

VFW Leads Effort with Other VSO/MSOs, Asks President Obama to Lower Drone Medal Ranking

Mar 14, 2013

March 12, 2013

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of millions of veterans, service members and their families, we the undersigned leaders of the nation's largest Veterans and Military Service Organizations write to request your personal involvement to lower the Pentagon's new Distinguished Warfare Medal on the military order of precedence. The Distinguished Warfare Medal currently ranks 9th among some five dozen active medals and ribbons — higher than the Soldier's Medal, the Bronze Star with combat "V" device, and the Purple Heart.

No one disputes that drone operators, cyber warriors and others are having a tremendous and immediate impact on battlefields far away, but to create a new "war" medal that doesn't require physically serving in a warzone, and then to rank it above valor and injury medals that can only be earned in combat, has created a huge morale problem within the ranks. Tens of thousands have already spoken out in opposition, to include Members of Congress, who have introduced bipartisan legislation to force the Pentagon to lower the medal's status to below the Purple Heart.

After weeks of defending its position, the Pentagon announced that Secretary Hagel has directed a formal review of the medal's ranking, and that Joint Chiefs Chairman General Dempsey will lead the review. We view this as a very encouraging sign, but demoting the medal below the Purple Heart is not yet a done deal, which is why we are soliciting your personal involvement. The Pentagon has enough challenges to overcome in the months and years ahead. They don't need a self-inflicted morale problem added to the list.

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Respectfully,

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