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Chapter 23

WORLD WAR TWO STARS

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WORLD WAR TWO STARS

TERMS



Described for each individual star. To award a star, a period of one month was deemed to be 30 days. Service curtailed by death, or disability due to service, also qualified for the award. A recipient of a decoration, Mention-in-Despatches or a King's Commendation, qualified for the award irrespective of the length of service. Service spent in qualifying for one star could not run concurrently with service qualifying for another. Prisoner-of-War time could count towards the 1939-45 Star but it would not count towards the earning of other stars unless the 1939-45 Star qualifying time had been completed before capture. No more than five

stars could be awarded to any individual.

BARS

All of the stars had bars except the Italy Star. The bars represent either a special service connected with that star (such as the Battle of Britain with the 1939-45 Star) or denote that the person qualified for the award of another specific star after the award of the first star. Only one bar per medal is worn.

DESCRIPTION

A six pointed tombac (a yellow copper-zinc alloy) star, 45-mm across the points.

OBVERSE

The Royal and Imperial Cypher (GRI with VI below) appears in the centre of the obverse. The Cypher is within a circlet bearing the name of the particular star, with a Royal crown at the top of the circlet.

REVERSE

The reverse was plain on issue, but some had their names engraved privately.

MOUNTING

There is a ring on the top point of the star through which another ring passes.

RIBBON

The ribbons are 32-mm wide and differ for each star. A silver rose emblem on the ribbon signified the award of a bar to the star. Ribbon colours are described left to right when facing the ribbon.

DATES

Authorized by Canadian Army Routine Order #6919 (16 August 1946).

THE 1939-1945 STAR

TERMS

ARMY: to personnel who had six months (180 days) service in an operational theatre, provided such service was:

- (i) Northwest Europe or the Central Mediterranean theatres prior to 8 May 1945;
- (ii) the Southwest theatres prior to 2 September 1945.

NAVY: to personnel who had six months (180 days) service afloat in areas of active operations prior to 8 May 1945 or 2 September 1945.

RCAF (Aircrew): to those who took part in operations against the enemy subject to completion of two months (60 days) service in a fully operational unit or squadron, prior to 8 May 1945 or 2 September 1945.

RCAF: (Groundcrew): to those who served for six months (180 days) in an operational theatre prior to 8 May 1945 or 2 September 1945.

SPECIAL DATES:

In the following operations, service of 6 or 2 months qualifies for the award of the 1939/45 Star:

- (i) France from 30 September 1939 to 9 May 1940.

In the following operations, entry into operational service will qualify for the 1939/45 Star:

- (i) Belgium, France from 10 May 1940 to 19 June 1940;
- (ii) Holland from 12 May 1940 to 13 May 1940
- (iii) Dieppe on 19 August 1942 (1 day)
- (iv) India, Northwest Frontier
 - from 03 February to 24 May 1940
 - from 18 June 1941 to 26 August 1941
 - from 28 July 1942 to 18 August 1942

NOTE

The 1939/1945 Star was issued when operational service was terminated by death, wounds, or other disability due to service.

The 1939/45 Star was also awarded when an honour, decoration or mention in despatches was awarded to an individual who had not yet received the star.



BARS

BATTLE OF BRITAIN: This bar was awarded to those members of the crews of fighter aircraft who took part in the Battle of Britain between 10 July and 31 October 1940.

BOMBER COMMAND (Not for Canadians - see CVSM)



This bar was not one of the original bars to the eight stars originally awarded for WWII **but came almost seventy years** after the end of war.

(Canadians wear it on the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and all members of Bomber Command are eligible for this clasp, not just aircrew as is the case in Great Britain.)

For the RAF and other British personnel, the Bomber Command Clasp (which is worn on the 1939/1945 Star) recognizes those who between 03 September 1939 and 08 May 1945 (VE Day) who:

- a. Served as aircrew on a Bomber Command operational unit for at least 60 days, or completed a tour of operations; and
- b. Flew at least one operational sortie.

Note 1: The above criteria mean that eligible personnel will have already qualified for the 1939-45 Star.

Note 2: Special Cases - The clasp will usually also be issued in respect of Bomber Command aircrew who do not meet the above qualifying criteria but:

- (1) had their service brought to an end by death, wounds or other disability due to service; or
- (2) received a gallantry award for their Bomber Command service; or
- (3) were taken as a prisoner of war.

It was announced in late 2012 and formally approved by the Queen in early 2013. Bars began to be awarded in Britain in mid-2013.

RIBBON

The ribbon consists of three equal: dark blue, red and light blue (representing the navy, army and air force).

THE 1939-1945 STAR

¹

ISSUED

Canadians received 305,000 Stars

103 Bars Battle of Britain Bars. Of these, 23 Canadians were killed in the Battle of Britain that would have earned them the bar and another 30 who flew in the Battle of Britain were killed later in the war.

NOTE: CANADIANS WILL WEAR THE BOMBER COMMAND CLASP on the CVSM



¹ Peter Engbrecht, CGM, CD, RCAF – he would have earned the Bomber Command bar to his 1935/1945 Star (Commonwealth Training Plan Museum Brandon)

Wing Commander Paul Pitcher, RCAF, Number 1 Fighter Squadron in the Battle of Britain – 1939/1945 Star with bar Battle of Britain and an MID on his 1935/1945 Medal plus bars to his other two stars (Medals in the Museum at CFB Trenton)

THE ATLANTIC STAR

TERMS



a) **RCN and Canadian Army:** awarded to personnel who had six months (180 days) service afloat in the Atlantic or Home waters since 3 September 1939 to 8 May 1945;

b) **Flying Personnel:** awarded to personnel who have taken part in operations against the enemy in the Atlantic or Home waters, provided they completed two months (60 days) service in a fully operational unit.

NOTE

The 1939/45 Star must have been earned by completion of six (or two) months of service before a candidate could begin to earn the Atlantic Star.

SPECIAL RULE

There is a special rule in relation to the last six months of operational service (from 8 November 1944 to 8 May 1945). Persons who entered into operational service during the last six or two months (as the case may be) will, if they did not subsequently serve in another operational area, qualify for the Atlantic Star and the prior time qualifications of 6 or 2 months will not apply. However, the 1939/45 Star will not be awarded in such cases in which total operational service amounted to less than 6 or 2 months.

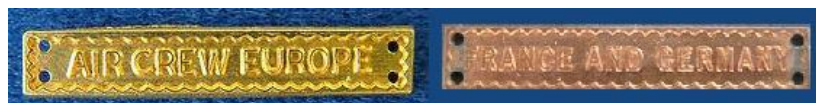
Time spent as prisoner of war, by a Naval Officer or rating will **not** be counted towards the total qualifying period of 12 months unless the individual had completed his 6 months service for the 1939/45 Star and had begun to earn the Atlantic Star before being made prisoner.

Service for the Atlantic Star brought to an end by death, wounds or other disability due to service, or marked by an award of M.I.D. qualifies although it may not have amounted to 6 or 2 months as the case may be.

BARS

If later entitled to a second or third star, rather than wearing the star, a bar would be worn (but only one bar could be worn):

AIR CREW EUROPE or FRANCE AND GERMANY



RIBBON

The shaded and watered ribbon consists of three equal stripes: blue, white, and sea-green to represent the Atlantic Ocean.

ISSUED

There were 43,500 issued to Canadians.

2



² Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray, VC, DSC, RCNVR with Atlantic Star - MID on the 1939/45 Medal
Captain Andrew Ross, OMM, VRD, CD - former Commanding Officer, HMCS Discovery
- Medals displayed in the HMCS Discovery Museum in Vancouver, B.C.
- Note the RCNVR Officer Decoration (VRD) and the RCNVR Long Service Medal before his CD

THE ARCTIC STAR

TERMS



The Arctic Star recognizes any length of operational service (i.e. one day, or part of, or more) north of the Arctic Circle (66 degrees, 32'N) between 03 September 1939 and 8 May 1945 (VE Day).

This includes:

- a. Service by personnel of **any Service** on the 'Russian Convoys';
- b. Service in RAF/RCAF Coastal Command, other RAF/RCAF Squadrons and Fleet Air Arm crew who flew at least one sortie north of the Arctic Circle;
- c. Army personnel who took part in land operations north of the Arctic Circle;
- d. Army and Royal Marines personnel who served in His Majesty's ships or Merchant ships north of the Arctic Circle; and
- e. Merchant Navy personnel other than the Russian Convoys, who served north of the Arctic Circle.

Thus any length of service above the Arctic Circle, defined as 66° 32' North Latitude, by members of the British, Canadian and Australian Armed Forces and the Merchant Navy of these countries is eligible for this medal.

The Arctic Star **was not one of the eight stars originally awarded for WWII but came almost seventy years after the end of war.** It was announced in late 2012 and formally approved by the Queen in early 2013. Medals began to be awarded in Britain in mid-2013.

RAF / RCAF members are eligible if they landed north of the Arctic Circle or served in the air over this area. Non aircrew on operational service in the area or those sailing in Catapult Aircraft Merchant Ships are also eligible. Army personnel serving in His Majesty's ships or in defensively equipped Merchant ships qualify under the rules applying to the Navy or Merchant Navy. Personnel taking part in land operations north of the Arctic Circle are also eligible for award.

BARS

There is no bar to this medal.

RIBBON

The ribbon is 32-mm wide with equal stripes of light blue, dark blue, red, white (edged in fine black stripes), dark blue and light blue. The light blue represents the air force, the dark blue the navy, the red the merchant navy and the white with black edges the arctic.

ORDER of PRECEDENCE

The Arctic Star will be worn **between** the Air Crew Europe Star and the Africa Star.

This is because Second World War theatre stars are worn in chronological order of the start date of the operations in the theatre that the Stars represent. Royal Navy ships were at their war stations in the Atlantic the day the War started (thus the Atlantic Star is the first theatre star coming after the 1939/1945 Star). The first Royal Air Force bombing sorties took place over Germany on 4 September 1939, the second day of the War (Air Crew Europe comes after the Atlantic Star).

Chronologically, therefore, it is appropriate that the Atlantic Star takes precedence over the Air Crew Europe Star in the Order of Wear. Operations north of the Arctic Circle (not least the April-June 1940 Norway campaign) took place before operations which qualified for the Africa Star began on 10 June 1940.

DATES

Any length of service between 03 September 1939 and 08 May 1945 in the arctic qualify and individual. Most of the eligible recipients died before the medal was issued in 2013.

NOTE

The medal was primarily to recognize the hazardous conditions of the convoys to North Russia by the Merchant Marine Ships and the Navy.

ORDER of WEAR of the WORLD WAR II STARS and MEDALS to CANADIANS

1939/1945 Star
Atlantic Star
Air Crew Europe Star
Arctic Star
Africa Star
Pacific Star
Burma Star
Italy Star
France and Germany Star
Defence Medal
Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
1939/1945 War Medal

Arctic Star



Bruce Menzie wearing the Arctic star with Temple Anderson (left) and Paula Hanson (right) - Bruce also received the Croix de Guerre from the French Government

THE AIRCREW EUROPE STAR

TERMS

The star was awarded for two months (60 days) operational flying from the United Kingdom bases over Europe (including U.K.) between 03 September 1939 and 05 June 1944. It was **not** awarded after D-Day. Aircrew service in operations at sea will not be a qualification for the Aircrew Europe Star.

The 1939/45 Star must have been earned by six months or for aircrew two months service in operations before a candidate can begin to earn the Aircrew Europe Star. Four months service as air crew in an operational unit, any 2 months of which qualify for the Aircrew Europe Star, is regarded however, as a qualification for that star.

Service for the Aircrew Europe Star brought to an end by death, wounds or other disability due to service, or marked by an award of Mentioned in Despatches qualifies although it may not amount to two months.

BARS

If later entitled to a second or third star, its bar would be worn (but only one bar):

ATLANTIC
or
FRANCE AND GERMANY

RIBBON

The ribbon is light blue with black edges with narrow yellow stripes between the blue and black (representing continuous service by day and night).

ISSUED

There were **12,800** issued to Canadians. ³



³ Flight Lieutenant Donald Robert Morrison, DFC, DFM, RCAF with Air Crew Europe Star and bar France and Germany
Photo in the Aviation Museum at CFB Trenton

THE AFRICA STAR

TERMS



The star was awarded for operational service of any length (usually regarded as a minimum one day service) in North Africa from the date of entry of Italy into the War on 10 June 1940 up to the date of cessation of operations against the enemy in North Africa on 12 May 1943.

The qualification is entry as part of the establishment, into an operational command in North Africa. The individual must have been

taken on strength of a unit or formation. The whole of the area between the Canal and the Straits of Gibraltar is included. Service in operations in Abyssinia, Somaliland and Eritrea and also in Malta is a qualification. Service in West Africa is excluded. Airborne troops of the Army who have taken part in airborne operations in a qualifying Army area for land operations did qualify.

There is no condition that the 1939/45 Star should already have been earned.

BARS

FIRST ARMY Awarded for service with the First Army in Tunis or Algeria between 8 November 1942 and 12 May 1943.

A '1' is worn on the ribbon in undress to denote this bar.

EIGHTH ARMY Awarded for service with that army between 23 October 1942 and 12 May 1943.

An '8' is worn on the ribbon in undress to denote this bar.

NORTH AFRICA 1942-1943 Awarded for service with the 18th Army Group Headquarters, navy or air force between 23 October 1942 (the date of the battle of El Alamein) and 12 May 1943.

In undress, a rosette on the ribbon denotes this bar.

Only one clasp may be worn on the Africa Star.

RIBBON

The pale buff (sand) ribbon has a central red stripe and two narrow stripes, dark blue at left and light blue at right. The colours represent the desert, the army, navy, and air force.

ISSUED

There were 7,400 issued to Canadians.

PACIFIC STAR

TERMS

The star is awarded for one day or more of operational service in the Pacific between 08 December 1941 and 02 September 1945.

Operational service qualifies in all islands South of latitude 40 degrees North in the Central Pacific and the South China Sea in the area subject to enemy invasion during the war, and including islands occupied by the enemy up to the cessation of hostilities, for the period of the date of enemy invasion or occupation in each instance and up to 2 September 1945.

Qualifying service on land in the **Army** is restricted to operational service in territories in which there have been enemy or Allied invasions. The dates vary for each particular territory. Service in Burma is excluded.

Operational service in China and Malaya from 8 December 1941 up to 15 February 1942 qualifies for the Pacific Star. Operational service in China and Malaya from 16 February 1942 to 2 September 1945 qualifies for the Burma Star. Airborne operations in a qualifying area for land operations will qualify. No prior time qualification is required for Army personnel.



BAR

If later entitled to that star, the **BURMA** bar would be worn.

RIBBON

The ribbon consists of seven coloured stripes: red, narrow dark blue, green, narrow yellow (centre), green, narrow light blue, and red. The colours represent the forests and beaches and the army, navy and air force.

ISSUED

There were 8,800 stars awarded to Canadians.

4



⁴ Company Sergeant-Major John Robert Osborn, VC – Pacific Star for time in Hong Kong – Canadian War Museum (Hong Kong bar on his CVSM)
Wing Commander Zebulon Lewis Leigh, OBE, CM, ED – Pacific star – National Air Force Museum of Canada, CFB Station Trenton

THE BURMA STAR

TERMS



Awarded for one day or more operational service during the Burma campaign, between 11 December 1941 and 02 September 1945.

The qualifying area for land operation in service in Burma. In addition, service on land from 1 May 1942 to 31 December 1943, in the province of Bengal and Assam and from 1 January 1944 until 2 September 1945 in those parts of Bengal or Assam east of the Brhmaputra, qualifies.

Operational service in China and Malaya from 8 December 1941 to 15 February 1942 qualifies for the Pacific Star. Service in China and Malaya from 16 February 1942 to 2 September 1945 qualifies for the Burma Star. Airborne troops of the Army who have taken part in airborne operations in a qualifying Army area for land operations will qualify. There is no prior time qualification for Army personnel.

BAR

If later entitled to that star, the **PACIFIC** bar would be worn.

RIBBON

The ribbon has a red centre with dark blue, orange, dark blue edges. The red represents the Commonwealth Forces and the orange the sun.

ISSUED

There were 5,500 stars issued.⁵



⁵ Lieutenant Roger Mark Caza, MBE (Croix de Guerre) – SOE136 (spy) – Medals at the Canadian War Museum
CPO T.D. Angus, CD, RCN – CFB Esquimalt Museum – Burma Star is the 3rd one from the left in both photos

THE ITALY STAR

TERMS

The star was awarded for entry into operational service (usually considered 1 day) in Sicily or Italy between 11 June 1943 (capture of Pantellaria) and 08 May 1945.

In the Army, there is no prior time qualification. Airborne troops of the Army who have taken part in airborne operations in a qualifying Army area for land operations, will qualify.

Operational service in the Mediterranean theatre, for instance in the Aegean and Dodecanese, Corsica, Greece, Sardinia and Yugoslavia after 11 June 1943 is a qualification.

Operational service in Elba is a qualification. Service in Sicily after 17 August 1943, and in Sardinia after 19 September 1943, and Corsica after 4 October 1943, is not a qualification.



BAR

This was the only star without a bar.

RIBBON

The ribbon consists of equal stripes of red, white, green (centre), white, and red.

The colours represent the colours of the Italian flag.

ISSUED

There were 91,000 stars issued to Canadians. ⁶



⁶ Major Ronald William John Grinstead, MBE, ED – Royal Westminster Regiment Museum (This MBE is a post WWII award for the 1949 floods in B.C.
Commissioner Leonard H. Nicholson, OC, MBE, GCStJ – RCMP Museum, Regina Saskatchewan – 3rd medal in each group is Italian Star

THE FRANCE AND GERMANY STAR

TERMS



The star was awarded for entry into operational service (usually quoted as one day) in France, Belgium, Holland or Germany between 06 June 1944 (D-Day) and 08 May 1945.

There is no prior time qualification. Airborne troops of the Army who have taken part in airborne operations in a qualifying Army area for land operations, will qualify.

BARS

If later entitled to that star, the **ATLANTIC** bar would be worn.

NOTE

The Aircrew Europe Bar is **not** issued with this star because one could not qualify for that star after 05 June

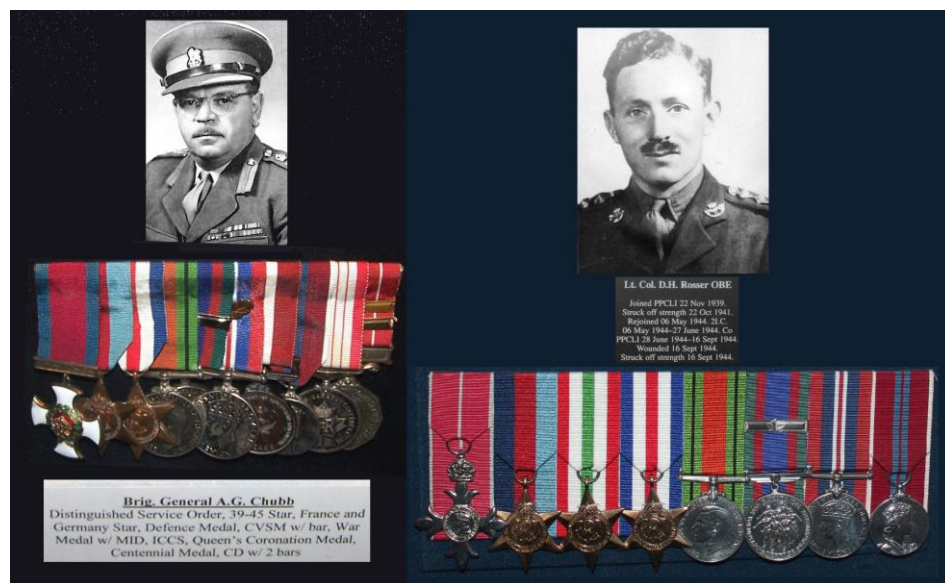
1944.

RIBBON

The ribbon consists of equal stripes of blue, white, red (centre), white, and blue. The colours represent the Union flag and those of France and the Netherlands but not of Belgium.

ISSUED

There were 230,000 stars issued to Canadians.⁷



⁷ Brigadier Arthur Gerald Chubb, DSO, CD, British Columbia Regiment – Medals in Lord Strathcona's Horse Museum, Calgary, Alberta

Lieutenant-Colonel David Hillard Rosser, OBE, PPCLI – Medals in the PPCLI Museum – France and Germany Star blue/white/red/white/blue ribbon