

The Albert Medal

The Albert Medal was instituted by royal Warrant dated 7 March 1866. It is said to have been designed by Prince Albert and was established by Queen Victoria. Initially there was only one class of award, but by 1867 the award had been divided into two classes. The medal was to be awarded for daring and heroic actions in saving life at sea. In 1877 it was further expanded to include actions on land. One of the conditions of eligibility for this award was that the probability of death should exceed the chance of survival.

The differences between the awards are that the enamelling on the sea-related medal is in dark blue whereas the land service award enamelling is in red, and further, the sea medal includes an anchor placed centrally on the medal. The Albert First Class Medal was in gold and the Second Class Medal in bronze. The ribbons were also different with blue and white stripes for the sea service medal and crimson and white for the land medal.

The post nominal letters AM were used by the recipients.

In 1949 the award of the Gold or First Class Medal ceased and the conditions of eligibility for the Bronze Medal were also changed such that it could only be awarded posthumously. The Medal was then discontinued in 1971. At this time, all living recipients were to exchange their awards for the George Cross, which was now deemed would supersede the Albert Medal. There had been two awards of the Albert Medal Second Class to New Zealand Army Personnel; Trooper James Magnusson on 4 May 1917, posthumously, and Lieutenant Randolph Ridling on 19 April 1918.

Randolph Ridling requested that he be permitted to retain his medal as it had great sentimental value and the Queen approved his request. His medal is displayed in this alcove.

