

A bit of history

The Romans were among the first to decorate their troops, with phalera (metal decorations named for Phalerus, a hero in Greek mythology) mounted on the soldiers' armour.

The first military medal was issued in about 1588, with the “Ark in Flood” medal awarded by Queen Elizabeth I to British senior officers who led the battle against the Spanish Armada that year. These came with a chain to be worn about the neck, rather than a ribbon.

The first British Army medal for bravery seems to have been the Welch medal, won by Sir Robert Welch in the Battle of Edge Hill (1642).

The Commonwealth Naval Medal was probably the first service medal ever awarded, starting in about 1649, and was also the first medal to be given to enlisted men as well as officers, for “having done good service at sea”.

By the 19th century, England was awarding medals for every battle an officer took part in – which led to some officers having as many as 10 medals (which were sewn on to their uniform by the hanging ribbons). This was expensive for the Crown, so the idea of clasps or bars to denote repeated awards was created.

Eventually, medals became equipped with pin-backs, making them easier to add to and remove from uniforms.



Illustration 1: Slabovian medals

What is Microphaleristics?

Micronations are entities that claim to be independent nations or states but are not recognized by world governments or major international organizations.

Phaleristics (sometimes spelled as faleristics) is a sub-branch of history which studies, classifies, and catalogues decorations (medals, orders, etc.) that are the external sign of an award (and, in the case of an order, its degree). The term itself seems to have originated in the former Czechoslovakia, just before WWII.

Microphaleristics, then, is the study of medals, orders, and other decorations that are issued by micronations.

Why study Microphaleristics?

There are several good reasons to study this fascinating field.

First, micronations hoping to create their own awards can study those created by others, both to draw inspiration and to avoid creating work that is very similar to extant awards.

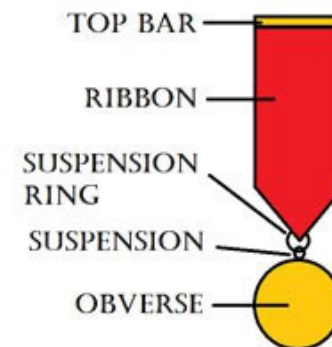
Second, there can be some confusion about what has been awarded, and to whom. A phaleristic resource such as MEDALS can help a collector to identify forgeries.

Third, these awards can be studied and appreciated in their own right, both for the work that goes into the medals themselves and for what they often represent to the people awarding and receiving them.

Finally, such decorations can serve as reminders of historical events, and inspire others to recall or learn about such events.

Medal Terminology

MEDAL TAXONOMY



NOT SHOWN: BROOCH, REVERSE FACE

Illustration 2: Parts of a medal

The common parts of a medal are:

1. Top Bar – Not always present, but when it's there the function is to secure the ribbon to the brooch. If present, it may be inscribed with names, dates, or places.
2. Ribbon – the part of the medal that connects the medal proper to the brooch. Originally silk, these are now usually made of synthetic materials, and are commonly grosgrain or satin.
3. The medal itself has two sides or faces:
 1. The obverse face is the side which a casual observer can see when the medal is being worn.
 2. The reverse face is that side worn closest to the wearer's chest.
4. The brooch is the pin used to attach the medal to the uniform.
5. The suspension ring is the contact point between the medal and the ribbon. On some medals, the ribbon is folded through the suspension ring during mounting.
6. The suspension is a loop or attachment point affixed to the top of the medal, where it connects to the suspension ring.

Kinds of Medals

Medals are awarded for a number of different reasons.

Commemorative or *souvenir* medals are both in honour of specific events such as coronations. Sometimes these are sold or otherwise made available to the general public.

Campaign medals mark participation in a specific military campaign, often involving foreign service.

Service awards are presented to individuals who participated in a designated war, campaign, or expedition, or who otherwise completed specific service requirements (such as the Antarctica Service Medal).

Other awards may be made, such as *bravery awards*, *distinguished service awards*, or *unit awards* (awarded to all members of a military unit who were enrolled in that unit at the time of a notable action).

Orders tend to be the most elaborate and highly-regarded decorations, since they mark distinguished service to a nation or to the betterment of humanity. Awarding of an order implies membership in an organization of people who have received the same award. While orders don't typically trace their roots to knighthood (the obvious exception being the Order of the Garter), they often use multiple levels of rank similar to those found in chivalric orders, including knight, commander, and so on. Orders are only rarely signified by a simple medal, and usually have much more distinctive insignia associated with them, including collars, sashes, and badges. It's notable that the Medal of Honor awarded by the US Congress is largely regarded as equivalent to an Order, although it's not explicitly named as such.

About MEDALS

The Microphaleristic Educational Archive and Library of Slabovia (MEDALS) was founded in 2018 by HRM King George 2.0 of Slabovia.

The archive and library exist to document for future generations the diversity and splendour of medals, orders, and other decorations issued by various micronations. The documented collection can be found online at <http://www.microphalerist.com>, or the Board of Directors may be contacted by e-mail at medals@slabovia.com

Contributions

MEDALS welcomes contributions of phaleristic specimens from all micronations!

Physical specimens should be carefully wrapped and shipped with appropriate documentation (see below) to:

George Bragg
PO Box 99900 KA 614 655
RPO Parkwoods Plaza
Don Mills Ontario Canada M3A 0A3

Virtual specimens (i.e. photos) can be sent via e-mail to medals@slabovia.com with the following information:

- The name of your micronation and a link to its official website if any
- Pictures of the front and back of the award (taken with a white background)
- The name of the award
- A short paragraph outlining the awarding criteria and any other special features of the award

(If sending via e-mail, please only document one decoration per e-mail.)

Please note that the archive only documents awards presented in the physical world.

An Introduction to Microphaleristics



An educational pamphlet from the
Microphaleristic Educational Archive
and Library of Slabovia (MEDALS)

