

VALOUR

Canada's three military valour decorations, namely, the Victoria Cross, the Star of Military Valour, and the Medal of Military Valour, were created by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, on 1 January 1993. All the decorations may be awarded posthumously.

The **Victoria Cross** is awarded for the most conspicuous bravery, a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy.

The **Star of Military Valour** is awarded for distinguished or valiant service in the presence of the enemy.

The **Medal of Military Valour** is awarded for an act of valour or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy.

Additionally, the **Mention in Dispatches** was created to recognize members of the Canadian Forces on active service and other individuals working with or in conjunction with the Canadian Forces for valiant conduct, devotion to duty, or other distinguished service. Recipients are entitled to wear a bronze oak leaf on the appropriate campaign or service medal ribbon. Like the military valour decorations, the Mention in Dispatches may be awarded posthumously.

On 28 October 2008, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada, announced the awarding of 11 Military Valour decorations – three Stars and

eight Medals – to members of the Canadian Forces who displayed gallantry and devotion to duty in combat. Readers should note that the ranks used in the following column reflect the substantive ranks held by the recipients at the time of the respective combat incidents. The recipients will be invited to receive their decorations at a presentation ceremony to be held at a later date.

Star of Military Valour

1. Corporal James Ball
2. Sergeant William Kenneth MacDonald
3. Captain Jonathan Snyder (deceased)

Medal of Military Valour

1. Major Joseph Antoine Dave Abboud
2. Corporal Steven Bancarz
3. Corporal Cary Baker
4. Corporal Alexandre Benjamin Jonathan Dion
5. Master Corporal Christopher Lorne Harding
6. Warrant Officer Tod Hopkin
7. Corporal Bryce Keller (posthumous)
8. Captain Robert Peel



Victoria Cross



Star of Military Valour



Medal of Military Valour

VALOUR

CITATIONS

Corporal James Ball, SMV
Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba
Star of Military Valour

Captain Jonathan Snyder, SMV (deceased)
Edmonton, Alberta and Penticton, British Columbia
Star of Military Valour

Corporal Steven Bancarz, MMV
Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta
Medal of Military Valour

Corporal Cary Baker, MMV
Edmonton, Alberta and Rossland, British Columbia
Medal of Military Valour

Captain Robert Peel, MMV, CD
Victoria, British Columbia
Medal of Military Valour

Corporals Baker, Ball and Bancarz, and Captains Peel and Snyder were deployed to Afghanistan to serve as mentors to an Afghan company, when they were ambushed by Taliban insurgents on June 4, 2008. With little chance of survival, they exposed themselves to great peril and retaliated against the enemy while encouraging the Afghan soldiers to do the same. Captain Snyder seized control of the situation and ensured that the Afghan soldiers retrieved their wounded comrades. Corporal Ball led a two-man team across broken terrain to secure an extraction route that allowed for the execution of a fighting withdrawal by Captain Peel and Corporals Bancarz and Baker. Because of their dedication, leadership and valour, many Afghan and Canadian lives were saved.

Sergeant William Kenneth MacDonald, SMV, CD
Denwood, Alberta and Regina, Saskatchewan
Star of Military Valour

On August 3, 2006, amidst chaos and under sustained and intense enemy fire in Afghanistan, Sergeant MacDonald selflessly and repeatedly exposed himself to great peril in order to assist his wounded comrades. Despite the risk, he ensured that his men held on until reinforcements arrived and that the platoon's focus remained on holding the ground that they had fought so hard to secure.

Major Joseph Antoine Dave Abboud, MSC, MMV, CD
Leavenworth, Kansas, United States of America and Sherbrooke, Quebec
Medal of Military Valour

A selfless and devoted commander of B Company, 3rd Battalion, Royal 22^e Régiment, Major Abboud led his combat team during an arduous battle in Afghanistan that lasted two days, in August 2007. His courage and leadership inspired his troops and contributed to the success of the mission.

Corporal Alexandre Benjamin Dion, MMV
Québec, Quebec
Medal of Military Valour

On September 27, 2007, in the Panjwayi district of Afghanistan, enemy forces ambushed Corporal Dion's platoon and grievously wounded a fellow soldier. Under direct and sustained enemy fire, he carried the injured soldier over 150 meters of difficult terrain to safety. Corporal Dion's valiant actions helped to save the life of his comrade and enabled his platoon to safely withdraw from the scene.

Master Corporal Christopher Lorne Harding, MMV
Souris, Manitoba
Medal of Military Valour

Master Corporal Harding was deployed with 6 Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, in Afghanistan. When his section was attacked on July 8, 2006, he selflessly advanced across open terrain and commanded the battle while providing first aid to a critically wounded soldier. His courageous actions under intense fire enabled his section to hold its position and to save the life of a comrade.

Warrant Officer Tod Hopkin, MMV, CD
Edmonton and Wainwright, Alberta
Medal of Military Valour

On August 22 and 23, 2007, Warrant Officer Hopkin commanded the lead vehicle of a combat team through sustained enemy attacks in Afghanistan, exposing himself to great risk in order to recapture a vital position. His composure and leadership were inspirational, and led to the success of the mission.

Corporal Bryce Keller, MMV (posthumous)
Sherwood Park, Alberta and Regina, Saskatchewan
Medal of Military Valour

On August 3, 2006, while exposed to intense enemy fire in Afghanistan, Corporal Keller demonstrated courage and leadership in order to allow his comrades to attend to a critically wounded soldier. Sadly, Corporal Keller made the ultimate sacrifice that day, but his selfless actions contributed to saving lives and enabled his platoon to hold vital terrain until reinforcements arrived.