

# “FOR VALOR”

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## The Canadian Winners of The Victoria Cross.

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The Victoria Cross is being won by many brave Canadians. Each tells a thrilling story of heroism.

As the most highly coveted decoration which it is possible for any soldier or sailor, officer or man to receive, it represents the acme of bravery, in the winning of which many have given up their lives.

Already, twenty-eight have been awarded to Canadians, and the honour roll is steadily growing.

### What The Victoria Cross is.

The Victoria Cross was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856 during the Crimean War. The decoration consists of a bronze Maltese cross, one and one-half inches across, with raised edges. On the obverse, in the centre, is a lion passant gardant standing upon the royal crown, while below the crown are the words, “For valor,” on a semi-circular scroll. The reverse has raised edges like the obverse, while a record for the act for which the decoration is bestowed is engraved in a circle in the centre. The cross is suspended by means of a plain link from a V., which is part of the clasp, ornamented with laurel leaves, through which the ribbon passes. On the back of the clasp is engraved the name, rank, regiment or ship of the recipient. The ribbon, one and a half inches wide, is red for the army and blue for the navy.

### The Canadian V. C. Honor Roll.

Appended are the names of the Canadian winners, up to date, with a brief statement of the heroic act that won the honour. Supplementary lists of V.C. winners will be issued from time to time.

It is suggested that speakers use this interesting and moving chronicle to illustrate the subject, “For Valor.”

# War Lecture Bureau

UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INFORMATION  
OTTAWA

HOPE CHAMBERS

FEBRUARY 5TH, 1918

Captain **Francis Alex. Caron Scrimger**, Canadian Army Medical Service, M.O. 14th Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment.

On the afternoon of the 25th April, 1915, in the neighbourhood of Ypres, when in charge of an advanced dressing station in some farm buildings which were being heavily shelled by the enemy he directed under heavy fire the removal of the wounded, and he himself carried a severely wounded Officer out of a stable in search of a place of greater safety. When he was unable alone to carry this officer further, he remained with him under fire till help could be obtained.

During the very heavy fighting between 22nd and 25th April, Captain Scrimger displayed continuously day and night the greatest devotion to his duty among the wounded at the front.

Colour-Sergeant **Frederick William Hall**, 8th Battalion.

On 24th April, 1915, in the neighbourhood of Ypres, when a wounded man who was lying some 15 yards from the trench called for help, Company Sergeant-Major Hall endeavoured to reach him in the face of a very heavy enfilade fire which was being poured in by the enemy. The first attempt failed, and a non-commissioned Officer and private soldier who were attempting to give assistance were both wounded. Company Sergeant-Major Hall then made a second most gallant attempt, and was in the act of lifting up the wounded man to bring him in, when he fell mortally wounded in the head.

Lance-Corporal **Frederick Fisher**, 13th Battalion.

On the 23rd April, 1915, in the neighbourhood of St. Julien, he went forward with the machine-gun, of which he was in charge, under heavy fire, and most gallantly assisted in covering the retreat of a battery losing four men of his gun team.

Later, after obtaining four more men, he went forward again to the firing line and was himself killed while bringing his machine-gun into action under very heavy fire, in order to cover the advance of supports.

Private Acting Corporal **Leo Clarke**, October 26th, 1916, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery. He was detailed with his section of bombers to clear the continuation of a newly-captured trench and cover the construction of a "block." After most of his party had become casualties, he was building a "block" when about twenty of the enemy with two officers counter-attacked. He boldly advanced against them, emptied his revolver into them and afterwards two enemy rifles, which he picked up in the trench.

One of the officers then attacked him with the bayonet, wounding him in the leg, but he shot him dead. The enemy then ran away, pursued by Acting Corporal Clarke, who shot four more and captured a fifth.

Later, he was ordered to the dressing station, but returned next day to duty.

Private **John Chipman Kerr**, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery. During a bombing attack he was acting as bayonet man, and knowing that bombs were running short, he ran along the parados under heavy fire until he was in close contact with the enemy when he opened fire on them at point-blank range, and inflicted heavy loss.

The enemy, thinking they were surrounded, surrendered. Sixty-two prisoners were taken and 250 yards of enemy trench captured.

Before carrying out this very plucky act one of Private Kerr's fingers had been blown off by a bomb.

Later, with two other men, he escorted back the prisoners under fire, and then returned to report himself for duty before having his wound dressed.

Lieutenant **Frederick William Campbell**, 1st Canadian Battalion.

For most conspicuous bravery on 15th June, 1915, during the action at Givenchy.

Lieutenant Campbell took two machine-guns over the parapet, arrived at the German first line with one gun, and maintained his position there, under very heavy rifle, machine-gun, and bomb fire, notwithstanding the fact that almost the whole of his detachment had then been killed or wounded.

When our supply of bombs had become exhausted, this Officer advanced his gun still further to an exposed position, and, by firing about 1,000 rounds, succeeded in holding back the enemy's counter attack.

This very gallant Officer was subsequently wounded, and has since died.

Lieutenant **Robert Grierson Combe**, late Canadian Infantry Battalion.

For most conspicuous bravery and example. He steadied his Company under intense fire, and led them through the enemy barrage, reaching the objective with only five men.

With great coolness and courage Lieutenant Combe, proceeded to bomb the enemy, and inflicted heavy casualties. He collected small groups of men and succeeded in capturing the Company objective, together with eighty prisoners.

He repeatedly charged the enemy, driving them before him, and whilst personally leading his bombers, was killed by an enemy sniper. His conduct inspired all ranks, and it was entirely due to his magnificent courage that the position was carried, secured and held.

Captain **Thain Wendell MacDowell**, D.S.O., Canadian Infantry Battalion.

For most conspicuous bravery and indomitable resolution in face of heavy machine gun and shell fire.

By his initiative and courage this officer, with the assistance of two runners, was enabled, in the face of great difficulties, to capture two machine guns, besides two officers and seventy-five men.

Although wounded in the hand, he continued for five days to hold the position gained, in spite of heavy shell fire, until eventually relieved by his battalion.

By his bravery and prompt action he undoubtedly succeeded in rounding up a very strong enemy machine post.

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Lieutenant **Frederick Maurice Watson Harvey**, Canadian Force.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. During an attack by his regiment on a village a party of the enemy ran forward to a wired trench just in front of the village and opened rapid rifle and machine gun fire at a very close range, causing heavy casualties in the leading troop.

At this critical moment, when the enemy showed no intention whatever of retiring and fire was still intense, Lieutenant Harvey, who was in command of the leading troop, ran forward well ahead of his men and dashed at the trench, still fully manned, jumped the wire, shot the machine gunner and captured the gun. His most courageous act undoubtedly had a decisive effect on the success of the operation.

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Lance-Sergeant **Ellis Welwood Sifton**, late Canadian Infantry Battalion.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. During the attack in enemy trenches Sergeant Sifton's company was held up by machine gun fire which inflicted many casualties. Having located the gun he charged it single-handed, killing all the crew.

A small enemy party advanced down the trench, but he succeeded in keeping these off till our men had gained the position.

In carrying out this gallant act he was killed, but his conspicuous valour undoubtedly saved many lives and contributed largely to the success of the operation.

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Private **William Johnstone Milne**, late Canadian Infantry Battalion.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in attack. On approaching the first objective Private Milne observed an enemy machine gun firing on our advancing troops. Crawling on hands and knees, he succeeded in reaching the gun, killing the crew with bombs, and capturing the gun.

On the line re-forming, he again located a machine gun in the support line, and stalking this second gun as he had done the first, he succeeded in putting the crew out of action and capturing the gun. His wonderful bravery and resource on these two occasions undoubtedly saved the lives of many of his comrades.

Private Milne was killed shortly after capturing the second gun.

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Private **John George Pattison**, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery in attack. When the advance of our troops was held up by an enemy machine gun, which was inflicting severe casualties, Private Pattison, with utter disregard of his own safety, sprang forward and, jumping from shell-hole to shell-hole, reached cover within 30 yards of the enemy gun.

From this point, in face of heavy fire, he hurled bombs, killing and wounding some of the crew, then rushed forward, overcoming and bayonetting the surviving five gunners. His valour and initiative undoubtedly saved the situation and made possible the further advance to the objective.

Captain **William Avery Bishop**, D.S.O., M.C., Canadian Cavalry and Royal Flying Corps.

For most conspicuous bravery, determination and skill. Captain Bishop, who had been sent out to work independently, flew first of all to an enemy aerodrome; finding no machine about, he flew on to another aerodrome about three miles south east, which was at least twelve miles the other side of the line. Seven machines, some with their engines running, were on the ground. He attacked these from about fifty feet, and a mechanic, who was starting one of the engines, was seen to fall. One of the machines got off the ground, but at a height of sixty feet Captain Bishop fired fifteen rounds into it at a very close range, and it crashed to the ground.

A second machine got off the ground, into which he fired thirty rounds at 150 yards range, and it fell into a tree. Two more machines then rose from the aerodrome. One of these he engaged at a height of 1,000 feet, emptying the rest of his drum of ammunition. This machine crashed 300 yards from the aerodrome, after which Captain Bishop emptied a whole drum into the fourth hostile machine, and then flew back to his station.

Four hostile scouts were about 1,000 feet above him for about a mile of his return journey, but they would not attack. His machine was very badly shot about by machine gun fire from the ground.

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Sergeant **Frederick Hobson**, late Canadian Infantry Battalion.

During a strong enemy counter-attack a Lewis gun in a forward post in a communication trench leading to the enemy lines, was buried by a shell, and the crew, with the exception of one man, killed.

Sergeant Hobson, though not a gunner, grasping the great importance of the post, rushed from his trench, dug out the gun, and got it into action against the enemy who were now advancing down the trench and across the open. A jam caused the gun to stop firing. Though wounded, he left the gunner to correct the stoppage, rushed forward at the advancing enemy and, with bayonet and clubbed rifle, single handed, held them back until he himself was killed by a rifle shot. By this time however, the Lewis gun was again in action and reinforcements shortly afterwards arriving, the enemy were beaten off.

The valour and devotion to duty displayed by this non-commissioned officer gave the gunner the time required to again get the gun into action, and saved a most serious situation.

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Private **Harry Brown**, late Canadian Infantry Battalion.

For most conspicuous bravery, courage and devotion to duty. After the capture of a position, the enemy massed in force and counter-attacked. The situation became very critical, all wires being cut. It was of the utmost importance to get word back to Headquarters. This soldier and one other were given the message with orders to deliver the same at all costs. The other messenger was killed. Private Brown had his arm shattered, but continued on through an intense barrage until he arrived at the close support lines and found an officer.

He was so spent that he fell down the dugout steps, but retained consciousness long enough to hand over his message, saying, "Important message." He then became unconscious, and died in the dressing station a few hours later. His devotion to duty was of the highest possible degree imaginable, and his successful delivery of the message undoubtedly saved the loss of the position for the time and prevented many casualties.

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Captain (Acting Major) **Okill Massey Learmouth**, M.C., late Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery and exceptional devotion to duty. During a determined counter-attack on our new positions, this officer, when his company was momentarily surprised,

instantly charged and personally disposed of the attackers. Later, he carried on a tremendous fight with the advancing enemy. Although under intense barrage fire and mortally wounded, he stood on the parapet of the trench, bombed the enemy continuously and directed the defence in such a manner as to infuse a spirit of utmost resistance into his men.

On several occasions this very brave officer actually caught bombs thrown at him by the enemy and threw them back. When he was unable by reason of his wounds to carry on the fight, he still refused to be carried out of the line, and continued to give instructions and invaluable advice to his junior officers, finally handing over all his duties before he was evacuated from the front line to the hospital where he died.

Company Sergeant-Major **Robert Hanna**, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery in attack, when his company met with most severe enemy resistance and all the company officers became casualties. A strong point, heavily protected by wire and held by a machine gun, had beaten off three assaults of the company with heavy casualties. This warrant officer under heavy machine gun and rifle fire, coolly collected a party of men, and leading them against this strong point, rushed through the wire and personally bayoneted three of the enemy and brained the fourth, capturing the position and silencing the machine gun.

This most courageous action, displayed courage and personal bravery of the highest order at this most critical moment of the attack, was responsible for the capture of a most important tactical point, and but for his daring action and determined handling of a desperate situation the attack would not have succeeded.

Company Sergeant-Major Hanna's outstanding gallantry, personal courage and determined leading of his company is deserving of the highest possible reward.

Private **Michael James O'Rourke**, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during prolonged operations.

For three days and nights Private O'Rourke, who is a stretcher-bearer, worked unceasingly in bringing the wounded into safety, dressing them, and getting them food and water.

During the whole of this period the area in which he worked was subjected to very severe shelling and swept by heavy machine gun and rifle fire. On several occasions he was knocked down and partially buried by enemy shells. Seeing a comrade who had been blinded stumbling around ahead of our trench, in full view of the enemy who were sniping him, Private O'Rourke jumped out of his trench and brought the man back, being himself heavily sniped while doing so. Again he went forward about 50 yards in front of our barrage under very heavy and accurate fire from enemy machine guns and snipers, and brought in a comrade. On a subsequent occasion, when the line of advanced posts was retired to the line to be consolidated, he went forward under very heavy enemy fire of every description and brought back a wounded man who had been left behind.

He showed throughout an absolute disregard for his own safety, going wherever there were wounded to succour, and his magnificent courage and devotion in continuing his rescue work,

in spite of exhaustion and the incessant heavy enemy fire of every description, inspired all ranks and undoubtedly saved many lives.

Acting Corporal **Philip Konowal**, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery and leadership when in charge of a section in attack. His section had the difficult task of mopping up cellars, craters and machine-gun emplacements. Under his able direction all resistance was overcome successfully, and heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. In one cellar he himself bayoneted three enemy and attacked single-handed seven others, in a crater, killing them all.

On reaching the objective, a machine-gun was holding up the right flank, causing many casualties. Corporal Konowal rushed forward and entered the emplacement, killed the crew, and brought the gun back to our lines.

The next day he again attacked single-handed another machine-gun emplacement, killed three of the crew, and destroyed the gun and emplacement with explosives.

This non-commissioned officer alone killed at least sixteen of the enemy, and during the two days' actual fighting carried on continuously his good work until severely wounded.

Lieutenant **Robert Shankland**, Canadian Infantry.

For most conspicuous bravery and resource in action under critical and adverse conditions.

Having gained a position he rallied the remnant of his own platoon and men of other companies, disposed them to command the ground in front, and inflicted heavy casualties upon the retreating enemy. Later he dispersed a counter-attack, thus enabling supporting troops to come up unmolested.

He then personally communicated to Battalion Headquarters an accurate and valuable report as to the position of the Brigade frontage, and after doing so, rejoined his command and carried on until relieved.

His courage and splendid example inspired all ranks and coupled with his great gallantry and skill undoubtedly saved a very critical situation.

Lieutenant **Henry Strachan**, M.C., Canadian Cavalry.

For most conspicuous bravery and leadership during operations.

He took command of the squadron of his regiment when the squadron leader, approaching the enemy front line at a gallop, was killed. Lieutenant Strachan led the squadron through the enemy line of machine-gun posts, and then, with the surviving men, led the charge on the enemy battery killing seven of the gunners with his sword. All the gunners having been killed and the battery silenced, he rallied his men and fought his way back at night through the enemy's line, bringing all un wounded men safely in, together with 15 prisoners.

The operation—which resulted in the silencing of an enemy battery, the killing of the whole battery personnel and many infantry and the cutting of three main lines of telephone communication two miles in rear of the enemy's front line—was only rendered possible by the outstanding gallantry and fearless leading of this officer.