

# Medals Depicting Historical Figures

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## Introduction

This is a sparsely populated drawer. It holds the medals that depict historical figures and do not more appropriately qualify for an different Centennial drawer. This is, of course, subjective, but it is one of the few privileges accorded the author. As a result, there are not many medals that fit this narrow definition. For example, the most common figure on Centennial medals, by far, is George Washington; so common, in fact, that placing them in their own drawer, labeled simply “Washington,” would obscure the more specific Centennial category to which they more properly belong in this, a Centennial catalog. However, there are a few examples that picture an historical figure but, other than being obviously Centennial, do not better fit in another drawer. Those fmedals reside here.

## Medals Depicting Historical Figures

### 2690. Washington Plaque



(.77x)



(.77x)

**Obverse:** Within a finely denticled border in a stippled field, an undraped bust of George Washington to left; above: "PATER" (Father); below: "1776"; framed in a border of 48 pellets with holes drilled for mounting at 12:00 and 6:00.

**Reverse:** A negative image of the obverse with inscriptions in raised script-style lettering; to left: "Miller & Krips"; above "CENTENNIAL"; below "1876".

**Cross-refs:** Not listed.

**Size:** 106 mm wide x 153 mm high    **Edge:** Plain

Alloy	No.
Brass	2690bs

## 2700. Lincoln Plaque



(.77x)



(.77x)

**Obverse:** Within a finely denticled border in a stippled field, an undraped bust of Abraham Lincoln to right; above: "SALVATOR" (Savior); below: "1861"; framed in a border of 48 pellets with holes drilled for mounting at 12:00 and 6:00. Holes top and bottom for mounting.

**Reverse:** A negative image of the obverse with inscriptions in raised script-style lettering; to left: "CENTENNIAL"; below in two lines: "Miller & Krips // Phil<sup>a</sup>"; to right "1876".

**Cross-refs:** Not listed.

**Size:** 106 mm wide x 153 mm high    **Edge:** Plain

Alloy	No.
Brass	2700bs

## Medals Depicting Historical Figures

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### 2710. Lafayette Plaque



(.43x)



(.43x)

**Obverse:** Military bust of Lafayette one-quarter left. Clockwise around from 9:30: “1776 . LAFAYETTE 1876 .” [There is a period after each date.]

**Reverse:** The concave inverse of the obverse. There is a 1/4” threaded nut soldered to the center for mounting.

Per Joe Levine: “Insofar as I can tell, it is unlisted in any reference.”

**Cross-refs:** Not listed.

**Size:** 189 mm.    **Edge:** Plain

**Alloy**            **No.**

Bronze            2710bs

## Medals Depicting Historical Figures

### 2720. Lafayette/Statue of Liberty



(2.6x)



(2.6x)

**Obverse:** Bust of Lafayette in civilian dress to right; around, clockwise from 8:00: "GENERAL" and from 2:00: "LAFAYETTE".

**Reverse:** In nine lines, the first two, fourth, and seventh through ninth curved: DEFENDER OF AMERICAN AND / FRENCH / LIBERTY. / BORN 1757 DIED 1834 / STATUE IN / NEW YORK / UNVEILED / SEPT. 6. 1876 / CENTENNIAL". The periods after "Liberty" and in the 1876 date are in the shape of diamonds.

**Cross-refs:** Not listed.

**Diameter:** 31.8 mm.      **Edge:** Plain

Alloy	No.
Silver	2720si
Bronze	2720bz
White Metal	2720wm

The reverse of this 1876 medal is reminiscent of the Lafayette medal (right) issued to commemorate General Lafayette's visit to America in 1824. It is easy to differentiate the two medals because the 1824 version is inscribed under Lafayette's shoulder with "CAUNOIS FRENCH" (The artist was Francois-Auguste Caunois) and there is a period after "LAFAYETTE", both of which are absent on the 1876 medal. . There are also minor differences in the bust, notably the cravat and the hair, that make it clear that two separate dies were used.



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## The Lafayette Statue Medal

Thanks to the American penchant for brevity, Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette, is known to most of us simply as "Lafayette." He was a French aristocrat who became so enthused by America's declaration of freedom from Britain that he volunteered to serve without pay in the Continental Army. Congress commissioned him a major-general, and General Washington, at Benjamin Franklin's suggestion, made him his aide de-camp.

Lafayette's exploits and unstinting dedication to the American cause made him a hero in both America and France. He personified the special relationship that the two countries still maintained in 1876, so much so that the statue commemorated by this medal was erected even before Washington's great monument and the Statue of Liberty, which were both still unfinished (until 1885 and 1886, respectively).

As a point of history, it appears that during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the citizens of New York City provided aid and encouragement to the French side. In gratitude for that support, the Cercle Français de l'Harmonie, or French Fellowship Society, in 1872 commissioned Auguste Bartholdi (who also sculpted the Statue of Liberty) to execute a statue of Lafayette. It was cast in 1873 and delivered in the U.S. on 14 July 1875, Bastille Day, destined for Central Park. For reasons unknown, the site was changed and the statue was dedicated in Union Square, New York City, on 6 September 1876. The granite pedestal on which it stands, designed by H.W. DeStuckle, was donated by French citizens living in New York. The inscription on the statue reads, "In remembrance of sympathy in times of trial."



Honors to Lafayette have spanned the entire history of our country. On 28 December 1784, the Maryland General Assembly passed a resolution stating that Lafayette and his male heirs "forever shall be...natural born Citizens" of the state. In 1824, President James Monroe invited Lafayette to tour America as "the nation's guest." During that visit, he toured all twenty-four states of the nation. While in New York City, a military parade was held in his honor, and the New York Seventh Regiment took the name "National Guard," after the Garde National de Paris, once commanded by Lafayette during the early days of the French Revolution. Our own National Guard traces its name back to that event. Much more recently, in 2002, General Lafayette was made an honorary citizen of the United States. Only seven people have ever been so honored, and only two, Lafayette and Mother Teresa, were conferred by act of Congress; the other five, by Presidential proclamation.

In addition to the honors and accolades, statues and boulevards, parks and squares, Lafayette himself best expressed his love for and unique relationship with America. He named his son George Washington Lafayette, and he arranged to be buried at Picpus Cemetery in Paris under soil brought from the battlefield at Bunker Hill. From a Maryland "natural-born citizen" and Congressional Honorary Citizen to burial "under American soil," Lafayette was truly a son of America.

## Medals Depicting Historical Figures

### 2730. General Grant/Lib Bell



(4 x)

(4 x)

**Obverse:** According to Holland: "GENERAL GRANT 1872 with head to L., which has been muled before."

**Reverse:** According to Holland: "The large bell."

**Cross-refs:** H-166.

**Diameter:** 19.1 mm.      **Edge:**

<b>Alloy</b>	<b>No.</b>
Bronze	2730bz