



SUPPLY
LINE

Second World War Discovery Box

Artifact Backgrounder

Canada awarded this badge to Second World War veterans who had volunteered to serve outside Canada. It was one way of showing that the wearer had done military service.

Original

General Service Badge



General Service Badge © Canadian War Museum

“General Service”

The General Service badge was worn by veterans who had served in the Canadian military during the Second World War. The badge was only awarded to those who had volunteered for general service. This meant service in any theatre of war they were sent to, which could include Europe and other locations outside Canada.

The badge was not awarded to those who were conscripted under the **National Resources Mobilization Act** and those who had not volunteered for general service. As a result, it is part of the history of **conscription** in Canada.

People receiving the badge also had to have been **honourably discharged**. More than 900,000 men and women were potentially eligible to receive it. The badge had a fastener on the back to attach it to civilian clothing.

A Symbol of Service

This badge was one of the ways that military service was recognized in Canada during and after the Second World War. It helped show to people that the wearer had served in the military.

Early versions were made of plated (coated) metal. The final versions, like the example in the Discovery Box, were made of silver.

A warning on the back of the badge reminded people that it was illegal to wear the badge if it had not been earned.

Along with the badge, veterans would receive a small certificate confirming that they were allowed to wear it. They were expected to carry the certificate every time they wore the badge.

Military Service and Masculinity

There was pressure in many parts of Canada for able-bodied men to enlist, and to be seen in military uniform.

The General Service Badge showed that a man in civilian clothing had done his military service.

Did You Know?

Possible penalties for unauthorized wearing of the General Service Badge included a fine of \$500. This is equal to about \$7,500 today.

Vocabulary

Conscription:

Requiring people to serve in the military.

Honourably discharged:

Leaving the military after performing duties well, sometimes because of injury or illness. After the war, many were discharged because they were no longer needed.

National Resources

This 1940 Act of Parliament required Canadians to register with the federal government. Men of military age could be required to serve in the military.

Mobilization Act:

2

warmuseum.ca/supplyline

General Service Badge