

## **The Wearing of Medals and Decorations**

War medals may only be worn on the left breast by the persons upon whom they were conferred. The honour afforded remains with the individual and does not pass to a widow, parent, son or relative when the recipient is dead. Similarly, the same rules apply in cases where a posthumous award is made.

The policy as it stands is that on the death of a recipient, technically, any honours and awards revert to the commonwealth in the first instance. The reality of course is that family members have an ambient claim and the commonwealth would not seek to intervene in medals being passed on directly within the family.

Family members may wear their forebears medals on the right breast which indicates that they are not their own. There is no limitation or formal policy on what occasions they should be worn. In essence, the wearing of forebear's medals on the right breast is a convention passed down over the years that is largely dictated by the occasion and (ideally) a measure of decorum fitting the event. They should not be worn lightly or where it would be inappropriate to do so.

For uniformed personnel, on ANZAC and Remembrance days only, modification of normal service dress code is allowed whereby they wear their own medals on the left breast accompanied (if they wish) by their ancestor's on the right.

War Medals (with certain exceptions) are worn on the left breast of the coat, or in a corresponding place on the dress, as the case may be. They will be worn in a horizontal line, suspended from a single bar, of which no part is to be seen, or stitched to the garment. When worn on the coat, the coat should be buttoned up.

The length of the drop between the top of the ribbon and the bottom of each medal should measure 9.5cm for full size medals and 5cm for miniatures. War medals are worn to show the Sovereign's head.

War medals (or Campaign medals) are worn in the order of the dates of Campaigns for which they have been conferred, the first obtained being farthest from the left shoulder.

### **THE ORDER OF WEARING AUSTRALIAN HONOURS AND AWARDS**

The Governor-General notifies for general information the positioning of the wearing of Australian Orders, Decorations and Medals. This notification incorporates the positioning of the following awards: the Afghanistan Medal (notified in Special Gazette No. S422 of 22 October 2004); the Iraq Medal (notified in Special Gazette No. S421 of 22 October 2004); and the Australian Defence Medal (notified in Special Gazette No. S48 of 30 March 2006).

The Schedule, together with the Annexes to the Schedule, incorporates the new positioning of these awards and supersedes that notified in Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. S101 of 4 April 2002.

Honours and Awards listed in the Schedule and Annexes in **BOLD** print are:

- those within the Australian System of Honours and Awards;
- those conferred by The Sovereign in exercise of the Royal Prerogative;
- those within the Order of St John; and
- foreign awards, the acceptance and wearing of which have been authorised by the Governor-General.
  - all imperial British awards made to Australian citizens after 5 October 1992 are foreign awards and should be worn accordingly.

Those Honours and Awards listed in the Schedule and Annexes in UNBOLDED print are Imperial awards.

### **MINIATURE MEDALS**

The only time these should be worn are on occasions when evening dress or a dinner jacket is worn at a dinner or evening function.

### **WEARING OF NON-OFFICIAL MEDALS**

The RSL actively discourages the wearing of non official medals at RSL and other ceremonial or commemorative functions. If Commemorative Medals are worn, they should be positioned on the right breast and not mixed with Service Medals or Decorations.

The Awards and National Symbols Branch of the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet further states:

“Over a number of years some ex-service organisations have created and distributed ‘commemorative’ medals to mark Particular periods of military service. *These medals have no official status.*”

You should be aware that the government has created a number of official medals that commemorate certain events, for example, the 80th Anniversary Armistice Remembrance Medal, the Australian Sports Medal and the “Anniversary of National Service 1951-1972 Medal”.

Only those medals, decorations and honours, which have been created under the prerogative of the Crown, have official status. Such medals should be worn in accordance with The Order of Wearing Australian Honours and Awards on the left breast either on an official uniform or civilian dress. Official medals worn by relatives of a deceased veteran should be worn on the right breast.

Ideally, unofficial medals should not be worn. However if they are worn as the occasion demands, they may be worn on the right breast.

This advice is based on official protocol and practice".

### **FRAUDULENT WEARING OF MEDALS**

No person, with the exception of a direct descendant of a deceased service man or woman, may wear medals which have not been awarded to him or her personally. This also applies to the wearing of miniature medals and medal ribbons.

Fraudulent wearing of medals attracts penalties under Federal regulations and also attracts subsequent penalties under the RSL Constitution.