

# Eye on the Web

LINKS TO THE RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

## Government Web Sites for Canadian Military Awards and Honours

Today, more than 3,000 Canadian military personnel are engaged in 18 different international operational missions. For each of these missions, Canadians will be honoured with service awards. Which awards will they receive and why?

This issue of Eye on the Web focuses on government websites containing information about Canadian military awards and honours, a tradition that began in French colonial times and continues to this day. The Web sites described below include historical and modern military awards and honours, which can be broken into three rough periods: French, British Commonwealth and Canadian.

By Jennifer Dekker

### French Honours

The tradition of bestowing military honours on “Les Canadiens” began with Louis XIV who wanted to motivate soldiers in all of his armies and reward them for outstanding or long service. He thus conferred the Ordre Royal et Militaire de Saint-Louis to nearly 300 military officers in New France as early as 1694. But outstanding military service was not the sole criterion for this honour; candidates also had to be Roman Catholics to receive it.

### British Commonwealth Honours

In 1866, the first of several unsuccessful requests for a home grown Canadian honours system was made. Lord Monck (Governor General at the time) requested that a knighthood be established for Canada called the “Order of St. Lawrence.” But the Colonial Office saw this proposal as potentially weakening its presence in Canada, and insisted that all honours be directly bestowed on Canadians by England.

### Canadian Honours at Long Last

After 101 years of British honours in Canada, 1967 finally saw the creation of the Order of Canada; the first truly Canadian system of honours. However, this award is a civilian award, and does not include honours for military service. The establishment of the Order of Canada did finally lead to military award when, a few years later, the Order of Military Merit was announced. This military honours was established on July 1, 1972 and to this day, more than 3,000 Canadians have earned it.

## Web Sites for Information Regarding Canadian Military Awards and Honours

### Veterans Affairs Canada, Canadian Military Medals and decorations

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=collections/cmdp/mainmenu>

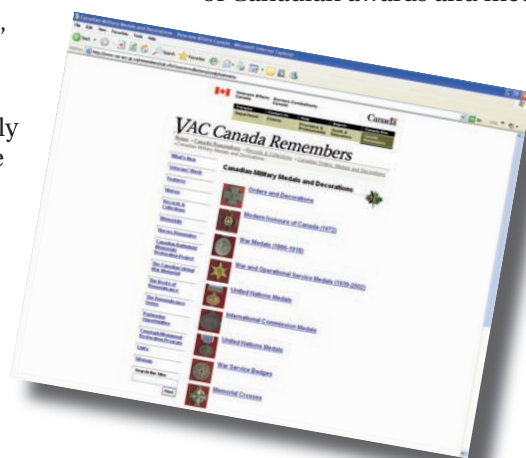
This is the most comprehensive Web site for the topic of both historical and modern military honours in Canada. It contains a highly detailed and exhaustive list of all types of Canadian military honours and decorations with images. Within each entry is a high quality digital image of the award; information pertaining to criteria for its reception; an image of the bar, if applicable; a complete physical description of the honours; information concerning its correct mounting; an image of the ribbon, if applicable; the dates within which the honours was awarded; and how many recipients have earned any given award.

### Among the categories of Canadian Military medals and decorations are:

- 'Orders and decorations,' which links to information about historical awards for bravery (including the British Victoria Cross);

- 'Modern honours of Canada,' which links to modern awards for bravery (including the Canadian Victoria Cross);
- 'War medals (1866 – 1918),' which includes medals awarded for military valour from the time of the Fenian raids and Riel's first rebellion to the end of World War I;
- 'War and Operational service medals (1939-2002),' which details war medals awarded from the start of World War II through to the Gulf War and service medals for several modern international operations;
- 'United Nations medals I & II,' which includes medals awarded for service during the Korean War and extends into several UN Missions in which Canadians are currently contributing expertise and personnel;
- 'International commission medals,' which covers medals for service in Indo-China and Vietnam;
- 'War service badges,' which includes military personnel who were honourably discharged or whose service was offered but rejected;
- 'Memorial crosses,' which are awarded to the surviving relatives of deceased military personnel whose death was caused by military service since World War I;
- 'Commemorative medals,' which are awarded to both civilians and military personnel; and
- 'Efficiency and Long Service Decorations and Medals,' which includes a variety of awards earned for long or efficient military service. Many of these awards are still current.

In addition to the exceptional detail of the information presented in this Web site, the navigation bar on the left side of the page links to a collection of events, activities, oral and textual histories (including the Book of Remembrance), projects and programs with the same goal; to honour and remember Canadian war veterans. This is an excellent site for anyone studying the history of Canadian awards and medals.



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## Department of National Defense, Honours and Awards

[http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/dhh/honours\\_awards/engraph/home\\_e.asp?cat=3](http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/dhh/honours_awards/engraph/home_e.asp?cat=3)

The Directorate of History and Heritage is responsible for researching and recording the official history of the Canadian Forces. As such, this organization is well positioned to offer the “National inventory of Canadian Military Memorials” (found under “Heritage and Tradition”) in addition to five distinct web pages found under the heading “Honours and Awards.”

### **These five Web pages contain the following information:**

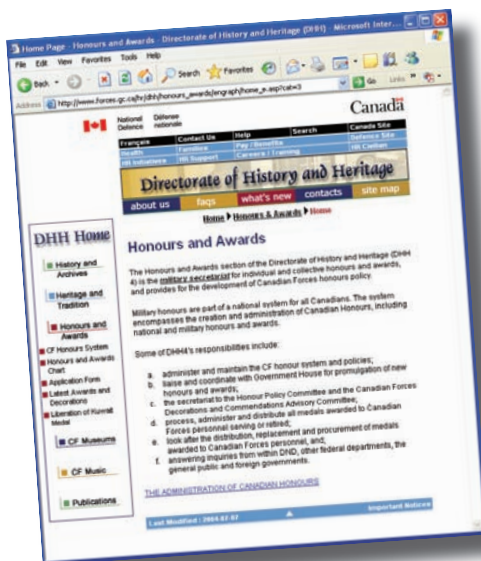
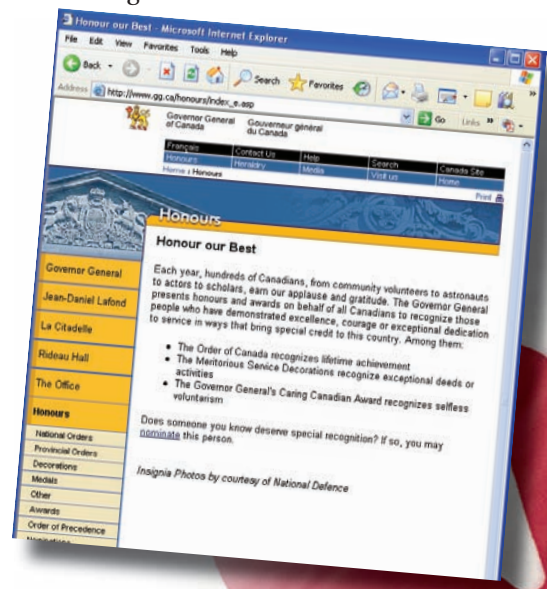
- How Canadian Forces awards are administered;
- Honours and Awards chart containing high quality graphical images of each award;
- An application form for initial issue or replacement service medals;
- The most recent awards and decorations (2000 - );
- Information about the Kuwait medal, awarded by the state of Kuwait to Canadians who have already received the Canadian Gulf & Kuwait medal.

This Web site is also recommended; it is more current than the Veterans Affairs site since it includes the most recent military awards, but is less user-friendly and contains far more textual information, and fewer images. There is an impressive drop down menu under the heading “Canadian Forces Honours and Awards chart,” with links to awards not covered in the Veterans Affairs Site mentioned above, including NATO and UN mission awards.

## Governor General of Canada, Canadian Honours search page

[http://www.gg.ca/honours/search-recherche/index\\_e.asp](http://www.gg.ca/honours/search-recherche/index_e.asp)

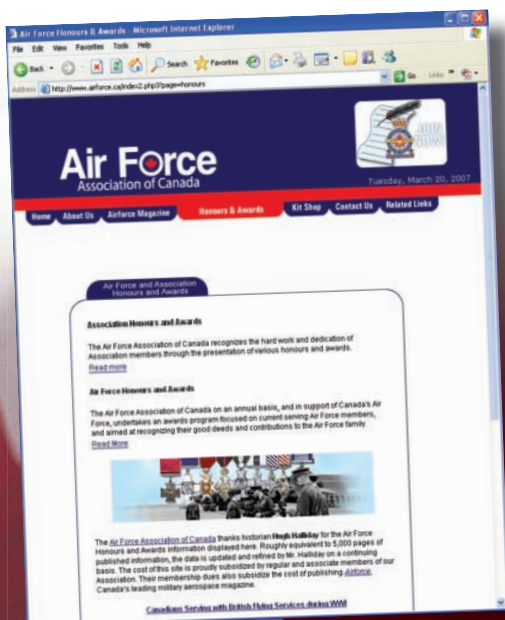
This search page is a database of all recipients to have earned the distinction of either a civilian or military award designated by the Governor General. It is designed to help researchers locate the names and/or dates of those who have received such an award. In terms of locating recipients of military awards, it is most useful for unearthing those honoured by the Order of Military Merit, a Decoration for Bravery award or a Meritorious Service Decoration. There is also a link under the “Honours” menu to a .pdf guide called The Wearing of Orders, Decorations and Medals, which illustrates how the awards are to be mounted on specific types of clothing for both women and men.



## Air Force Association of Canada, Honours and Awards

<http://www.airforce.ca/index2.php3?page=honours>

The Air Force recognizes merit among its members every year through the presentation of awards and honours. This site details modern awards and honours, but also includes lists of Air Force personnel who received awards during World War I in the British Flying Services and in World War II who were part of the RCAF. The site includes a link to an Air Force Medals archive. The information presented in this site has been compiled by a private researcher on behalf of the Air Force, but contains appropriate source notes and would be valuable for those researching awards specific to the Air Force.



## United Nations Peacekeeping Medals

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/medals/>

The 'Missions and Medals' portion of this Web page is dedicated to all of the UN peacekeeping medals established to date. An image of each award is included with the dates and place of the mission, the criteria for its award, and the countries which contributed service personnel to the mission. Although individuals are not named, countries whose personnel are eligible or who received awards are mentioned in the last paragraph of each mission.



## Further Reading

There are a few essential reference sources for library clients interested in Canadian military honours systems. They are:

Blatherwick, F.J. *Canadian Orders, Decorations and Medals*. Toronto: Unitrade, 1994.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *Canadian honours and awards bestowed upon members of the Canadian Forces*. (.pdf) [http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/dhh/downloads/cfps/aad200000\\_jd-001\\_31mar05.pdf](http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/dhh/downloads/cfps/aad200000_jd-001_31mar05.pdf)

McCreery, Christopher. *The Canadian honours system*. Toronto: Dundurn, 2005.

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