

Brothers find WWI hero's VC in the U.S.

MILITARY service has been in the Goodenough family as far back as brothers Clyde Goodenough and Wanneroo councillor Ian Goodenough can research.

Their great grand-uncle, Sir William Edward Goodenough, was the son of Commodore James Graham Goodenough, the first head of the Australian Naval Station.

Not that family is what Sir William, who was Commodore aboard Britain's HMS Southampton in World War I, is best remembered for.

He forged an impressive naval record of his own throughout the war, particularly in the May 1916 Battle of Jutland, for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC).

The two-day joust between the German and British navies is regarded as the greatest sea battle of the war.

During the battle Commodore Goodenough's ship made it to within about 920m of the German fleet before mistakenly being called back to the British fleet.

Most fighting took place at a distance of about 11,000m.

The Southampton sank the German cruiser Frauenlob in the battle, but there was heavy damage and many casualties.

Sir William was credited with personally saving the lives of many of his crew, and was recommended for the VC by British Grand Fleet Admiral John Jellicoe for his heroism.

These ties inspired Clyde and Ian's fascination with military tradition, particularly links with their family and the VC.

While researching his family tree, Clyde stumbled across Jason Goodenough, his 19-year-old fourth cousin who lives in the U.S. and is the only direct male descendant of Sir William.

Jason's family standing meant Sir William's four military medals, including the

THE Victoria Cross is the highest individual honour which can be awarded for military gallantry to fighters representing the Commonwealth. Now one of the precious, rare medals has made Perth its home.

Wanneroo councillor Ian Goodenough and his brother Clyde recently found the famous cross that was awarded to their great grand-uncle, Commander Sir William Edward Goodenough VC, and are now its rightful owners.

How they took possession of the VC is almost as intriguing as the story of Sir William's triumphs at sea during WWI.

Clyde and Ian reflected on their great grand-uncle and his prize in the lead up to Remembrance Day.

VC, rightfully belonged to him.

However, the U.S. teenager had little appreciation for the sentimental and family value of the medals and had begun selling them.

By the time Clyde tracked him down about a year ago, Jason had already traded one medal for a CD player and another for cash.

Fortunately, the VC was still at the family home.

"Jason didn't actually realise it was the Victoria Cross," Clyde said.

"He thought it was the iron cross or something."

"When he said it had a purple ribbon - that's when it struck and I realised what it was."

Clyde moved quickly, offering his relative US\$100 for the precious medal, which was gratefully accepted.

Within weeks, the medal was in Perth and in the Clyde's hands.

While the Goodenough brothers were

able to settle on a buying price for their great grand-uncle's medal, they are adamant that they could not put a price on it for future sale.

The last official VC transaction occurred in September, when UK investors paid 97,500 pounds (about \$270,000) for Irishman John Barry's medal from the Boer War.

By VC standards, Clyde and Ian know they scored a bargain.

However, it is not monetary value that makes the medal so valuable to the brothers.

"For me it means a great deal to know it is staying in the family," Ian said.

"If we hadn't got it from Jason, who knows where it might have gone?"

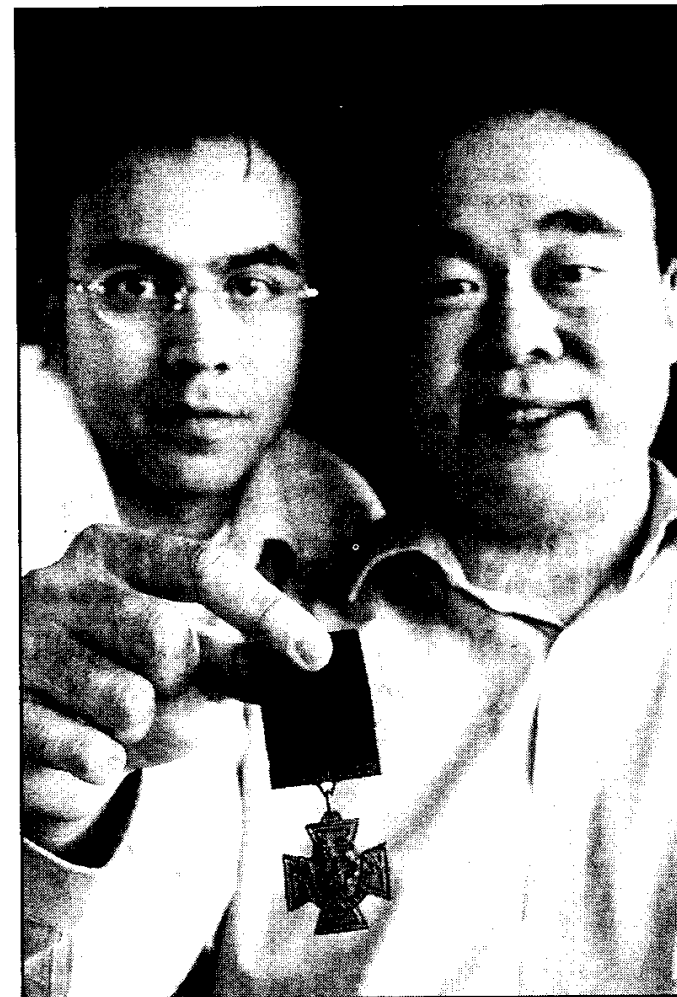
Of the 1354 medals cast from Russian gunmetal captured during the Crimean War, more than 500 are unaccounted for and only 300 are known to be in private hands.

Clyde insisted the medal would remain in the Goodenough family, and would probably be passed to the descendent with the most interest in war history.

■ Quinns-Mindarie RSL sub-branch will hold a Memorial Day service at 11am on Saturday at the Memorial Centre in Tapping Way, Quinns Rocks.

■ Wanneroo-Joondalup RSL sub-branch will hold a Remembrance Day ceremony at Wanneroo War Memorial, in front of the Wanneroo Senior Citizens Centre, on November 11 from 10.45am.

— MATT ZIS



Clyde, left, and Ian Goodenough with their great grand-uncle Sir William Goodenough's Victory Cross medal.