

Queen's South Africa Medal

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Queen's South Africa Medal



Obverse (top left) and reverse (top right) of the medal.

Awarded by United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland

Type	Campaign medal
Eligibility	Service in South Africa between 11 October 1899 and 31 May 1902
Awarded for	Service
Campaign	Second Boer War
Clasps	26

Statistics

Established 1900



Example of medal with five clasps.

The **Queen's South Africa Medal (QSA)** was awarded to military personnel who served in the Boer War in South Africa between 11 October 1899 and 31 May 1902. Units from the British Army, Royal Navy, colonial forces who took part (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India and South Africa), civilians employed in official capacity and war correspondents. The QSA (without bar) was also awarded to troops who guarded Boer prisoners of war at the POW camp on the island of St. Helena. Troops on the Mediterranean islands were awarded the Queen's Mediterranean Medal, and some personnel on troopships got the Transport Medal.

The QSA was the medal issued to all who served in South Africa up to the end of the war in May 1902. This included those such as the New Zealand 10th Contingent who arrived in Durban in May 1902, and did not fight. The requirements for the King's South Africa Medal meant that few were issued.

Clasps

There are twenty-six different clasps added to the medal indicating each action and campaign of the Second Boer War. A "state" clasp was issued for service within that state when no "battle" clasp was issued to the recipient for a specific action within the same state. This meant a QSA medal could not carry both a "state" clasp and a "battle" clasp for actions within the same state. The "Cape Colony" clasp was not issued to recipients of the "Natal" clasp, nor "Rhodesia" with the "Relief of Mafeking". Recipients could not get both the "Defence" and "Relief" clasps for Mafeking, Kimberley or Ladysmith.

State Clasps

- CAPE COLONY – 11 October 1899 – 31 May 1902
- NATAL – 11 October 1899 and 11 June 1900
- RHODESIA – 11 October 1899 – 17 May 1900
- ORANGE FREE STATE – 28 February 1900 – 31 May 1902
- TRANSVAAL – 24 May 1900 and 31 May 1902
- SOUTH AFRICA 1901 – Awarded to those not eligible for the King's Medal although they had served at the front between 1 January and 31 December 1901.
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Battle Clasps

(showing which 'state' the battle was in)

- DEFENCE OF MAFEKING 13 October 1899 – 17 May 1900 (CC)
- DEFENCE OF KIMBERLEY 15 October 1899 – 15 February 1900 (CC)
- TALANA 20 October 1899 (Natal)
- ELANDS-LAAGTE 21 October 1899 (Natal)
- DEFENCE OF LADYSMITH 3 November 1899 – 28 February 1900 (Natal)
- BELMONT 23 November 1899 (CC)
- MODDER RIVER 28 November 1899 (CC)
- RELIEF OF LADYSMITH 15 December 1899 – 28 February 1900 (Natal)
- TUGELA HEIGHTS 12–27 February 1900 (Natal)
- RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY 15 February 1900 (CC)
- PAARDEBERG 17–26 February 1900 (OFS)

- DRIEFONTEIN 10 March 1900 – Awarded to troops serving with Army Headquarters and LtGen French's column which advanced from Popular Grove on 10 March 1900 (OFS)
- WEPENER 9–25 April 1900 (OFS)
- RELIEF OF MAFEKING 17 May 1900 (CC)
- JOHANNESBURG – Awarded to those troops who, on 29 May 1900, were north of an east and west line through Klip River Station and east of a north and south line through Krugersdorp Station (Transvaal)
- DIAMOND HILL 11–12 June 1900 (Transvaal)
- WITTEBERGEN 1–29 July 1900 (OFS)
- BELFAST – Awarded to troops who, on 26 or 27 August 1900, were east of a north and south line drawn through Wonderfontein, and west of a north and south line through Dalmanutha Station, and north of an east and west line drawn through Carolina (Transvaal)
- LAING'S NEK 12 June 1900 (Natal)

Description

- A circular, silver medal, 1.52 inches (39 mm) in diameter. The obverse shows a crowned and veiled effigy of Queen Victoria, facing left, with the legend VICTORIA REGINA ET IMPERATRIX.
- The reverse has Britannia depicted holding the Union Flag in her left hand and a laurel wreath in her right hand. In the right background are troops marching to the coast and in the left background are two men-of-war. Around the top are the words SOUTH AFRICA. The first medals, awarded to Strathcona's Horse, bore the dates 1899–1900. The dates were removed from subsequent medals because the war continued beyond 1900. Some medals still show the 'ghost' of 1899–1900. There is also a further variation to be found on the reverse of these medals. On some the wreath held by Britannia points to the letter "F" of AFRICA, whilst on others it points to the letter "R".
- The ribbon is 1.25 inches (32 mm) wide, and consists of five stripes: red (5 mm), dark blue (5 mm), orange centre, dark blue (5 mm), and red (5 mm).
- Bronze medals were issued to non-enlisted personnel (including Indians), though some silver medals were issued to native troops.

References

- Veteran Affairs Canada
- NZDF Medals
- Anglo-Boer War website (showing variants)
- Website showing Obverse & Reverse
- QSA & KSA on Digger History
- G.R. Duxbury (June 1972). "Queen's South Africa Medal with 10 Bars". *Military History Journal* (The South African Military History Society) **2** (3).