

BRITISH WAR MEDAL

Backgrounder



The **British War Medal** was awarded by King George V in 1919 to record the bringing of the war to a successful conclusion, and the arduous services rendered by His Majesty's Force. The award was later extended to 1919-1920 to cover the postwar mine clearance at sea, as well as service in North and South Russia, the Eastern Baltic, Siberia, Black Sea and Caspian.

The medal, which hangs from its ribbon by a straight clasp, without a swivel, bears on the obverse the effigy of His Majesty - exactly similar to that on the half-crown - with the legend "Georgivs V; Britt: Omn: Rex et Ind: Imp:." The reverse represents St. George on horseback trampling underfoot the eagle shield of the Central Powers and a skull and cross-bones, the emblems of death. Above is the risen sun of victory. The male figure, rather than a symbolical female one, was chosen because man had borne the brunt of the fighting. The figure was mounted on horseback as symbolical of man's mind controlling a force (represented by the horse) of greater strength than his own. The design was thus also symbolical of the mechanical and scientific appliances which helped so largely to win the war. The ribbon has an orange watered centre with stripes of white and black at each side and borders of royal blue. It is stated that the colours have no particular signification.

In the **Navy**, the medal was granted:

- to those who performed twenty-eight days mobilized service, or lost their lives in active operations before completing that period, between August 5, 1914 and November 11, 1918, both dates inclusive.

In the **Army**, the medal was granted :

- to those who either entered a theatre of war on duty, or who left their places of residence and rendered approved service overseas, other than the waters dividing the different parts of the United Kingdom, between August 5, 1914 and November 11, 1918 both dates inclusive.

Honours and Awards
Veterans Affairs Canada