

MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

INFORMATION SHEET 19

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S MEDALS

Awards for service and gallantry were first given in the mid-19th century, and were administered by the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, on behalf of the Government.

Cumulative lists of officers who received awards and testimonials for exceptional service at sea, usually in relation to shipwrecks, can be found in the Mercantile Navy Lists editions between 1857-1864.

Lloyd's Calendar, primarily a seamen's almanac, contains lists, some being cumulative, of recipients of Lloyd's War Medals. Lloyd's Medal for Saving Life at Sea introduced 1836, last cumulative list 1940. Lloyd's Medal for Meritorious Service introduced 1893, last cumulative list 1940. Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea introduced 1940, cumulative lists 1953-1955. Lloyd's Medal for Services to Lloyd's introduced 1913, cumulative lists 1918-1975. Also included are plaques awarded to vessels 'instrumental in effecting rescues and whose boat crews received Lloyd's Medals', last cumulative list 1940.

The Imperial War Museum has a collection of Rolls of Honour and information on gallantry awards and commissions in the Department of Printed Books. The National Archives (PRO) holds some records relating to awards and medals. Albert Medal Registers 1866-1913, BT 97; Marine Divisions: Gallantry at Sea Awards, BT 261; Marine Crews (MC series), BT 238, contains information on honours and awards for gallantry; Code 6 of Marine Correspondence and Papers, MT 9, contains information on gallantry awards and covers the period 1854-1969; Home Office: Registered Papers, HO 45, contains details on the Albert Medal for heroism on land for the period 1839-1979. Records of the following medals can be found at the National Archives:

Pre-First World War

Records of the Egyptian and the Sea Transport Medals, can be found in the ADM 171/52 series, with further details on the Egyptian Medal in the ADM 116/711 and ADM 171/41 series.

First World War

The British War Medal, the 1914-1915 Star and the Victory Medal, can be found in the Admiralty series ADM 171/130-133, on microfilm. The Mercantile Marine Medal which was awarded to seamen for sea service of not less than six months between 4 August 1914 and 11 November 1918, and who served at sea on at least one voyage through a danger zone, are available on microfiche in series BT 351. Recipients of the Mercantile Marine Medal were entitled to the British War Medal and the details of this can be found also in BT 351. Details of naval gallantry awards can also be found in the ADM 116, code 85, Admiralty and Secretariat Cases.

Second World War

Records of Campaign Medals awarded to Merchant seamen during the Second World War, are with the Registry of Shipping and Seamen.

The Lloyd's Medal for Gallantry at Sea was established in 1940, and to be awarded by Lloyd's upon officers and men of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleet for gallantry at sea in time of war. Published lists and information regarding the medal is available at the National Archives Library.

Details on the Board of Trade Medal for Gallantry in Saving Life at Sea, the Sea Transport Medal, the George Medal, the Lloyd's Medal for Gallantry at Sea and the Polish Cross of Valour, can be found in Code 6 of Marine Correspondence and Papers, MT 9.

Bibliography

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The Seamen's Almanac. London: Lloyd's, 1892(-1899).

Lloyd's Calendar. London: Lloyd's, 1899(-1978).

The Mercantile Navy List and Annual Appendage to the Commercial Code of Signals for all Nations. London: General Register and Record Office of Shipping and Seamen, 1857(-1864).

SEEDIE. Seedie's List of Awards to the Merchant Navy for World War II. Tisbury: Ripley Registers, 1997.

SEEDIE. Seedie's Roll of Honours and Awards, 1939-1959. Tisbury: Ripley Registers, 1989.

Useful Addresses

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