

## Teachers' Notes about replica medals in schools kit

### Background notes

The medals in the kit (each contained in an individual presentation box) are representative of those that were awarded to the eight men featured in the Bravest of the Brave display. The set of medals awarded to each of the eight men during World War One can be seen mounted in the frames alongside their particular citation for the Victoria Cross.

The five medals in the kit include examples of two gallantry awards (awarded for distinguished service)

- **Victoria Cross** (which all eight were awarded)
- **Military Medal** (awarded to Phillip Davey)

and three campaign or war medals (available to all members of the British and Commonwealth armed services who saw service in WWI).

- **1914/15 Star**
- **British War Medal**
- **Victory Medal**

**NOTE:** Original medals would have the recipient's service number, rank, name and unit impressed either on the back of the medal (VC and Star) or the rim (others). Because these are replicas, the word REPLICA or COPY is engraved instead.

### More information:

<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-campaign-medals.htm>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/medals-british-armed-services-campaign-service.htm>

<http://www.anzacday.org.au/education/medals/general/ww1.html>

<http://www.defence.gov.au/medals/Content/+040%20Campaign%20Medals/+150%20World%20War%20I/default.htm>

SPENCER, William *Medals: The Researchers Guide* (Kew: UK National Archives, 2006)

For more resources for teachers about the Australian honours system, with lesson and activity ideas, go to the Australian federal government's *It's an Honour* website:

<http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/teachers/index.cfm>

## Some things to think and talk about

The medals in the presentation boxes can be removed and handled.

Hold one of the medals in the palm of your hand

Feel how heavy/light it is

Consider how special it is

Examine both sides of the medal

Look at the words and images

Look for the words FOR VALOUR on the Victoria Cross

Look for the inscription GEORGIVS V BRITT. OMN: REX ET IND: IMP:

What language do you think this is?

It is Latin for *Georgius V Britanniarum Omnium; Rex Et Indiae; Imperator*

This means: 'George the 5<sup>th</sup> of all the Britons (British people); King of India; Emperor'

Look for the following figures and things; what do you think they represent?

- A man on a horse standing on a dead dragon and skull & crossbones (St George slaying the dragon, winning over death)
- A woman with wings (Winged Victory)
- The head and shoulders of a man with a beard (King George V)
- Laurel wreath (ancient symbol of victory)
- Lion standing on a crown (part of the Royal coat of arms)

Do you know the relationship of King George V to our present Queen Elizabeth II? (He is her grandfather)

Have you seen people wearing medals like these? Such as on Anzac Day or Remembrance Day?

Where do they wear them? (The medals are suspended from a special bar brooch and always pinned above the left breast - over the heart)

Do you have some medals belonging to a relative in your family? Have you ever worn them?

Sometimes people wear war medals of relatives who have passed away when marching in their place at commemorative events

## **Gallantry Awards**

### ***Level 1 and Level 3 of the Gallantry awards available to military personnel***

#### **1. Victoria Cross**

The Victoria Cross is the highest award for gallantry so it is known as a Level 1, Gallantry Award. It has the words FOR VALOUR on the front of the medal. It was awarded for an act of extra special bravery and courage. It could be awarded to all military ranks.

#### **2. Military Medal**

The Military Medal is a Level 3, Gallantry Award. It has the words FOR BRAVERY IN THE FIELD on the back of the medal. The Victoria Cross was first introduced during the Crimean War in 1856 but the Military Medal was not instituted until 1916, during the First World War being backdated to 1914 when WWI first started. It could be awarded to soldiers below officer ranks, of the British army and Commonwealth forces and was given to those who showed gallantry and devotion to duty while under fire in battle on land. Recipients could use the letters MM after their name

## **Campaign medals**

### ***Three of the six campaign medals awarded to personnel for service during the First World War and 1919-1920 in Russia***

#### **3. 1914-15 Star**

Awarded to individuals who saw service in France and Belgium from 23 November 1914-31 December 1915, and to those who saw service in any other operational theatre from 5 August 1914 – 31 December 1915. Authorised 1918

#### **4. British War Medal (1914-1920)**

Awarded to eligible service personnel and civilians who either entered a theatre of war or saw approved service overseas between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918. Service in Russia in 1919-1920 also qualified for the award.

#### **5. Victory Medal (1914-1919)**

Awarded to all eligible personnel who served on the establishment of a unit in an operational theatre. Authorised in 1919.