



Above: U.S. W.W.I Victory Medal on Ming pearls (7-RM129-SMP)

VICTORY MEDALS:

At the end of World War I, all of the victorious allied nations decided to commemorate their triumph by issuing a medal to anyone and everyone who served in the military in any capacity during the conflict, meaning it is literally the Participation Trophy for the war.

Military medals as jewelry accessories have been a popular trend for many years, however there are some who disapprove of the idea, believing that the wearing of a combat medal by a person who was not awarded it is disrespectful both to whom the medal was originally awarded, as well as to all those who fought and died in that, or frankly any other conflict.

We happen to agree wholeheartedly with that, which is why we will not feature such decorations in our line. To my mind, the idea that someone would sell, purchase, or even wear a jewelry item adorned with, let's say, a Bronze Star (awarded for valor in combat, often posthumously) when they did not earn said commendation or even know who did, is at best contemptuous of that soldier's service and sacrifice, and at worst, intentionally insulting.

Thus, the only military decorations we will be using are these, which are non-combat medals, but instead were awarded to everyone even remotely involved in the military during the war. A guy who spent the entire war cataloging tractor parts in Iowa got one of these. However, if someone was shot, injured, killed or even shot at to earn a medal, you won't see it in our line. We have Victory Medals from the U.S., Great Britain, France and Belgium.

RM 129: U.S. Victory Angel:

This particular medal, RM 129, is the version of the Victory Medal distributed by the United States and was designed by noted American sculptor James Earle Fraser. Though Mr. Fraser was more noted for his statues and monuments, he also designed smaller items such as this, as well as the design for the "buffalo head" nickel.

On the obverse of this medal are the names of all the participating Allied nations and the phrase "The Great War For Civilization", as the conflict was then optimistically called, for as we now know it was merely the prelude to the much larger and more devastating Second World War.



Belgian W.W.I Victory Medal on labradorite & vintage chain (7-VM3-LABVC)

All of the medals from the Allied nations are variations on the same theme, that being the Victory Angel (known as Nike to the ancient Greeks and as Victoria to the Romans) on the obverse, and some commemoration of the other nations involved or merely the name of the conflict on the reverse.

If you are interested in seeing where the inspiration for this motif came from, look up the statue Winged Victory of Samothrace. Sculpted by Pythokritos of Rhodes over 2,200 years ago, it is considered one of the finest surviving representations of Greco-Roman art and since 1864 has occupied the place of highest honor at The Louvre in Paris, towering above the Daru staircase at the museum's entrance.



French W.W.I Victory Medal on Baroque pearls (7-VM2-MNPR)



RM 231: French SPCA Medal:

The front of the medal has a woman, her arms outstretched and surrounded by various animals. The woman is an Art Deco representation of the goddess Gaia from Greek mythology. We know her better as “Mother Earth” and her arm gesture is meant to represent the fact that she protects all of Earth's creatures, great and small.

One can make out a horse, cow, dog, cat, deer, donkey, sheep and what looks like a partridge...whether or not the tree it's sitting in is of the pear variety, well...you'll have to make your own call on that. There is what appears to be a tombstone in the foreground, for which I have no explanation. All I know is it lends a sort of maudlin air to the whole thing. Then again, it IS French, so it's almost required to have some sort of fatalistic undertones. Heck, I'm surprised none of the animals are smoking.

On the reverse we see a laurel wreath and the name Mr. Sicard, whom one must assume was the recipient of this honorary medallion. The words on the outer edge translate as “Society for the Protection of Animals” and at the bottom, “Founded in 1845”, which I am confident you figured out on your own but thought I would include anyway...just in case.

The Alzheimer's Necklace (7-RM67-ALZ):

One would be hard-pressed to find a person not touched in some way by the scourge of Alzheimer's Disease. Be it family or friends, chances are you know all too well how awful an experience it is to watch someone you love deteriorate during what has been aptly and heartbreakingly termed, "The Long Goodbye".

It's bad enough that Alzheimer's robs its victims of their most cherished memories until it ultimately causes the body to "forget" how to even function, but often it does so at an agonizingly slow pace. It is quite simply the working definition of "cruelty" for those left behind; the only saving grace being that at some point the patient forgets who they even are, much less that they have a terrible disease. For that at least there is some modicum of comfort. Knowing that eventually they won't remember enough to know they are suffering is quite literally the only thing to look forward to upon receiving this diagnosis. This amelioration of pain experienced by the loved ones of the afflicted is unfortunately marginal, but at least it's something.

In 2003, we lost Andrea's mother, Norma Jean, to Alzheimer's Disease. To me, she was and always will be "Mimi".

The cross that Andrea and her sister Cindi found in the back of Mimi's bureau after she passed has proven to be a hallmark of her jewelry line. Be it the finishing touch or the centerpiece itself, "Mimi's Cross" has become a signature element of Andrea's work and each time we use it, it helps us remember her as she was before the illness robbed us of her light and love: vibrant, funny, incalculably kind, infinitely loving and the greatest audience the world has ever known for either a bad gymnastics routine or an even worse riddle.

What did the grape say when the elephant stepped on it?

Nothing, it just let out a little wine.

Yeah...that KILLED with Mimi. Every time. If you needed attention or applause, Mimi was your gal.

And so it is in her honor that we present our "In Memory of Mimi" necklace, which features St. Dymphna, the patron saint of Alzheimer's Disease, a sterling silver cross with an angel atop it, symbolizing the ascension into Heaven and accented by a small faceted amethyst, purple being the official color of The Alzheimer's Association and its Walk To End Alzheimer's.

To that end, 20% of all proceeds from the sale of this piece will go to The Alzheimer's Association in order to help fund research for a cure to this insidious malady. We hope you buy one in remembrance of someone you lost and that our small contribution might possibly mean we never lose anyone to Alzheimer's ever again.



The Alzheimer's Necklace (7-RM67-ALZ)

The Mother's Day Necklace:

This 36" glass pearl rosary necklace finishes with a pair of medals, one in bronze and the other in silver. The bronze medal features St. Anne, the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus. She is the patron saint of both mothers and grandmothers, so it seemed fitting to suggest it as an item for Mother's Day since it covers two generations of moms.

The small sterling cross with it belonged to Andrea's own mother. After she passed, Andrea and her sister Cindy found it in a tiny box in the back of a drawer. Being raised Baptist, Andrea's mother Norma Jean, never wore any religious jewelry. Baptists don't do iconography, so it was something that never got worn, but based upon the box, we knew she had kept it for over 50 years.

To the grand-kids she was "Mimi". Like we didn't know her actual name until we were 12. If you had had the pleasure of knowing Mimi, she was the kindest, sweetest, most gentle, loving soul you might ever encounter.

Andrea and her mother had always hoped to be able to go into business together but circumstance and eventually the scourge of Alzheimer's kept that from happening. Norma Jean finally left us in 2003 but ever since, when Andrea is designing a necklace and it just doesn't seem to be coming together, she adds a "Mimi's Cross" and suddenly the whole thing works. It makes Andi feel like maybe she and her mama really are working together, just not as they had planned. That is why you will find that cross on many, many items and why the Mother's Day Necklace wouldn't be complete without it.





Hill Tribe Silver Roses:

In the northern highlands of Thailand, the Hill Tribes live much as they have for 1,000 years, actually preceding the Thai settlement of the region.

Hill Tribe Silver is 99% pure, making it workable by hand & the hands of their artisans are exceedingly deft. They produce intricate necklaces, bracelets, beads & pendants, among the best known of which are their rosebuds.

In addition, the cottage industry of silversmithing has greatly reduced the illicit cultivation of opium poppies in the region, as whole families engage in the manufacturing process & this ages-old skill is passed on to a new generation.