

## **George W. Studley Veteran, Dealer, Medal Collector, and Legend**

**George Studley was born on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1893 and grew up in Rochester, New York. His interest in medals began when he enlisted in the US Navy on 13 January 1909. In July of that year he was transferred, via Cuba and Panama, to the USS Rainbow in Shanghai, China, where he began his Asiatic adventure in far eastern waters. He visited all of the major ports of call until he returned home in late 1911. Some of the men he served with were veterans of the Spanish, Philippines, and China. The Navy also participated in many of the later campaigns in the Philippines, which continued in the southern islands through 1913. Many times he was called to quarters, as was the custom in that time, where presentation was made of campaign medals for those earlier events. At that young age he was quite impressionable, and it was at that time that he thought he would try to collect these medals some day. The issuing of simple campaign medals were just as impressive as decorations such as the Navy Congressional Medal of Honor, awarded to one his shipmates, Jacob Volz, for gallantry in action against the Moros on the Island of Basalin on September 1911.**

**After his Navy hitch he toured much of America and eventually ended up in Goldfield, Nevada. He started by first working in gold, silver, and copper mines. This gave him enough of a grub stake to begin prospecting and hunting through other mountain and desert states of the west. During this time he also worked as a cook, blacksmith, and miner even receiving a certificate from the US Bureau of Mines for rescue work. World War I brought him back into the Navy where he served on the Destroyer USS Stringham, which was based at Brest, France. He began to cover the local shops and secured a number of French medals and decorations. He was ordered home and placed on inactive duty until his discharged in July 1922. His Navy training as a rigger helped him through a series of civilian jobs starting with auto factory machine operator, rigger, iron worker, steeple jack, and steel contractor.**

**As a World War I veteran he was drawn to the many local organizations that were formed as a result of these recent wars. In 1932 he was one of the leaders of the Bonus March where thousands of World War I veterans converged on the Capitol seeking relief from the depression. He became a member of the Army and Navy Union, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Cooties, the 40 and 8, and the Veterans of World War I. He noticed that many of their members wore medals or ribbons that were out of order, frayed or even soiled. When he commented on them it no one seemed to know where to find clean ribbons and it was suggested that he go secure cleaner ones. This is what really started him in the medal and ribbon business. He found that he had to secure permission from the Army and Navy Departments for the authority to purchase U. S. ribbons. After this was accomplished he found himself with several hundred dollars invested in ribbons and materials. He suddenly realized that the work he had begun doing for free, he needed to get reimbursed for, if he was going to keep on providing this unique service to his fellow veterans. In 1926 he began advertising in local papers and then by 1928 he was advertising in the Veterans publications, attending conventions where he would set up in the lobby and provide**

ribbons, medals and other devices for their uniforms and hats. While he visited these locations he would often visit their local pawn shops looking for medals to add to his own collection. He continued in the structural steel contracting business until 1941 with the ribbon business as a side line. World War II changed all this. By the end of the war he had 17 local women working for him. He supplied ribbon sets to such notables as General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, General Wainright, and King Farouk of Egypt. In 1952 he was issued the manufacturer's mark, 5 S, by the Institute of Heraldry.



GEORGE W. STUDLEY

1-1-1926

During World War II George tried return to the Navy, but age prevented that from happening. During the War he was a Volunteer Observer for the First Fighter Command. He was Chief of the Avon Volunteer Fire Department. He was well known as a civic volunteer leader running many community service events. He was a charter member and past president of the Avon Lions Club.

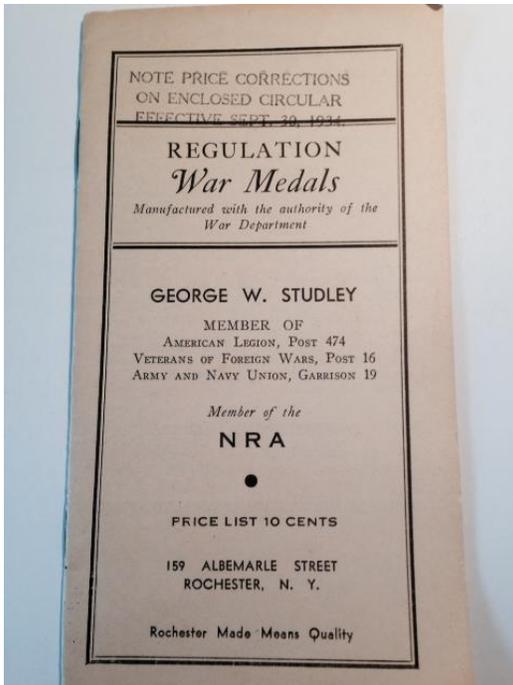
During this period he began publishing a little pocket size reference booklet and catalog for the veteran which was titled "Regulation War Medals". It served as a check list, a consolidated source of regulations, as well as, a detailed catalogue with prices. Over the years there were a total of seven different editions which began in 1928 with a price of 10 cents and the last edition for \$1.00 which included 4 full color ribbon charts. These books eventually included American medals, ribbons, insignia, patches, state medals, foreign medals, and society membership badges. Prices for full size medals in the first book generally ran \$2.50 and by the last book they ranged from \$4.00 to \$7.50. Older medals with numbers were an extra dollar, but in those days numbers meant nothing and the few collectors treated medals like postage stamps or coins with no regard for whether it had ever been issued.

**His original sources for medals were the US Mint for Army medals and the firm of Bailey Banks, and Biddle for those of the Navy and Marine Corps. During the 1920s other manufacturers began offer nicer looking finishes and he began prefer K. C. Davidson Inc. of Philadelphia, maker of the Grand Army of the Republic Membership badges, as a source. Davidson would cut his own dies when the official hubs were not available for loan. The practice of the different manufacturers cutting their own dies was wide spread during this period as long as basic design and other specifications for size, thickness, and ribbon designs were followed.**

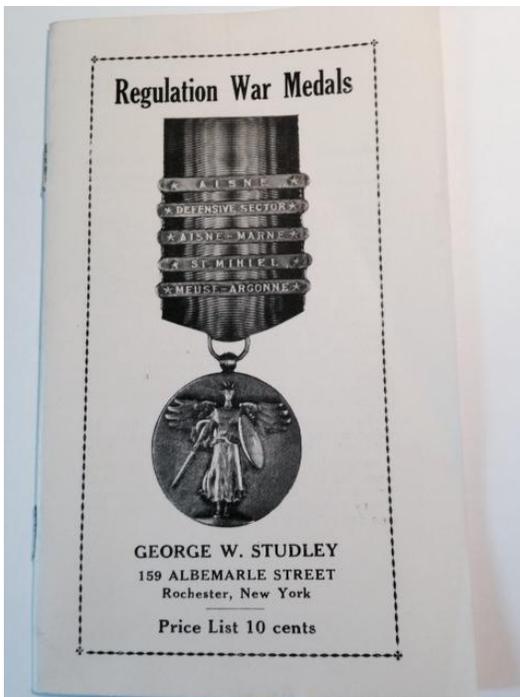
**After World War II he gave into the pleading of some collectors and sold some of key US items in his display sets, believing that he could later easily replace them. This he later felt was a mistake as a new crop of collectors came along and talked him out of other items taking his business into a new area. He found the only way to replace many of the obsolete designs, he needed for himself, along with others, was to have a few of them struck from government or manufacturer's dies. These included a copy of the Navy "Nickel Cross" Good Conduct medal, the Specially Meritorious West Indies Medal, the USMC Brevet Medal, for which he was able to borrow the original bottom cross dies from the Navy, and had a die cut for the Philippine Liberation Medal for sale primarily to veterans.**

**George Studley was one of the original founders of the group that became the Orders and Medals Society of America. He attended the first Convention at Gloversville, New York in 1960. He continued his business of supplying medals to veterans and collectors until he passed away in April 1968.**

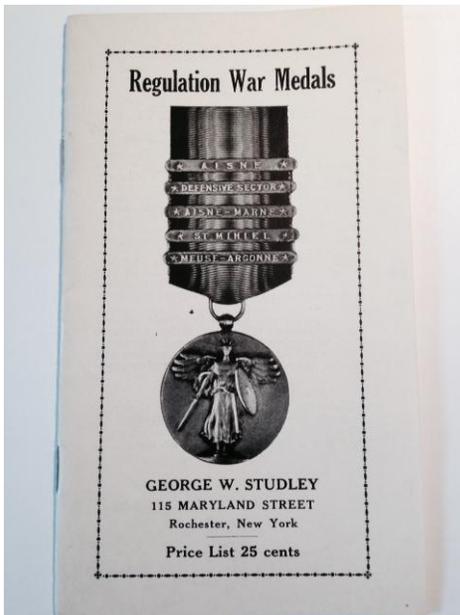
**It took quite a bit of time to find the seven versions of "Regulation War Medals" described. If someone has yet another version I would not be surprised. I suspect the last version, printed in 1961, is the most common one found in collector's hands. I have provided pictures of the covers and some data to identify each of the seven in turn.**



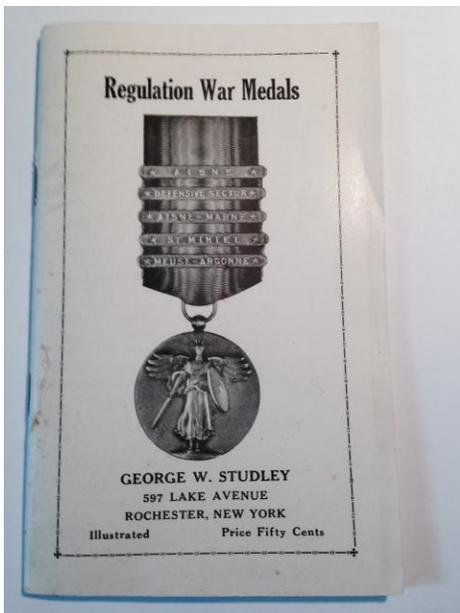
**This is Book 1, a quarter inch narrower than the others. It has 14 pages including the covers, and no photos. The first four books have different Rochester NY addresses on the cover.**



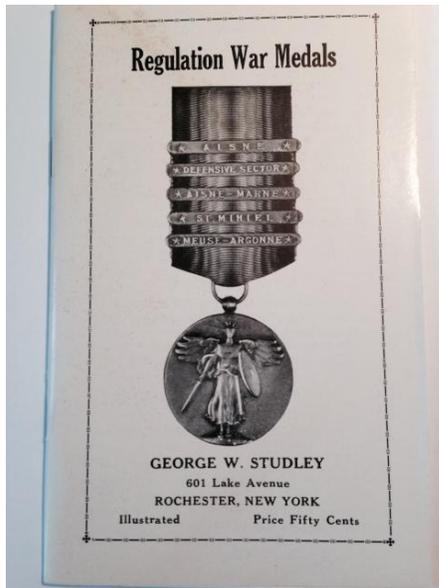
**This is Book 2, 3 5/8<sup>th</sup> wide and 6" high. It has 28 pages including covers. Four interior illustrations (on Pages 12,14,16,&18) with some of the US medals mounted on cards.**



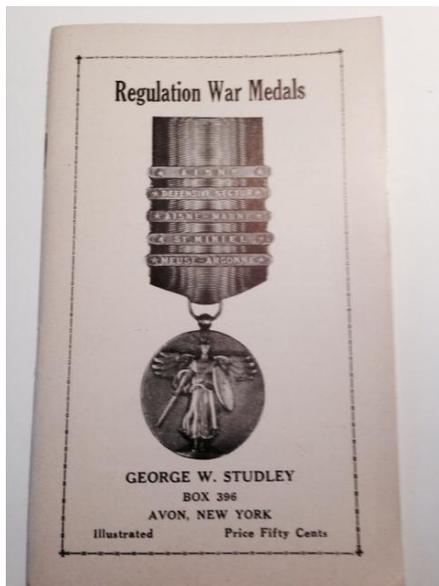
**This is Book 3. It is the same size as above. It has 32 pages including covers. Six interior illustrations (on Pages 8,12,16,18, 20, & 24) with single medals shown as issued.**



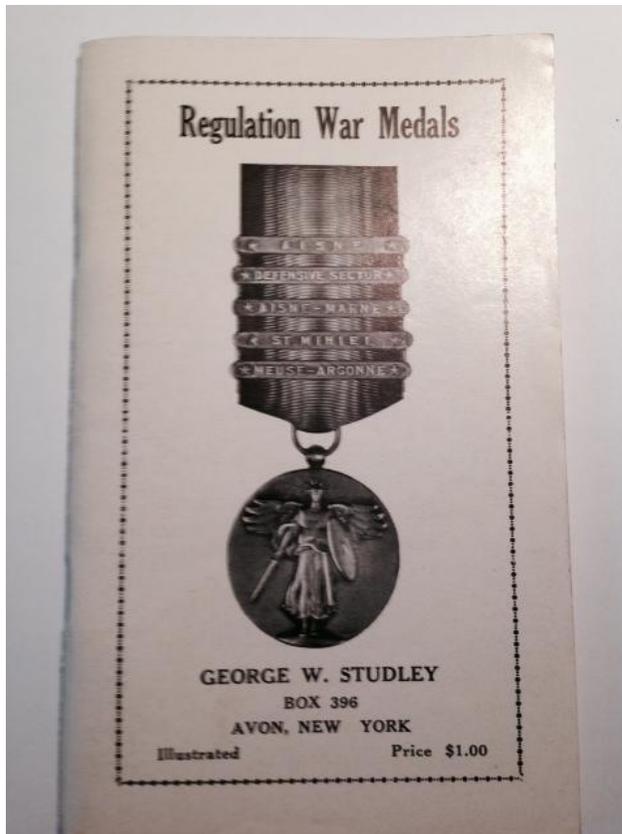
**This is Book 4, (3 5/8<sup>th</sup> wide and 6" high as above). It has 52 pages including covers. Fifteen interior illustrations (on Pages 8,16,18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, & 44) with medals on ribbons and pins as issued.**



**This is Book 5, (3 5/8<sup>th</sup>” wide and 6” high as above). It is dated 1 April 1939. It has 52 pages including covers. Sixteen interior illustrations (on Pages 8,12, 14,16,18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, & 40) with medals on ribbons and pins as issued. It is the last one with a Rochester address.**



**This is Book 6, (3 5/8<sup>th</sup>” wide and 6” high as above). It is dated 1 January 1945. It has 56 pages including covers. Seventeen interior illustrations (on Pages 8, 16,18, 20, 22, 24, 26, (28 & 30 color ribbons), 30, 32, 36, 38, 40, 42, 46 & 52) with US medal planchets. It is the first one with an Avon NY address.**



**This is Book 7, (3 5/8<sup>th</sup> wide and 6" high as above). It is dated 1 July 1961. It has 76 pages including covers. Sixteen interior illustrations (on Pages 18, 20, 22, (24, 26, 28, 30 color ribbons), 48, 52, 56 60, 62, 66, 68, 70, & 72) with US medal planchets displayed. It is the last one with an Avon NY address.**