



MIDWESTERN ORDERS AND MEDALS SOCIETY ADOPTS BADGE

by F. von Allendorfer

The April meeting of MIDOMS presented a very interesting aspect to the devotees of our hobby. The local has adopted a badge which has the appearances of a well-earned decoration. A committee under the chairmanship of Michael Powills has been formed to draw up rules and regulations regarding the award of this badge. Bill Cheoros came armed with a Ghuznee to the 4th Light Dragoons, and a Seringapatam in tin (which was issued to privates). This was compared with the one in bronze recently obtained by your writer. A collection of Turkish awards, the property of C. V. Kelly were shown and talked about by F. von Allendorfer, they included campaigns against Crete, Greece, Russia, the Gallipoli Star (Iron Crescent), Arts and Sciences Medal, Medal for Aid to the Builder of the Railroad to Mecca, Liakat, Imtiaz, and two Turkish Naval Medals which no one present was qualified to identify.

Plans were formented regarding an exhibition to be given soon at the Chicago Public Library embracing the themes of World War I, and World War I Aviation. This will contain medals, photographs, airplane models, uniforms, weapons and other materia associated with the Great War for Civilization.

KITCHENER AND THE MILITARY CROSS

by Hoyte C. Evans

The DSO, during the South African War, had been restricted to senior officers, and was, in fact, awarded to several officers who never left their base nor saw combat. There was considerable dissatisfaction with such an arrangement among the combat troops. The outbreak of World War I made it evident that awards of the VC and DSO would not be adequate for a struggle of such far reaching magnitude. Men whose bravery did not qualify for either were, nevertheless, brave and deserving.

When the situation was brought to the attention of King George V by Sir Frederick Ponsonby, the King voiced the opinion that the Navy's Distinguished Service Cross should be made available to the Army. There was a flat refusal by Winston Churchill at the Admiralty which caused Lord Kitchener, extremely irritated, to demand a completely new medal for the Army. The King agreed.

The first meeting of Kitchener's committee met to consider a design. When asked if the new medal would be a copy of the Navy DSC, Kitchener blared: "Most certainly not!" The purpose was admittedly that of providing a medal for combat, but Kitchener decided that a staff officer in the charge of an operation was as deserving as one who performed an individual feat of bravery, saying that if the decoration implied that the recipient had never seen combat, no one would care to own one.

Kitchener fancied himself an artist, and doodled designs. With some misgivings, Sir Ponsonby requested one or two artists to submit their designs. The first one submitted was by Sir Henry Farnham Burke, who painted his cross with silver. It caught Kitchener's eye, and without viewing any others, he selected it. Thus the second point was accomplished.

Selecting a ribbon design was troublesome as Lord Kitchener, being very enthusiastic in his suggestions, set forth his own ideas. Sir Ponsonby had feared Kitchener's eagerness and had armed himself with a catalogue of ribbons.

What happened went something like this. Kitchener produced a ribbon of his design, which Ponsonby pointed out was the one for the Austrian Jubilee Medal. Kitchener tried again, and was told by Ponsonby that it was the Navy's Conspicuous Gallantry Medal's ribbon. His next inspiration brought forth the comment that it was for the Black Eagle of Germany.

Miffed, Kitchener said of Ponsonby: "This damned fellow contradicts me whenever I say anything." Still determined, Kitchener decided on one to end the dispute, coming forth with a design of plain black and white, simple and dignified. Ponsonby merely pointed out that it was the German Iron Cross.

That broke up the meeting! Exasperated, Kitchener went to the King, but Ponsonby was not yet finished. He furnished them with his books, and a basket of ribbons made up by his wife, together with a card containing his suggestions. Shortly thereafter, Ponsonby was summoned and was shown the selected ribbon, one which his wife had made, mauve on a white ground.

The new medal was called the Military Cross, and it was instituted on Dec. 31, 1914. King George V, perhaps with a twinkle in his eye, looked at the two men, and suggested they start designing the Military Medal!

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