"However, the cure had been so strenuous that poor Stagg had to go to bed for a few days. Meanwhile, the police had heard of it, and attended the office to see the Colonel. He, however, in the meantime had an interview with Stagg. It turned out that he had gotten the poison from the Master Tailor after the death of his wife, but had thought better of it. He had taken it now because a certain widow, who had four or five children of her own, had refused to marry him.

"The lady in question was prevailed upon to think better of her decision, the Colonel gave his personal guarantee to the police that no proceedings were necessary, the wedding took place and Stagg continued with us for many happy years, a grand old man, and one of the straightest and best I ever met."

Another medal in my collection that would never get another glance from the accumulator/speculator is a single Queen's South Africa Medal with four common bars, named: VET: LIEUT: E.C. ORTON. A.V.D. (Veterinary Lieutenant, Army Veterinary Department). Research discloses that Edward Charles Orton was born in 1871 and served two years as a civil veterinary surgeon. He was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Army Veterinary Department in 1901, being promoted to Captain in 1906 and Major in 1915. He served in South Africa during the Boer War with the 12th Lancers, where he earned this medal. He later served as Assistant Director of Veterinary Services during 1914-15 in France and during 1915-16 in Mesopotamia. He retired in 1920.

But once again Lieut. Colonel Hobson has a story to tell, this time about Lieutenant Orton, who he referred to as "The man with no luck," and the time he spent with the 12th Lancers. The excerpt from Some XII Lancers is as follows:

"E. C. Orton came to us as our Veterinary Officer in South Africa; a slim, young, good-looking fellow with a rare fund of humour and a repertoire of totally unrepeatable stories with which he could regale the whole Mess by the hour.

"'Darius,' by which name he was soon known to all, had no money. While the war was on he saved up some 400 Sterling, and this, in view of the Regiment's prospects of going to India, he placed in Watson's Bank.

"When the Regiment arrived in Bombay, the first news to come on board was that Watson's Bank was bust. Darius' savings were gone!

"He had no bedding and sent his new Bearer to the Bazaar to buy him blankets. But with the blankets he also bought small-pox, which he developed soon after getting to Umballa. His was a very bad case, and he was eventually sent home for a time. When next I saw him, it was a great shock.

"His hair was snow white, his face terribly marked and very red, and his figure had increased to at least twice its original size.

"He himself was just the same cheery, story-telling soul as before, but his activity, his horsemanship, his youth, in fact, had all gone.

"Poor Orton, he died many years ago, and I fear never really recovered from the ravage of small-pox that came to him gratuitously with the casual purchase of a few blankets in a native bazaar ..."
Also entitled to the King's South Africa Medal with two bars, the 1914 Star, War Medal, and Victory Medal, Orton's lack of luck lingered after he himself was gone; his group of five medals is scattered to the wind, with only this one, his first, to remind us that there was such a man, and to exemplify in its loneliness his trials and sufferings . . .

And so, why do you collect medals? That question, so easy to ask but so difficult to answer. Basically, the answer is that the true medal collector, as contrasted to the accumulator or "investor" (read speculator), is not just a collector in the sense of the stamp or coin collector, but is an historian and researcher as well. Nor does it stop there.

For the final answer is that he is an alchemist . . .

He is an alchemist that starts with inanimate bits of silver and silk, and through his efforts puts flesh upon the cold skeleton of the silver, and blood into the hues of the silk, and over the interminable gulf of the years imbues the shadowy figure behind these small objects with the breath of life once again, after of-so-long a time; surely this is the alchemy of the Nuclear Age.

And so here on this page is lifted all-too-briefly the curtain of time, enabling the dim figures represented by their medals to come back from the forgotten reaches of forever to play once again their small parts on the stage of reality, a stage as real to us now as theirs once was to them.

So when you read of these men, picture in your mind their lives, their times and their troubles, and the parts they played in the world that was NOW for them, but for us is forever gone. And realize that you have had a glimpse of the past through the window of time into the world that was, made possible through the alchemy of medal collecting, and reflect upon the thought that those who remain alive in the thoughts and memories of others are never really truly dead.

And know that this is why we collect medals . . .

GROUP BEING FORMED

As a member of OMSA, I would like to let my fellow members know about a new group being formed. It is THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF U.S. MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS OF W.W.2. The group has been formed to give the children of the World War 2 Merchant Marine Veteran the chance to share with each other the experiences of our fathers and our undying pride in their service to our country in her time of need. We are also seeking some lasting and meaningful recognition from our nation for the service our fathers gave.

Anyone wishing further information please send me a S.A.S.E. There are no dues, just a sincere desire to keep the memory of our fathers alive. - Ian A. Millar, 1806 Bantry Trail, Kernersville, NC 27284.
MEDAL COMMEMORATING THE 1500TH ANNIVERSARY OF KIEV

IGOR VICTOROV-ORLOV

On May 10, 1982 a new medal was instituted in the Soviet Union to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of Kiev, capital of the Ukraine, and the third largest city in the USSR (population 2,300,00). Following a UNESCO decision, the anniversary will be marked the world over.

A medieval chronicler called Kiev the "mother of Russian cities." The city on the Dnieper River was the center of Kiev Rus, the cradle of three peoples - Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians.

The medal is bronze, 32 mm in diameter. The obverse shows the monument to the October Revolution set up in Kiev. In the background are waving flags and the rays of the sun, above which is a circular inscription which reads: "In Commemoration of the 1500th Anniversary of Kiev." The reverse bears portions of the building of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Republic and parts of St. Sophia Cathedral, a church built in the 11th century. Over them there is the inscription "Glory to the Hero-City" with a Golden Star Medal above it.

The ribbon is 24 mm wide consisting of red 2 mm, green 4 mm, gold .5 mm, green 1 mm, gold .5 mm, red 8 mm, gold .5 mm, green 1 mm, gold .5 mm, green 4 mm, and blue 2 mm.

The medal is awarded to both civilians and military personnel who have made contributions by their labor or service to the development of the city, and who have lived in Kiev or its suburbs for at least ten years. The medal is also awarded to war veterans who were awarded the medal "For the Defense of Kiev," and to the partisans and resistance movement participants who fought against the enemy in Kiev and neighboring areas, or to those who took part in the liberation of Kiev when in the ranks of the Soviet Armed Forces, no matter where they may reside now.

The medal is worn on the left side of the breast after the "250th Anniversary of Leningrad" Medal.