

VETERANS DESERVE GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION

For years veterans and the organizations that support veterans have requested that the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal (CVSM) be re-introduced and issued to all veterans. This writer has written several op-eds concerning this matter; however, the Government of Canada continues to ignore these with vague responses. I have previously recommended that Canadians should contact their Members of Parliament and Senators to formally request that the medal be re-introduced.

Canadians continue to join the Canadian Armed Forces and serve Canada, with unlimited liability. Many of those who chose to serve but leave the Armed Forces before completing 12 years of service do so without a medal that recognizes their service. Other NATO and like-minded nations have volunteer service medals and their veterans wear these decorations with pride. Surely our veterans are also deserving of such recognition!

Canadians know that whenever and wherever the military is needed, an appropriate response is rendered. These military members place themselves in harm's way as may be necessary to fulfill Canada's national interests and this includes service in war zones, service as a deterrent to the aggression of others, service to search and rescue operations, service in combating forest fires, floods, and ice storms and a host of other types of service. Yes, it is true that after many years of requesting, the Government is in the process of issuing service recognition cards; however, a more tangible and visible form of recognition—a medal—should also be presented. All veterans support organizations are unanimous in advocating that the CVSM be re-introduced and their quest continues.

The common Government common response to the request for reinstating the CVSM over many years has been that there already is a medal which serves that role – the Canadian Forces Decoration (CD) – which is awarded after 12 years of service, with bars at 22, 32 and 42 years. However, what the Government response does not acknowledge is that the CD is given for long service and good conduct whereas the CVSM is intended to recognize the selfless and patriotic act of volunteering for service which has unlimited liability for injury or death, working under extremely harsh and physically demanding situations and having to obey all legally given orders of superiors. Our military veterans deserve such recognition—let's make it happen!

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