

# CAN I WEAR MY FAMILY MEDALS?

## Did you know there are rules about wearing your family war medals?

The rule is that war medals should only be worn on the left breast by the person upon whom they were conferred. Technically this honour remains with the individual and does not pass to a widow, parent or relative upon death. However, if you wish to wear your family medals you should wear them on the right breast to indicate they were not conferred upon you.

The RSL recommends that although there are no rules about when and where you can wear the medals, that they should not be worn lightly and that the choice to wear should be dictated by the occasion and the decorum of the event.

For uniformed personnel, on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, they may wear their own medals on the left breast and their ancestor's medals on their right.

War medals are worn in a horizontal line, suspended from a single bar (of which no part should be seen) or stitched on. The length and 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. They should always be worn to show the Sovereign's head.

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

## Further Resources

<http://www.defence.gov.au/medals/>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/medals/>

<http://rsl.org.au/Our-Services/Medals/The-Wearing-of-Medals-and-Decorations>

Clive Francis Johnson, *Australians awarded : a concise guide to military and civilian decorations, medals and other awards to Australians from 1815 to 2007 with their valuations* (Banksmeadow, NSW: Renniks, 2008)

## Replicas

As only the original recipient is able to get lost medals re-issued, it is recommended that you look into purchasing replicas, particularly if you have many people who would like to wear or display a relative's medals.

Likewise, as they are both precious and symbolic objects, it is recommended that care is taken with the originals and they are kept in a safe place. Replicas might serve the same purpose for wearing on commemorative days like ANZAC Day (particularly if you plan on joining for a game of Two-Up at the local RSL after the march!)

You can request information from the Department of Defense to find out exactly which medals your ancestor was entitled to and then order replicas from a medal dealer. We do not recommend any particular dealer, however a quick online search for 'replica medals' will bring up a number of companies.

Similarly these companies will also mount your medals for you – either on a swing bar for wearing or in a special commemorative box or frame.