

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this, the last message for the year 1988, it is impossible not to think back over the achievements of this year that has gone so fast, but seen so much of significance for OMSA. Principal on this list is of course the new constitution and By-Laws, which will see our Society into the 1990's and beyond. It also must be mentioned that never before in its history have we had so many members nor been in such financial health. Speaking of finances, by now all of you who plan to continue your membership should have paid your dues; if not, please do us a favor and save yourself some money by getting your check in the mail before the 31st.

Regardless of how well things go with OMSA, there are always unpleasant aspects of our hobby of which we must be aware. The latest bit of nastiness that has come to my attention is the seemingly ever-increasing number of unclassified-as-such "duplicate" medals that come on the scene. Recently two medals have appeared for sale in England that are duplicated in the Honeyman Collection in the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. Both of these medals are detailed in the book by David Workman that was given out to registered members at the 1985 OMSA Convention in Los Angeles. While from here it is anyone's guess as to which are the originals and which are spurious (since none are marked "duplicate"), the Honeyman Collection has been in the museum for over 30 years (not nearly so many forgeries of common medals were being done back then), so my guess at this point would have to be that those that recently surfaced for sale are the ones most suspect. And I am aware of at least two other instances in this country where medals "duplicated" in the Honeyman Collection have been offered for sale. I have even seen duplicates of medals still in my own collection come up for sale in English auctions; it's enough to make one wonder sometimes if most of our collections aren't made up mostly of medals all to the same recipients! The main point of this exercise is to bring to your attention that this sort of thing happens far more often than would be probable in a world without forgers, and that there is simply no substitute for a good research library. Those collectors who are aware and informed are those who will least easily fall into the pits inhabited by the careless and gullible.

So much for the bad news; the good news is that the Editor and I are going to give you a Christmas present that I have had in mind for some time, the details of which are now worked out between us. This is in the form of a "medal finder", as a version of it is called elsewhere. Since this rather ideal title is already taken, we will call our column "WHERE IS IT NOW?", and the purpose of it will be to offer free inquiries by members wishing to find medals to individual recipients missing from pairs, trios, or groups already in their possession. In order to keep this column from getting out of hand in both size and content, entries will be limited to one request concerning a medal or medals to ONE INDIVIDUAL ONLY, per issue. These requests should be sent directly to the Editor, Mike Shaw, and should be in the format of the following examples: "WATERLOO MEDAL TO CAPT. JOHN M. TUCKER, 27th FOOT." or "PUNJAB MEDAL W/BARS MOOLTAN & GOOJERAT TO CPL. SAMUEL GERRY, 32nd FOOT." or "BWM & VICTORY TO PTE. STANLEY V. GRIFFIN, ROYAL SCOTS." or "PHILIPPINE CONGRESSIONAL No. 5276." etc. The request should also include the member's name, address, and OMSA number; all transactions will be strictly covered by the OMSA Code of Ethics. Please let me emphasize again that requests must be for

medals to a single individual ONLY. The Editor retains complete discretion to edit or refuse entirely any request that he feels does not conform to this strict requirement, as he sees fit. Requests such as "Wanted, medals to the Rifle Brigade" or "Indian War Medals to the Cavalry," etc., will simply not be printed. There will at present be no limit on the number of times a request may be submitted, but it must be re-submitted each time it is to be printed - there will be no "continuing requests." Members are limited to one request per member per issue, and no requests will be kept on file. I'm sure just a little thought will rationalize these procedures.

Also under the heading of good news, the discount book purchase plan that I mentioned last month is moving along nicely, and I hope to be able to announce its inauguration at an early date.

And that is it for another year; may you and yours enjoy all the best that the holiday season has to offer!

- Lee Bishop, OMSA President.

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The Wall Street Journal (contributed by Peter Andresen).

## NEW SWEDISH MEDAL

LEIF PÅHLSSON

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King Carl XVI Gustav of Sweden at the yearly ordinary meeting of the Chapter of the Royal Orders of Knighthood ("Kungl. Maj:ts Orden") instituted a medal within the Royal Order of the North Star, on the 15th of April 1986. The changes in the statutes of the Order had previously been approved by the Swedish Government - under the presidency of Prime Minister Dr. Palme, who was murdered two weeks later - at its sitting on 20 February. The matter had been discussed for some years; the Foreign Office was in favor, but the socialist government was against - it was said because of financial reasons! However - and this must have been rather provoking - a conservative member submitted a motion (1985/86:K811) to the 1985-1986 "riksdag" (the Swedish Parliament) on January 27th. Then all went on with amazing speed, before the parliamentary machinery had even discussed the matter! In fact, all other suggestions on new medals - a medal for special military merit (a Sword Medal in gold); a commemorative medal for international peace-keeping operations (other than UN service); and a commemorative medal for emergency military service in Sweden during WWII - have been postponed.

The new official medal - the first instituted in Sweden since 1976 - is the Medal for Merit in the Foreign Service ("För förtjänster om utrikesförvaltningen"). Bearing the King's effigy and with the Royal Crown as mounting, it is called the "Nordstjärnemedaljen" (the Medal of the North Star) and shall be awarded only in "gold" (silver-gilt). For international reasons, the sponsoring M.P. wanted it to be awarded also in silver and bronze. The design is not yet finished by the Royal Mint in Eskilstuna (now a commercial company owned by the "riksbank", and not a public authority), but will, of course, show the badge of the Order on the obverse. It has been suggested to use either the motif from the institution of the Order in 1748, or from the so-called Vega Medal (by the famous female mint engraver Lea Ahlborn) from 1880. It will be struck in the so-called "8th size," 31 mm in diameter. Swedish official medals are not awarded in classes, but in "sizes" from the so-called Berch's scale of the 18th century: 18th (56mm), worn on a golden chain around the neck; 12th (43 mm), on a neck ribbon (sometimes a chain); 8th (31 mm); 6th (27.5 mm); and 5th (24 mm) on breast ribbons (or bows for ladies).

Since 1975, the Royal Order of the North Star is awarded only to foreign citizens, and stateless persons domiciled outside of Sweden, for personal merit toward Sweden or Swedish interests. The traditional black ribbon was abolished and a blue ribbon with yellow edges was adopted instead. The lowest degree was divided into "Knight (or Member for females) 1st Class (internationally "Officer") with the old gold cross; and "Knight (or Member)" with a new silver cross. Previously the order had only four classes.

The well-suited (for international purposes) Royal Order of Wasa with its six classes (including the silver badge of "Vasatecknet") and four medals was regarded as too "royal" by the socialist bureaucrats to be retained! *Quantilla prudentia mundus regatur!* Swedish subjects may not be awarded Swedish orders (except the Royal Order of Charles XIII - for the highest freemasons). The Royal Order of