

YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT - 66 TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



The Throughout 2021, the Virtual Visit series will be continuing to present interesting features from the Museum's collection and their background stories. The Australian Army Museum of Western Australia is now open four days per week, Wednesday through Friday plus Sunday. Current COVID19 protocols including contact tracing apply

Padgett Medal Group – US Distinguished Service Cross



546 Private John Rush Padgett enlisted in 44 Battalion AIF in January 1916 and embarked from Fremantle in July. He arrived in France on 25 November 1916. Promoted to Lance Corporal in September 1916 he was wounded a year later and did not return to France until January 1918 and re-joined 44 Battalion. He was promoted Corporal in July 1918. During an attack on the Hindenburg Line on 29 September, with his section he seized and held a section of German trench. Later in the action he carried a wounded American serviceman to safety across open ground subject to heavy machine gun fire. It was for this act of bravery that he was awarded the United States Distinguished Service Cross.

Displayed with John Padgett's medal group are his identity discs and a mizpah pin.

During the First World War there were three types of identity discs issued to those serving in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). The first type of disc issued to the AIF in 1914 was the aluminium Pattern 1907 disc. Introduced by the British in 1907, this identity disc measured about 42mm high x 35 mm wide. Worn about the neck, it was stamped or engraved with the soldier's details.

In late 1916 Australia adopted the British regulation from Army Order 287 (published as Military Order 507 by the AIF) to issue each member of the AIF with two discs, both made of compressed fibre: an octagonal green disc (formally referred to as "Disc, identity, No. 1, green"), and a circular red disc (formally referred to as "Disc, identity, No.2, red"). The red disc was the same format as those issued in 1914. If a soldier or officer already had a metal disc, he retained it and used it in place of the new red disc.

The level of destruction and dismemberment that could be wreaked on the men serving on the front line by shell and machine-gun fire was high. Many Australians also wore unofficial commercially produced or improvised identity discs in addition to their officially issued disc. Discs made from ground down foreign coins were particularly popular, as were identity bracelets.



Mizpah Symbolism



In the Book of Genesis, Jacob and Laban are given the wisdom to reconcile their differences and live peacefully. As a symbol of their trust, they built a tower, a mizpah. Before parting Laban salutes Jacob: *"The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another"*. Mizpah jewellery is given to loved ones as a reminder that they are loved always, no matter where they are, apart or together.



The United States Distinguished Service Cross

The Distinguished Service Cross is the second highest military award that can be given to a member of the United States Army for extreme gallantry and risk of life in actual combat with an armed enemy force. The Distinguished Service Cross was first awarded during World War I. On the obverse of the cross is an eagle on the centre and below a scroll bearing the inscription "FOR VALOR". On the reverse side, the centre of the cross is circled by a wreath with a space for engraving the name of the recipient. The suspender is a loose ring attached to a ball at the top of the cross. The ribbon is dark blue with white and red edge stripes.

Award criteria can sometimes be flexible to suit particular circumstances. General Thomas Blamey, Major General George Vasey and Brigadier George Wootten were each awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism during the Papua New Guinea Campaign from 23 July 1942 to 3 January 1943 as commanders of Allied Land Forces, South West Pacific, the 7th Australian Division and Australian 18th Infantry Brigade respectively. On the other hand, Blamey's uncle, Captain Jack Blamey was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism in the Buna-Gona campaign on Papua New Guinea in November 1942.

Three British Victoria Cross recipients have also been awarded the United States Distinguished Service Cross. Captain Frederick Thornton Peters VC, a Canadian officer serving in the Royal Navy, received the Victoria Cross for heroism during the November 1942 landings in French North Africa. Major Kenneth Muir VC 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's). Major Muir was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for bravery during the during the Battle of Hill 282 on 23 September 1950. Colonel James Power Carne VC was awarded the Victoria Cross for actions during the Battle of the Imjin River during which he led *The Glorious Glosters* in a famous stand against an overwhelming Chinese attack on Gloster Hill on 22/23 April 1951.

<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=232073>

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8003815>

[https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/ww1-identity-discs#:~:text=Introduced%20by%20the%20British%20in,\)%2C%20unit%2C%20and%20religion.](https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/ww1-identity-discs#:~:text=Introduced%20by%20the%20British%20in,)%2C%20unit%2C%20and%20religion.)

LINKS FOR FURTHER ENJOYMENT

Visit the Australian Army Museum of Western Australia web site

<https://armymuseumwa.com.au/>

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION



Padgett family descendants at presentation function



Lt (ret'd) Michael Munjak, USN, North American Veterans' Unit (centre) with Padgett family donors