Like their military counterparts, police and constabulary forces throughout the Empire have fought, died, or "just been there" and have been issued campaign, commemorative, long service, and gallantry medals for the past 150 years. No less than Britain's highest gallantry award, the Victoria Cross, was won by a policeman in 1902: Surgeon-Captain A. Martin-Leake of the South African Constabulary. However, in my opinion, medals thus awarded to British and colonial police forces are perhaps some of the least sought-after in the vast field of medal collecting. This article will discuss only campaign, commemorative, and long service medals issued to police. (Other works have dealt with gallantry and meritorious awards far better than I can here).

**CAMPAIGN MEDALS:**

Very early in the major campaigns, it became difficult to separate the para-military police forces from the Imperial forces. Except for the 1939-45 Defence Medal, most military campaign medals issued to police have been to colonial constabulary and police forces. The first medal, according to Maj. L.L. Gordon, was issued to Indian district police for the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58.

The most prolific issue of any single campaign medal of the Victorian Era to police and military was the Queen's South Africa 1899-1902. That medal, and the less numerously awarded King's South Africa 1901-02 were given to such famous police forces as the British South Africa Police and the South African Constabulary, a host of state police, and local town police. A wide range of bars from the common "Cape Colony" and "Orange Free State" to the rare "Defence of Mafeking" are found on these police medals. An interesting collection could be made of this medal and the various police forces and bar combinations.
Issued on a more individual basis than the Queen's South Africa and thus less common, are the series of India General Service medals, 1854-95, 1895-1902, 1908-35, and the 1936-39 with their respective bars. The Indian police recipients, sometimes few in number (as opposed to whole forces in other contemporary campaigns) were awarded the silver medal and/or bar for combatants. Each medal has its own story to tell!

On a far larger scale, the General Service Medal, Army and RAF 1918-62 has been issued (depending on which bar) to a far greater number of police since 1936. A few well-known bars are "Palestine" and/or "Palestine 1945-48" to British members of the Palestine Police, "Malaya" to Federation of Malaya Police and Singapore Police, "Cyprus" to Cyprus Police and "Brunei" to North Borneo and Sarawek police forces. The bar "Malay Peninsula" of the current Campaign Service medal 1962- has been awarded to a few local constables.

Pair of India General Service medals-I.G.S. 1908-35 and I.G.S. 1936-39, both with bar North West Frontier.
General Service Medal 1918-62 with bar Malaya.
Campaign Service Medal 1962- with Malay Peninsula bar.

Other medals to police comprise most of the African campaigns, and the African General Service medal up to and including the issuance of the bar "Kenya" to police and prison officers. Perhaps the rarest police campaign medal would be the Naval General Service 1915-64 with bar "Persian Gulf 1909-14" only issued to two Indian police officials. One cannot forget the least interesting and unnamed campaign medal of all—the 1939-45 Defence Medal which was issued to regular police after 3 years service. The medal wearer perhaps saw more of the "enemy" at home than many of the military forces in the field did. (It was also awarded to police who received gallantry awards during the war through enemy action.) Perhaps surprising were the 1914-15 Star trios and the 2nd World War stars and War Medal issued to the British South Africa Police, South African Police, and other African police forces for their services connected with the wars. (Excluding local operations against native tribes or rebels.)
COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS:

Here again is a vast field of medals to British and colonial police. By commemorative, I mean coronation, jubilee, and "official visit" medals.

Perhaps the first medal to be discussed should be the 1887 Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The medal was issued only in bronze to all ranks of the Metropolitan Police and the City of London Police on duty June 21, 1887 at the Jubilee Procession. (Some police officials received the civil issue medal in silver as well.) It was followed by the 1897 issue, again to the same forces for the same duty. Those policemen on duty in 1887 and 1897 received a bar in bronze with "1897" to add to their medal. These two medals, and the next one were worn from a dark blue ribbon. Another bronze medal, this time to the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, was given for the Royal visit of Victoria to Ireland in 1900.

Police Commemorative medals—trio of 1897 Jubilee, 1902 Coronation and 1911 Coronation with Metropolitan Police reverses, 1887 Jubilee with bar 1897. And the 1903 Royal Visit to Ireland.

Victoria died in 1901, and Edward VII was crowned in 1902. There were two types of police coronation medals issued with several inscriptions. Again, members of the Metropolitan Police and City of London Police received the medal in either bronze or silver, depending upon the rank of the recipient, as well as county and borough police and the members of the Police Ambulance Service on duty during the procession. In the next year, 1903, Edward made two official "visits" and then to India for his Durbar as Emperor of India. With the inscription "Scottish Police", a bronze medal was given regardless of rank to those policemen on duty during the Royal visit. (Unfortunately for collectors the force name of the recipient was not engraved with his name and rank on the medal.) Next came a visit to Ireland, where members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary received the same bronze medal as military and civic officials. Both of these "visit" medals and unique broach bars—one with thistles and the other with shamrocks. Time has not