative governments: those of Eden, Macmillan, Douglas-Home and Heath. Whist the timing of reform can be somewhat attributable to the 'human agency' of several Tory governments, Tory MPs and

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[646] William Graebner, 'After Watergate and Vietnam: Politics, Community, and the Ordinary American Hero, 1975-2015', in *Extraordinary Ordinariness*, ed. by Wendt, pp. 235-248 (p. 236).
[647] Davis, p. 73. Lawrence Black, 'Tories and Hunters: Swinton College and the landscapes of modern Conservatism', *Historical Workshop Journal*, (2014), 187-214 (pp. 204-5). Bulpitt, 'Discipline of the New Democracy', p. 39.
[648] Bulpitt, 'Discipline of the New Democracy', p. 39.

other ‘conservative’ groups such as the military and right-wing media, the pacing of transition has also been explored through other cultural forces found in Marwick’s ‘convergence’ theory.[649]

With regards to the late-1950s, converging ‘major forces’ such as the government’s modernisation and welfare expansion drives clearly had an impact upon the standardisation and welfarisation of gallantry, as did ‘convergences and contingences’ – coincidental developments – such as First and Second World War medallists entering old age. Furthermore, the importance of converging ‘events’ such as the VC Centenary of 1956 and decolonisation should not be understated. The former milestone planted gallantry awards and their recipients very firmly and enduringly within the public and political mind, whilst the latter forced the British government to reconsider its attitudes to the imperial awards system and to its application in Britain’s dirty wars. All these converging factors, found within Marwick’s theoretical framework, account for the timing of the value shift.

In relation to the early-1970s, similar converging forces can, alongside the ‘human agency’ of the conservative community, explain the pacing of change. In relation to converging ‘events’, the failure of reform across numerous fields of medals policy in the 1960s provided the momentum behind subsequently successful reform efforts throughout the 1970s. Other converging ‘events’ such as another wave of decolonisation and the onset of several controversial wars in this period also provided the need for medal reform. Additionally converging ‘major forces’, including the Heath government’s welfare reforms and the growing revision of female roles within the British military, all set the background against which reform occurred. In essence, the importance of the late-1950s and early-1970s can be attributed, alongside conservative reform efforts, to the convergence of a range of cultural, political, military and economic forces which turned these periods into catalysts for the cultural transformation of gallantry within a longer-term transition

Collectively, therefore, this thesis points to the late-1950s and early-1970s as of pivotal importance to the interaction between concepts of gallantry and the value shift. This places it in consensus with historians such as Sandbrook, Beckett, Marwick, Savage and Hall who have stressed the centrality of the years surrounding the 1960s to cultural transition whilst, in turn, questioning the importance, and even emphasising the enduring conservativism, of the said decade. The fact that the value shifts surrounding concepts of gallantry occurred across two phases and, indeed, remained topical issues across the entire twenty-five years covered in this

[649] Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 28.

thesis suggests that change was more ‘evolutionary’, rather than ‘revolutionary’, in nature, beginning and ending in fits and bursts.

Having established the nature of interaction between gallantry and the Sixties, this thesis has also addressed questions previously raised by historians of the Honours System. Harper has explored how conceptual direction of *service* awards was temporarily and deliberately decentralised to popular cultural tastes under Wilson between 1964-70 to restore their relevancy and popularity, leading to an influx of ‘celebrities’ into the system. In the long-term, however, Harper asserts that control of the Honours System remained a tool of political elites. He does, nevertheless, raise the question of conceptual control over other British decorations in the Sixties at a time of less deference by society for the leadership of elites. It is debateable whether a similar decentralisation took place in relation to gallantry awards. On the one hand, the government did indeed sometimes tailor medals policy to facilitate broadly measured public and international opinion. This was particularly true regarding government sensitivity to criticism during Britain’s dirty wars. Furthermore, not only did the public sphere, through the media and medal associations, periodically set the agenda on medals policy by drawing government attention to particular grievances such as standardisation, they also forced the government into significant policy U-turns, such as over the VC annuity increase. Additionally, the agency of the public sphere can also be underlined through the continual efforts of non-governmental organisations, such as the RHS, who retained some initiative in pursuing independent concepts of gallantry through their own medals structures across this period.

Viewed in a wider context, however, it is evident that conceptual direction of gallantry – as represented in the awards system – often remained more firmly rooted with the state. First and foremost, the main conceptual foundations of gallantry awards remained consistent throughout: distributed overwhelmingly by the state for service to Crown, nation and society. There was no major attempt by civil society organisations, such as the RHS and CHF, to wrestle back dominant ideological leadership. Whilst it is true that non-governmental organisations did occasionally practice divergent policies to the state in relation to awards, the prominence of these groups in British culture was, as Barclay argues, somewhat redundant by the mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, many of these groups had strong links to the state and were sponsored by it. In terms of the basic conceptual foundations of gallantry, therefore, significant initiative and direction remained in the hands of the state, whose medals remained far more publicly prominent than those of other organisations. Moreover, the extent of this initiative can also be underlined by how far successive governments often refused to cave into public pressure despite the prospect of a significant backlash. This can be seen, for instance,

in the total government refusal to provide Lt.-Col. Mitchell with a DSO in 1968 and in the refusal to grant Violette Szabo a VC despite Ward's very public lobbying campaign.

How far the British state retained conceptual initiative over gallantry awards does not, however, discredit Mead and Smith's notion of increasingly politicised gallantry awards after 1945. The extent to which medals policy had been occasionally used for party political point-scoring, such as during the GC and AM annuity debates, or had often been calculated into wider government agendas, such as during the COIN censorship debates, indicates that gallantry awards were indeed significantly subject to political interests post-1945.

When the government did reform the system in line with public preferences and values, it often did so at its own pace and within its own defined parameters, as opposed to letting the momentum of reform be dictated entirely from below. For example, in relation to posthumous awards, the British government only revised its regulations in the late-1970s, despite a major public and political outcry during the Vietnam War ten years previously. The same is also true of rank-specific awards. Despite complaints in the mid-late 1960s over allocation of different awards for the same gallant acts, change only came in 1974. Finally, there were numerous occasions whereby the government drove reform entirely off its own initiative and with little public input. For instance, the decolonisation of gallantry occurred with remarkably little British public attention and was conducted predominantly by interaction on a diplomatic level.

Whilst the direction of British concepts of gallantry must, therefore, primarily be interpreted through an eternal ideological interaction between state and society, the continued central role of the state within the formation of these concepts, with particular regards to the awards system, must also be emphasised. The public sphere did indeed maintain a steady stream of debate on various aspects of gallantry awards across this period and periodically forced the government to reluctantly undertake reforms. Nevertheless, unlike other related terms such as 'heroism', 'courage' and 'bravery', where historians have placed overwhelming agency with popular culture in accounting for conceptual change, the fate of concepts of gallantry, as manifested in the awards system, rested primarily with state policymakers. These findings somewhat correspond with the long-term state domination of service honours emphasised by Harper, Fox and McLeod.

This finding, in turn, poses the question of whether gallantry awards could be considered to have been part of a 'system of social control'. Goode and, more recently, Frey's theory has been mobilised by several historians including Harper and Fox to demonstrate how service honours were used by social and political elites to reinforce established gender, racial and class hierarchies in Britain and the Commonwealth. Despite the extent of state influence over concepts of gallantry, this thesis asserts that the contribution of these awards to a 'system of

social control' actually somewhat declined over the Sixties value shift. Whilst there is no evidence that racial discrimination affected medals policy by the mid-twentieth century, awards were still issued to project certain messages about gallant acts by women, the deceased and by certain social classes and professions. For instance, women were largely confined to the non-operational sphere of awards, thus reinforcing their non-combatant role. By the late-1970s the standardisation process had, at least on paper if not in general attitudes, removed most of this discrimination and encouraged recognition according to the act of gallantry alone. Goode and Frey's notion of elites allocating awards in order to control who is considered heroic and in what way was, therefore, arguably reduced across the Sixties value shift, despite elements of this philosophy remaining in military rank-specific awards and in the psyche of some policymakers.

This thesis also sought to address how far British concepts of gallantry had become increasingly 'militarised' at a time when the military footprint within society is commonly assumed to have faded. Strachan described 'militarism' as 'a veneration of military values and appearances in excess of what is strictly necessary for effective defence', manifested in policymaking, parliamentary influence and public opinion. He added that continual British militarism can be detected in the extent of increasing military influence over broad government policymaking, observing that 'rather than civilians colonizing the military, the military have colonized the civilians'.[650] It is clear that in applying this definition – based on political and cultural deference to the military and the latter's corresponding degree of policy influence – concepts of gallantry and their interaction with the Sixties can indeed be regarded as having been continually militarised throughout the Sixties. Indeed, the degree to which military values significantly encroached into the civilian awards sphere suggests that militarisation intensified, rather than simply endured or declined, during this transformative period.

There is significant evidence to suggest that military interests, represented through the MoD, held significant and perhaps disproportionate influence over medals policy, particularly relating to nominally 'civilian' or non-operational awards. For example, the MoD was the driving force behind attempts to distinguish between service and gallantry awards in both the civil and military spheres during the late-1950s. Moreover, it was this department that led the campaign to abolish the class-based OBE gallantry awards between 1964-74 despite remaining adamantly opposed to ending similar rank and service-specific medals within their own military remit. It was also the MoD that prevented posthumous criteria being added to civilian awards in the late-1960s and early-1970s, despite pressure from Commonwealth

[650] Strachan, *Politics of the British Army,* p. 264-5.

countries during the Vietnam War. Indeed, the civilian-directed HD Committee only desisted from complying with MoD preferences when all other major departments aligned against it in 1976. Military institutions, therefore, played a dominant role in policy surrounding both military and civilian awards due to their stake in both spheres, whilst civilian institutions often took their lead from military advice.

The extent to which military personnel dominated the agenda surrounding gallantry awards is further reinforced by their control over most medal associations. The major medallist pressure groups such as the VC Association, DCM League, MM League and the AM Association were all led by prominent military veterans such as Smyth, Place and Cowley regardless of the 'military' or 'civilian' composition of their membership. The extent to which, under their leadership, these associations intensely lobbied the government and interacted with the media to try and set the agenda surrounding gallantry awards, once again underlines the influence of military personnel and interests over medals reform. Furthermore, much of their prominent Parliamentary support also came from ex-military MPs, regardless of the civilian or military medal concerned. In terms of disproportionate influence over policymaking, therefore, this thesis concurs with Strachan's notion of militarism.

Furthermore, the extent of militarised gallantry is also illustrated in the degree to which both policymakers and society clearly venerated and prioritised military culture and interests in relation to reform of gallantry awards. This is particularly clear in how far various aspects of military culture increasingly encroached upon civilian medals during this timeframe. The most prominent of these was the provision of an annuity to the GC, AM and EM between 1965 and 1968. Prior to this point the allocation of government annuities had been regarded as a distinctly military tradition. The subsequent policy shift meant that top-ranking civilian medallists were financially compensated for their heroism, much like their military counterparts. Another element of military culture that swept into the civilian sphere was the inclusion of these medallists in associations. Prior to the mid-1950s medal associations had been primarily military organisations, often associated with veterans' groups and military charities. However, with GCs included in the VCA from 1962-onwards and the establishment of the AM Association in 1966, 'civilian' medallists gained greater access to the same communities and lobbying influence that had previously been a military preserve. The extent of military encroachment onto civilian awards suggests that medals policy was not just 'militarised', but also experienced a further wave of 'militarisation' across this period.

The prioritisation of military interests in relation to gallantry awards is evident in how far military conflicts often acted as catalysts for reform within both the military and civilian realms. By far the most prominent was the increasing use of censorship in the publication of

citations during the Jebel Akhdar, Guyana, Borneo, Ulster and Dhofar campaigns. This transition, brought about through military operations, radically readjusted the conventionally transparent relationship between the awards system and the public sphere. The fact that non-operational awards to both soldiers and policemen were included within this censorship illustrates the impact of military operations on the system as a whole. Indeed, the fact that the HO was only able to successfully expand the posthumous component within civilian awards by emphasising increasing civilian involvement in military-like activity during the IRA metropolitan bombing campaigns demonstrates how far a civilian department felt compelled to stress *military* priorities to achieve success. Finally, operations in Vietnam proved an emotive catalyst through which Commonwealth nations felt obliged to evaluate their relationship with British gallantry awards. Clearly, therefore, the importance of military operations in encouraging transformation in concepts of gallantry illustrates how far military interests were prioritised within the system and this, in turn, points to militarised concepts of gallantry.

Finally, the continued veneration of military interests is also evident in the how far military awards were identified by reformers as more prestigious than civilian ones within British culture and, accordingly, the grievances surrounding military awards were prioritised by policymakers. The perceived public bias towards military awards is most evident in how far Irene Ward felt that Szabo's transfer to the VC would both elevate and inject greater prestige into public notions of female heroism. This public bias towards military awards can also be found in how far public debates surrounding pressing reforms to the system often focused on military medals as opposed to civilian ones. This was perhaps most clear during the welfarisation process whereby the proposed extent of annuity expansion was carried much further in the military realm than in the civilian one in public debates.

Ultimately, the continued extent of military influence over the awards system and how far this increasingly encroached onto civilian decorations demonstrates how far British concepts of gallantry were indeed 'militarised' and underwent a further 'militarisation' process during the Sixties value shift. This is evident in both the extent of military influence over policymaking and the coinciding veneration and prioritisation of military interests within both the political and public sphere. The fact that the mid-twentieth century British military is overwhelmingly regarded by commentators as a 'conservative' institution ensures that its influence over awards bolsters the notion of a conservative community of interests driving the interaction between gallantry and the Sixties.

This thesis also has important implications for the study of the material culture of medals. Whilst Spijkerman has noted the importance of state investitures for injecting emotional

meaning into medals, Richardson and Joy have, nevertheless, placed overwhelming emphasis on the agency of medallists and their communities in investing decorations with personalised long-term meaning and memory. Hence, the latter have relegating the role of the state to simply initiating a rather bland, pre-programmed meaning to decorations at the very beginning of their emotional lifespan. This thesis has, however, demonstrated that the state continued to have a major impact on renegotiating the emotional relationship between medallist and medal well after issuing the award. This was particularly evident through both the welfarisation and standardisation processes. With regards to the former, as individual medallists, medal associations, journalists and politicians argued from the mid-1950s onwards that possession of a medal should entitle the holder to increasing amounts of social welfare and, accordingly, greater dignity in old age, it was the government which decided the purchasing power of enhanced annuities and who should be entitled to them. This, in turn, led to some medallists such as AMs feeling demoted, neglected and alienated from the awards system due to their exclusion from annuities which increasingly appeared as indicators of first-class status. Welfarisation, as dictated by the state, inevitably influenced the attitudes of medallists and wider society as to the nature and extent of state gratitude for past service, as embodied in the medal itself. Regarding clarificatory standardisation, many medallists felt an increased estrangement from their medals as they realised that they had become not only forgotten by society, but also demoted in state rankings by successive reforms to the awards system. Some medallists, after failing to obtain redress of grievances, became embittered and alienated from their awards and, particularly in relation to the KPMG, occasionally chose to return them to the government rather than be reminded of obsolete symbols of gratitude. Others, such as AM and EM medallists successfully campaigned for replacements within the new awards categories and hence received a renewed sense of public relevance and gratitude.

Regardless of the fate of particular medals in relation to welfarisation and standardisation, it is clear that decisions taken by the state in reforming awards policy had a direct and often seismic impact upon the meaning invested in awards by their holders and wider society. Historians of material culture should, therefore, place greater emphasis on the importance of the state, as well as society, in dictating and renegotiating the meanings invested in these objects.

Finally, this thesis has addressed what concepts of gallantry reveal about the place of the ‘hero’ figure within postwar British culture and society. As John MacKenzie has noted, there is a clear dearth of postwar contemporary heroic icons of comparative status to the imperial figures that dominated popular culture in the early-twentieth century. Indeed, whilst Dawson and others are correct in tracing the endurance of popular heroic icons after 1945, it is nevertheless evident that such figures remained either firmly based in historical memory or, if related to

contemporary events, possessed extremely short public lifespans, failing to take root within British culture. For instance, Colin Mitchell achieved short-term public fame and the hero label, yet, did not become firmly established in long-term public memory. It is, as MacKenzie notes, largely unproductive to study newly emergent heroic icons after 1945 as they rarely had the same all-pervasive impact or longevity as previous figures.

The significance of gallantry medallists, therefore, lies in their public prominence as heroic 'collectivities'.[651] Viewed by politicians and journalists as groups with homogenous heroic characteristics and experiences, they were often the collective focus of public and political attention due to the powerful messages they projected about the place of heroism within postwar British culture. First and foremost, it is evident that such heroic groupings often engaged with, and were often considered a part of, contemporary affairs. In their capacity as modern British heroes, medallist communities interacted with and were changed by current developments such as decolonisation, dirty wars, the expansion of the welfare state and the Sixties emphasis on meritocracy and modernisation. Whilst historians of heroic icons have often explored the ways in which figures of the past were revised and adapted within public historical memory to suit evolving social and cultural preferences after 1945, this thesis demonstrates that new heroes continued to be created out of contemporary events and, contributing towards collectivities, continued to hold powerful emotional resonance in the public mind. In essence, British culture did not simply rely on memory of a long-departed jingoistic past for its icons. New ones emerged through contemporary events to join the ranks of surviving heroic communities, often making heroism a matter shaped by current affairs involving living, breathing individuals.

It is, nevertheless, important to also recognise the prominence of historical memory in the public approach to contemporary notions of heroism. With a significant number of First and Second World War medallists reaching old age from the 1950s to the 1970s, the debates surrounding welfare and the social status of these figures – significant issues within public commentary on heroes – inevitably referred to past heroism and service as justification for current reforms. Historical memory also played a notable role in the pace and nature of the decolonisation of heroes in this period. The British government relied on recent shared military heritage, as represented through generations of Commonwealth VCs, as the launchpad for its new Commonwealth concepts of gallantry. Conversely, similar heroic 'collectivities', in the form of Commonwealth Vietnam medallists, were used to emphasise the strong divergence from the imperial past as the Commonwealth awards system crumbled. Whilst these collectivities illustrate how heroism was first and foremost influenced by the

[651] MacKenzie, 'Afterword', p. 977.

present, they also demonstrate the coinciding significance of past memory in numerous contexts.

Consequently, the direction of postwar heroism, as manifested through gallantry medallists, was guided primarily by contemporary events, but also with one eye fixed firmly on the past. This interplay between past and present is indeed vital to understanding notions of postwar British heroism. Invariably, public commentary on current grievances relating to medallists often chastised politicians and wider society for failing to provide these groups with the same respect, status and gratitude supposedly offered in the past. In so doing, commentators often consciously or subconsciously linked the condition of medallists with highly pervasive and all-encompassing current notions of 'British decline' and neglect of their previous standards and values. Hence, during the 'welfarisation' debates, military medallists were allegedly not entitled to the same financial recompense as in the past. Similarly, during the 'standardisation' process medallists were said to have lost their social standing due to the abolition of certain awards. Moreover, as gallantry awards interacted with Britain's dirty wars, there were complaints – particularly during Suez, South Arabia and Northern Ireland – that awards were being denied due to declinist Britain's squeamishness over the morality of these conflicts. Furthermore, regarding the disintegrating imperial system of awards, there was an inevitable political recognition that this too was symbolic of British decline vis-à-vis the Commonwealth.

Hence, the study of gallantry medallists reinforces the concept of the postwar 'declinist' hero. This notion – that heroic icons were used to either allay fears of British decline or, alternatively, through their supposed neglect, to reinforce notions of British decline – has already been explored by various commentators. For instance, Jones, Richards and Webster have explored in a fictional context the way in which film and TV depictions of empire heroes increasingly challenged conventional notions of British masculinity in the face of imperial decline. Alternatively, historians including Edwards, Schofield and Schwarz have explored how similar notions of heroism, particularly in the face of decline, influenced the reputations of non-fictional 'icons' such as Mad Mitch, Ian Smith of Rhodesia and Enoch Powell.[652] This thesis' focus on gallantry awards strengthens this affiliation between British concepts of heroism and decline as manifested in public understandings of heroic collectivities. It does, however, also reveal that this sense of decline was more all-pervasive than previously acknowledged by hero historians. Whilst other commentators have overwhelmingly identified

[652] Edwards, p. 138. Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire: The White Man's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 396. Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 22.

declinist trends linked to empire, this thesis indicates how far it permeated into other elements of hero culture, including social and economic recognition in old age.

This study of British concepts of gallantry has, therefore, shed new light on the nature of conservative interaction with the Sixties and, accordingly, on the nature of postwar British politics, culture and society. It has underlined the crucial importance of decades – previously neglected by historians – after 1945 to the evolution of concepts of gallantry, heroism and medals. The possibilities that this study opens for furthering academic understanding of these various themes and issues are numerous. However, the way in which John Major's subsequent 1993 reforms to the Honours System built upon several of the vital processes begun in the Sixties provides a promising and important avenue for future research.

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Table 1: The British gallantry awards system, circa-1955

Military Awards	Degree	Additional Qualification	Civilian Awards	Degree	Additional Qualification
VC	1st	Open to all.	GC	1st	Open to all.
DSO	2nd	An order restricted to officers. Not posthumous.	AM	1st	Restricted to posthumous cases.
DCM	2nd	Restricted primarily to Army ORs. Not posthumous.	EM	1st	Restricted to posthumous cases.
CGM	2nd	Primarily used in the navy. Not posthumous.	GM/RRC	2nd	Not posthumous. Latter awarded to women.
MC	3rd	Restricted to officers. Not posthumous.	QPMG/QFSMG	2nd	Restricted to posthumous service cases.
MM	3rd	Restricted mainly to male ORs. Not posthumous.	Order of the British Empire	3rd	Distributed on a class basis. Not posthumous.
DFC	3rd	Restricted mainly to male RAF officers. Not posthumous.	BEM	3rd	An order distributed according to class. Not posthumous.
DFM	3rd	Restricted to mainly to male RAF ORs. Not posthumous.	QCBC	4th	Open to all.
AFC	3rd	Restricted mainly to RAF officer in a non-operational basis. Not posthumous.	QCVSA	4th	Open to all.
AFM	3rd	Restricted mainly to RAF ORs on a non-operational basis. Not posthumous.	RHS/CHF/SPLF and other non-state awards.	5th	Non-state awards.
MID	4th	Open to all. Available posthumously.			

Table 2: The reformed British gallantry awards structure, circa-1979

Military Awards	Degree	Additional Qualification	Civilian Awards	Degree	Additional Qualification
VC	1st	Open to all.	GC	1st	Open to all.
DSO	2nd	Restricted to officers. Not posthumous.	GM/RRC	2nd	Open to all.
DCM	2nd	Restricted to ORs. Available posthumously.	QPMG/ QFSMG	2nd	Only available posthumously.
CGM	2nd	Largely restricted to navy ORs. Available posthumously.	QGM	3rd	Open to all.
MC	3rd	Restricted to officers. Available posthumously.	QCBC	4th	Open to all.
MM	3rd	Restricted to ORs. Available posthumously.	QCVSA	4th	Open to all.
DFC	3rd	Restricted to officers. Available posthumously.	RHS, CHF, SPLF and other non-state awards.	5th	Non-state awards.
DFM	3rd	Restricted to mainly RAF ORs. Available posthumously.			
AFC	3rd	Restricted mainly to RAF officer in a non-operational basis. Available posthumously			
AFM	3rd	Restricted to RAF ORs on a non-operational basis. Available Posthumously.			
MID	4th	Open to all.			

List of Abbreviations

AFC	Air Force Cross
AFM	Air Force Medal
AM	Albert Medal
BEM	British Empire Medal
BL	British Legion
BLESMA	British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association
CBE	Commander of the British Empire
CGM	Conspicuous Gallantry Medal
CHF	Carnegie Hero Fund
CO	Colonial Office
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPM	Colonial Police Medal
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross
DFM	Distinguished Flying Medal
DSM	Distinguished Service Medal
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
DSS	Defence Services Secretary
EGM	Empire Gallantry Medal
EM	Edward Medal
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Device
EOKA	Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FO	Foreign Office
GC	George Cross
GM	George Medal
GSM	General Service Medal
HC	High Commissioner
HD Committee	Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals

HO	Home Office
KBE	Knight of the British Empire
KPMG	King's Police Medal for Gallantry
LS&GCM	Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
MBE	Member of the British Empire
MC	Military Cross
MID	Mention in Despatches
MML	Military Medallist's League
MM	Military Medal
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal
MS	Military Secretary
OBE	Officer of the British Empire
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PM	Prime Minister
PMAC	Polar Medal Assessment Committee
PPO	Principal Personnel Officer
QCBC	Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct
QCVSA	Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air
QGM	Queen's Gallantry Medal
ORs	Other Ranks
QSO	Queen's Service Order
RAF	Royal Air Force
RHS	Royal Humane Society
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
RRC	Royal Red Cross
RSL	Returned Services League
SAS	Special Air Service
SBS	Special Boat Service
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SPLF	Society for the Protection of Life from Fire
VCA	Victoria Cross Association

VC	Victoria Cross
VCGCA	Victoria Cross and George Cross Association
WO	War Office
WRAC	Women's Royal Army Corps