

Medals: A History and Price Guide.

by John Ainsley

Bravery in battle has been recognised and rewarded since the dawn of human history. Certainly in the millennium before Christ, the Greeks are known to have presented awards in the form of badges which could be worn. The Romans followed with bronze or silver badges to honour gallantry in battle. The graves of Roman soldiers sometimes depict these awards. In Britain we are able to trace medals which recognised gallantry to the Civil Wars of the mid seventeenth century. A Robert Welch and a John Smith each received gold medals for bravery at Edgehill in 1642. Medals were stitched on to the sashes of uniforms. In 1643 Charles I awarded an oval silver badge to be worn on the chest of ordinary soldiers who distinguished themselves by acts of gallantry. The first award for war service was made by the Commonwealth to commemorate the Battle of Dunbar in 1650. It was issued in gold for officers and in silver for other ranks and was worn around the neck suspended by a chain. Moving on about a 150 years to the Napoleonic Wars, gold crosses were awarded to high ranking officers in the Peninsular Campaign. However, it was not until the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 that a medal was awarded to all ranks, or indeed all classes, involved in a campaign. At last, a system of gallantry awards was beginning to emerge but it remained unofficial, being sponsored and paid for by commanding officers or regiments. This remained the status quo until after the middle of the nineteenth century. The catalyst for change was the Crimean War of 1854-1856. Now, for the first time, correspondents were reporting on the progress of events. The press carried stories which captivated public interest, such as the Charge of the Light Brigade, but also reported on the incredible degree of suffering inflicted on the British forces through cold and disease. The British government responded by setting up a regular system of gallantry awards. Three were instituted during the War. The first of these is The Distinguished Conduct Medal. This was awarded to non-commissioned or other ranks of the army and may be shortened to DCM. The naval equivalent to the DCM, introduced at the same time, was The Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. The third and most important of all was The Victoria Cross. This was awarded for conspicuous gallantry, or as the medal itself simply denotes, for valour. The land and sea operations associated with The Crimea saw the award of 111 VCs and about 670 DCMs. Only ten CGMs were awarded. Sixty two of the VCs were presented by Queen Victoria in Hyde Park in 1858. Bars or clasps worn on the ribbon were also instituted at this time. These represented further awards. Here began a process which was to develop into a comprehensive system of gallantry awards and which would be mainly in place by the time twentieth century wars were to spill the blood of millions within the lifetime of one generation.

Further Reading.

British Gallantry Awards, 1855 - 2000.
Duckers, P. Shire Publications, No. 394. 2001. ISBN 0 7478 0516 4.

Medals.
Aldino Ltd. 1993. ISBN 1 85326 802X.

Medal News magazine.
Token Publishing. Enquiries tel: 01404 46972.

English Speaking Grading Terminology

PRF	Proof	F	Fine
UNC	Uncirculated	VG	Very Good
EF or XF	Extremely Fine	G	Good
VF	Very Fine	PR	Poor



1
A group of five medals, to Lt. Col C.E. Webber R.E. comprising The Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Companion breast badge in 18ct gold, Indian Mutiny 1857-59, with Central India bar; South Africa with 1879 bar; Egypt 1882-89 with The Nile 1884-85, and Tel-El-Kebir bars and Khedive's Star 1882, all EF with blue toning in glazed case. Gorrings, Lewes. Jan 04. £5,000.



2
Distinguished Flying Cross Medal, 3 other medals, miniatures & The Times death announcement. Gorrings, Bexhill On Sea. Dec 04. £4,000.



3
Military General Service Medal 1793 - 1814, with Nive, Pyrenees, Vittoria and Fuentes D'Onor clasps to A. Campbell 71st Foot in the original box dated 25.1.50, medal UNC. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 05. £3,100.



4
Group of 9 (ex 10) medals, to Major R.S. Webber Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Indian GSM with Burma 1885-87 bar, Queens Sudan, QSA with Transvaal, R. of Ladysmith, O.F.S. Tugela Heights and C.C. bars, K.S.A. with 01 and 02 bars, Aug/Nov star, WM, orders of Osmanieh and Medijeh and Khedives Sudan, GVF in a glazed case. Gorrings, Lewes. Jan 04. £2,200.



5
First World War medals of Major J.S. Courtauld. Military Cross, 1914/15 star, 1914/18 medal, Great War medal and Croix de Guerre with miniatures. Sixth Battalion of The Somerset Infantry, the 43rd Infantry Brigade. Stride & Son, Chichester. Jul 03. £2,100.



6
First World War medals including Victory, Queens South Africa, D.S.O. and the order of St Michael and St George. Gorrings, Bexhill. Sep 01. £2,000.



7
Group of 3 medals to John Morton RM, including The Crimean War Medal, together with a Turkish Crimea Medal and The Baltic Medal, framed together with a photograph. Cheffins, Cambridge. Apr 04. £1,500.



8
Victorian long service medal group named to 2281 Pte W. Humphries. Richard Winterton, Burton on Trent. Feb 05. £1,400.



9
Second World War Military Cross & miniature, 1st WW trio to Captain H.H. Keay 23rd Btn. London Regt. awarded La Bassee 10th June 1917. (all EF to UNC) Gorrings, Lewes. Jan 05. £1,200.



10
Medal group for Colonel the Hon. Charles William Ernest Duncombe CBE, 1862-1945. Rosebery's, London. Mar 02. £1,150.



11
16 medals to Henry Edward Harrison inc. Queen Elizabeth II Royal Victoria medal silver, 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, etc, 9 foreign decorations, citations, letters and a photograph. Denhams, Warnham. Mar 04. £1,100.



12
Two medals 'For Distinguished conduct' 3926 Serjt. J. Lowe 4th RL:LANG:REGT, a Queens South Africa medal marked 'South Africa 1901, Orange Free State' and 'Cape Colony', 2936, SGT J. Lowe, RL:LANG:RGT. Wintertons Ltd, Lichfield. Sep 00. £950.



13
Two Victoria military medals, Indian General Service medal and a Punjab medal 1848/9 to Captain H Bingham, 1st Battalion 60th Kings Royal Rifle Corps with ribbons. Stride & Son, Chichester. Feb 02. £920.



14
Six medals awarded to 741414 A. Sgt A W Pizzey (later Major) 25 County of London (Cyclists) Regt, inc: India General Service Medal 1908-1935 with Afghanistan NWF 1919 bar; The British War Medal 1914-20; The Victory Medal 1914-1918; The Territorial Force War Medal 1914-1919; The Territorial Force Efficiency Medal and Defence Medal 1939-1945 (6). Cheffins, Cambridge. Feb 05. £720.



15
Lieut. Colonel Thomas Carmichael Scott, Royal Artillery OBE medal group, including Africa Star; Italy Star; Bronze Star Medal (USA) and OBE also mentioned in despatches, also with George VI Territorial medal, together with letters, invitations, Bank of Scotland War Service Record book, his wife's war departmental pass and other paperwork and photos. Rosebery's, London. Mar 05. £720.



16
Crimean medal group including Crimea war medal with Sebastopol, Inkermann and Balaclava class. A Baltic medal (unmarked) and a South Africa medal with orange tree State and Cape Colony clasps (unmarked), Turkish Crimean medal and long service and good conduct medal engraved for 996 Robert Barber 1st Dragons. Rosebery's, London. Sep 04. £650.



17
A set of three First World War medals, with 1914 star for Private H. Ayling 4th Middlesex Rgt, another set with territorial force efficiency medal for Corporal H. Newman, Surrey Yeomanry, various other medals and insignia, a starting pistol and a First World War chocolate tin. Rosebery's, London. Dec 04. £580.



18
Group of George V campaign medals to 'Private E Fuller' (No 3214), East Kent Regiment; Military Medal (1st Type), 1914-1915 Star; War Medal and Victory Medal, and a small selection of cap badges and medallions. Canterbury Auction Galleries, Canterbury. Apr 05. £540.



19
George V Military Cross with Bar (unnamed). Canterbury Auction Galleries, Canterbury. Feb 04. £520.



20
A set of three First World War medals awarded to 16299 Pte J H Ford of the North Staffordshire Regiment. Richard Winterton Auctioneers, Burton on Trent, Staffs. Feb 03. £500.



21
Series of medals awarded to 2718 Pte L.Cpl S E Foster MFP. Richard Winterton Auctioneers, Burton on Trent, Staffs. Feb 03. £480.



22
3 2nd World War German Iron Crosses, 2 campaign medals and 2 badge caps with 3 General Service Medals, and other ephemera in a metal tin. Ambrose, Loughton. Mar 02. £420.



23
4 medal group, inc: Q.S.A. with Witterbergen, Johannesburg and Relief of Kimberley clasps, Aug/Nov star; WM and Victory to 3068 Cpl. W.A. Huggett I-L Gds (GVF). Gorrings, Lewes. Sep 04. £360.



24
India G.S.M., with Hazara 1891 clasp to 1938 Pte. M. Morris 2nd Seaforth Highlands (NEF) an Egypt medal to C.L. Lawton A.B. H.M.S. Ready (GVF, polished) and a Khedive Star 1882 (NVF) in a Spink glazed case Gorrings, Lewes. Jul 04. £300.



25
2nd World War 5 medal group, inc: O.B.E. (military), 1939-45 and France / Germany stars, WM oak leaf clasp and Defence to 31179 Col. Thomas Lindsay Irish Guards (EF). Gorrings, Lewes. Oct 04. £300.



26
Series of mixed First World War medals including Air Efficiency Award and 'Bomb Reconnaissance' band. Richard Winterton, Burton on Trent, Staffs. Apr 03. £240.



27
Naval medal group; China 1900 (NEF), Naval L.S.G.C (VF) and 1st WW Victory (GF) to 139686 James Gruitt, Chief Stoker HMS Dido. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 03. £240.



28
George V issue Military Cross, un-named, boxed. Denhams, Warnham. Aug 03. £240.



29
George V India General Service medal with Warzistan bar 1919, 21, a 14-15 star, Victory Medal and 14-18 British War medal, Lieut. C. G. Breten 69, PJBIS, the Star as Captain and other ephemera. Rosebery's, London. Dec 03. £230.



30
Group of 3 medals, inc: G.S.M. with Palestine 1945 - 48 clasp, Korea, and U.N. Korea to 19160183 / 22521578 Spr. William George Jenkins R. Warks. Regt. (GVF/NEF). With 3 cased medals, Jenkins' service books & some photographs. Gorrings, Lewes. Oct 04. £220.