

Essays On  
The Medals Of The  
Rochester Numismatic Association

Timothy J. Corio

Inside Cover

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# Contents

Contents.....	i
Introduction.....	1
The Tradition.....	2
The Line-Up – Presidential Medals.....	3
The Line-Up – Non-Presidential Medals.....	4
A Brief History.....	5
The Process.....	6
Presidential Medals.....	6
Non-Presidential Medals.....	6
In The Old Days.....	6
The Artists.....	7
Presidential Medal Reverses.....	8
Jane's Cracked Head and Big Bust.....	9
WWII and Rationing.....	10
Charlie Ricard is the Real Napoleon.....	11
Presentation.....	12
What's Up With Bob Doty's Medal.....	13
Dennonville – Why?.....	14
Restrikes.....	15
The Many Metals Of Gerard Muhl.....	16



## **Introduction**

The Rochester Numismatic Association has been producing medals since its inception. In 1913 the founding members struck a medal to honor Dr. George P. French, the first president of the RNA. Each present has been honored with such a medal ever since.

The RNA has issued many other medals to honor and celebrate the events that are important to the organization and its members.

## The Tradition

A bronze presidential medal is given to each person who as a member of the RNA during the honored president's tenure. Silver is usually offered for purchase via a pre-strike order.

The mint often produces lead trial strikes to setup to the press that strikes the medals. These trial strikes were sometimes given to the honoree. Later, a lead strike was offered to honoree for purchase.

The honoree has often been indulged with the opportunity to order medals struck in other materials.

QUESTION: Have bronze presidential medals always been payed for out of the membership dues, or has there ever been a charge for them?

QUESTION: Can someone confirm that the lead strikes were sometimes given to the honoree?

QUESTION: Were the lead strikes ever given to someone other than the honoree?

## **The Line-Up – Presidential Medals**

## **The Line-Up – Non-Presidential Medals**

## A Brief History

First the earth cooled ...

QUESTION: Why was no presidential medal struck in 1941?

QUESTION: How is the date on the medal determined?

# The Process

## *Presidential Medals*

Photographs of the honoree.  
Design sketch.  
Die cut.  
Trial strike.  
Approval.  
Striking.  
Distribution.

## *Non-Presidential Medals*

QUESTION: Mostly the same as for presidential medals?  
QUESTION: How does it differ?

## *In The Old Days*

QUESTION: What was the process in the early days of the RNA?

# The Artists

## Presidential Medal Reverses

There has been several reverses used for the presidential medals.

QUESTION: What are the various reverses?

QUESTION: Who designed each reverse?

QUESTION: Who cut each die?

QUESTION: Why was each one decommissioned?

QUESTION: Where are the dies now?

## **Jane's Cracked Head and Big Bust**

The die for the Jane R. Hanken presidential medal broke after producing **XXXX** medals. The design was flawed causing an inherent weakness. A second die die was produced with a reduced bust which strengthend the die allowing the run of medals to be completed. This gave us two varieties of medals for Jane R. Hanken: Large Bust and Small bust.

QUESTION; How many medals were produced with the first die before it broke?

QUESTION: How many medals were produced with the first die after it broke?

QUESTION; How many medals were produced with the second die?

QUESTION: Is there an obvious die progression for the first die?

QUESTION: What are the diagnostics for the first die (before the crack) and the second die?

QUESTION: What does Jane think of the innuendo often applied to the Large Bust/Small Bust names?

## WWII and Rationing

During World War Two everyone was asked to sacrifice. Food and fuel was rationed and many commodities we take for granted were diverted from civilian uses to the war. The RNA did its part as well. The presidential medals honoring Floyd B. Newell (1942), Edward F. Meinhart (1943), and William M. Hutchinson (1945) were produced using alternative materials. After the war those medals were re-struck in Bronze.

The Newell and Meinhart medals were first struck in plastic with a finish that looks like bronze. Hutchinson's medal was struck in gilded lead.

QUESTION: When were the Bronze issues struck?

QUESTION: What is the material used to guild the plastic and lead medals?

QUESTION: What processes were used to guild the plastic and lead medals?

## **Charlie Ricard is the Real Napoleon**

Charles J. Ricard was good friends with Alphonse Kolb who designed Charlie's presidential medal in 1960. To honor his friend Kolb hand tooled a standard bronze medal to give Charlie the appearance of Napoleon.

Charlie's suit is replaced with a toga and a multicolored gold wreath is applied to his head.

QUESTION: Why did Kolb produce this medal? Was he asked or did he do it on his own?

QUESTION: Why Napoleon?

QUESTION: When was the Napoleon medal produced?

QUESTION; How was the Napoleon medal presented to Charlie?

QUESTION: Was the medal delivered in a presentation box?

## Presentation

The presidential medals are presented to the honoree at the RNA's annual banquet.

At one time a member of the RNA made wooden presentation boxes for the medal given to the president.

QUESTION; Who produced the wooden presentation boxes?

QUESTION: When (dates and issues) were presentation boxes made?

QUESTION: Was there a fee for the presentation boxes?

QUESTION: Do any of these boxes still exist?

QUESTION: Have all presidential medals been presented at an annual banquet?

## What's Up With Bob Doty's Medal

Honoring Robert E. Doty's presidency is the RNA's most elaborate medal. Achille Forgione included subtle background objects. This is the first RNA medal to include items symbolic of the honoree other than the bust.

The items include:

- A sinking sailboat by the date.
- Mountains in the vague form of large breasts.

QUESTION: Why did Forgione do include these items? Did Doty request them or did Forgione do it on his own?

QUESTION: What other background items are there?

QUESTION: What is the meaning of these symbols?

QUESTION: Who else was aware of these items before the medal was issued?

QUESTION: Was there any controversy around including these non-traditional symbols?

QUESTION: What other medals have subtle background symbols?

# Dennonville – Why?

## Restrikes

QUESTION: Which medals have been restruck?

QUESTION: Why have medals been restruck?

QUESTION: How are restrikes recognizable?

QUESTION: When was each restrike made?

QUESTION: Which restrikes were authorized by the RNA?

QUESTION: How have restrikes affected availability and price?

QUESTION: Controversy?

## The Many Metals Of Gerard Muhl

Another case of “It's good to have friends”. Gery's medal holds the record for the number of different metals in which the medal was struck.

Known varieties:

- Bronze
- Silver
- Copper (cast)
- Wax

QUESTION: In what other metals was this medal struck?

QUESTION: How was this plethora of metals funded? Did Gery pay for them? Did the club?

QUESTION: How were the metals selected?

QUESTION: Was any metal considered and rejected?

QUESTION: Are there any metals that are unique in the series of presidential medals?

QUESTION: What were the mintages of all these various metals?

