

PRESS RELEASE

Results from Morton & Eden's auction of the Dr. Arthur B. King Collection
3 October 2003

Stack's/Morton & Eden auction of the first part of the Dr. King collection of Military Medals realises £556,850 (plus 15% buyers' premium).

Part 1 of the collection of medals formed by the late Dr. Arthur B. King sold very successfully in the auction held in London on 3rd October, with less than 2% by value remaining unsold.

The top price of £80,000 was paid by a British private collector for the Great War Victoria Cross awarded to Lance Corporal F. W. Holmes of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. Awarded in August 1914, this VC was only the tenth to be gazetted in the First World War and related to an action near Le Cateau in northern France when Holmes rescued an injured bugler caught up in close fire from the enemy (lot 675, estimate £70-90,000).

The sale included a number of awards issued by the Honourable East India Company, most significant of which was the extremely rare gold medal for the third Mysore War of 1791-92. This was bought by Spink's on behalf of a private collector for £22,000 (lot 18, estimate £10-15,000). A gold medal for Seringapatam and the final defeat of Tipoo Sultan in 1799 sold for £13,000 to a US private collector (lot 27, estimate £4-6,000).

Among a very extensive series of Victorian medals, a rare gold medal issued to a nursing sister, Emma Ireland, during the Hong Kong plague of 1894, realized £9,000 (lot 182, estimate £5-7,000), bought by another US private collector.

There were two major awards for the Peninsular War. Major General F.A. Wetherall's large army gold medal issued when he was second-in-command on the expedition against the island of Java in 1810 realised £22,000 (lot 656, estimate £20-25,000). Lt. Col. John Piper's Order of the Bath, Army Gold Cross and Army Small Gold Medal realised £36,000 (lot 657, estimate £30-40,000). It was acquired by the King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the medals will go on display there in mid-December.

Dr. King's collection also included an important section of medals relating to polar exploration. Of most significance was Tom Crean's Polar Medal with one clasp "Antarctic 1902-04". Crean not only went on to accompany Scott on the penultimate leg of his ill-fated attempt at the South Pole in 1912 but also played an important role in Shackleton's expedition of 1914-16, when he was part of the six-man crew of the *James Caird* on the epic 800 mile journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia to save the lives of the crew of the *Endurance*. His original Polar medal attracted much interest, especially in Ireland where he is very much regarded as a local hero, and it realized £22,000 (lot 612, estimate £14-18,000), selling to London dealers DNW acting for a private collector of Polar material.

All prices mentioned are the hammer price to which buyers pay an additional 15% buyers' premium.