
WHY DID CANADA REFUSE NATO'S AFGHANISTAN MEDAL FOR ITS TROOPS?

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Defence Watch has received a number of questions from Afghan veterans regarding the Canadian Forces/Department of National Defence decision not to accept the NATO Afghanistan medal. This decision was made years ago but it still causes concern among some veterans (the latest email coming in to Defence Watch just a couple of weeks ago)

So Defence Watch asked the questions and Suzanne Parker, of Personnel and Legal Services ADM Public Affairs, provided the answers.

So why didnt Canada accept the NATO Afghanistan medal for its troops? On the recommendation of the Department of National Defence, the Government of Canada decided that Canada would not be accepting nor authorizing the wear of the NATO Medal for International Security Assistance Force, explained Parker. Canada instead created and issued its own recognition of CAF service with International Security Assistance Force, the South-West Asia ribbon to the General Campaign Star and General Service Medal. In accordance with the Canadian Honours Policy rule, which precludes dual recognition, the Chancellery of Honours directed that no Canadian can receive the NATO-International Security Assistance Force Medal.

NATO was informed of this decision through official channels, she added. It is important to note that Canada is not the only country not to allow the wear of the NATO-International Security Assistance Force Medal, Parker pointed out. While the United Kingdom did allow its members to accept the medal as a memento, it did not approve the medal for wear. The UK instead awarded its own Operational Service Medal – Afghanistan for service on the mission.

And what were the specific reasons for the CF/DND recommending that the Canadian government not to accept the NATO medal? When NATO first introduced its Medal for International Security Assistance Force, it was determined that the dates and location of eligibility for the medal would

exclude a large number of Canadian Armed Forces personnel, Parker explained. Also, there was a strong feeling among the troops that the medal offered by NATO was not appropriate for the service in question; NATO medals being mostly associated, in their view, with peacekeeping service in the Balkans and not a combat mission.

Kaynak/Source: