



Medals of the First World War

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The 1914 and 1914/15 Stars

The 1914 Star was awarded for service in France and Belgium between 4th August and 22nd November 1914. Recipients of this medal were amongst the very first British soldiers to enter the war and were likely to have been enlisted prior to the outbreak of the war. Although there was a surge of reenlistment the new recruits required basic training before being sent to the front.

The 1914/15 version was awarded to anyone who fought in France and Belgium between 23rd November and 31st December 1915, or anyone who fought overseas in 1914 and 1915. These troops were likely to have enlisted at the outbreak of war and went to the front after training.



Victory Medal

This medal was awarded to anyone who served in a theatre of war at any time during the First World War. The rainbow ribbon is designed to show how a rainbow of nations allied to fight the war. For this reason each allied country issued its own version of this medal. The common features were the image of Winged Victory and the rainbow ribbon.

Nearly 6.5 million were awarded to soldiers from the UK and colonies.

The recipients name, regiment and number will be inscribed on the rim.



War Medal

This medal was issued to anyone who served overseas in the armed forces during the war. Anyone eligible for the Victory Medal also received a War Medal, however people who served overseas in areas which did not see any fighting, for example India, would only have received the War Medal. Members of the Women's Auxiliary, the Red Cross and medical staff at the front were also eligible for this medal.

Nearly 7 million were awarded. Around 100,00 are bronze rather than silver which indicates that the recipient was enlisted in the Labour Corps and were of non-European origin.

The recipient's name regiment and number will be inscribed around the rim, which will be useful



Territorial War Medal

This is a rare medal which was only awarded to 34,000 soldiers. To qualify you had to be a member of the volunteer reserves, served overseas and not be eligible for either of the Stars. At the outbreak of the war most reservists went straight to the front, having already received basic training, and were therefore eligible for a Star. Comparatively rare sets of circumstances would have led to the award of this medal, such as being a reservist sent to India, or perhaps having been otherwise engaged until 1916, which is why this medal is so rare.

The medals do not come inscribed with any information about the recipient, but the recipient would have been eligible for the War Medal and possibly the Victory medal also.



Mercantile Marine Medal

A comparatively rare medal in that only 140,000 were awarded. To qualify you must have served in the Merchant Navy or a similar organisation, at sea during the war. You must have completed one or more journeys through waters in a war zone (the Channel, the Atlantic etc.). Recipients were also eligible for the War Medal. If this medal is found alongside a Victory Medal then it means that the recipient also served in the armed forces at some point as well. This medal was issued by the Board of Trade in recognition of the dangerous work undertaken by these men in order that the UK had sufficient food supplies.

The recipient's name is pressed into the rim.



Mentioned in Dispatches

An emblem of one or more oak leaves indicates that the recipient has been "Mentioned in Dispatches" which means that an incident of brave or gallant behaviour has been officially noted by a superior officer. The emblem is attached to the medal ribbon, or worn on its own if there is no medal .