

THE VICTORIA CROSS

The Victoria Cross was instituted in 1856 by Queen Victoria as a way to acknowledge individual acts of bravery, in the face of the enemy, by members of the armed forces of Commonwealth countries. Since then, 81 members of the Canadian military (including those from Newfoundland and Labrador) and 13 Canadians serving in British units have been awarded the Victoria Cross. Among them are:

Honourary Captain John Weir Foote
Lieutenant Charles Smith Rutherford

The last Victoria Cross awarded to a Canadian was in 1945.

In 1972 the Canadian honours system was overhauled, and the Victoria Cross was eliminated from the official decorations, and medals of Canada list of honours. It was not until February 2, 1993 that the Canadian Victoria Cross was instituted.

The Canadian 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”* at any point after 1 January 1993. It may be presented posthumously and, unlike its British counterpart, may be revoked.

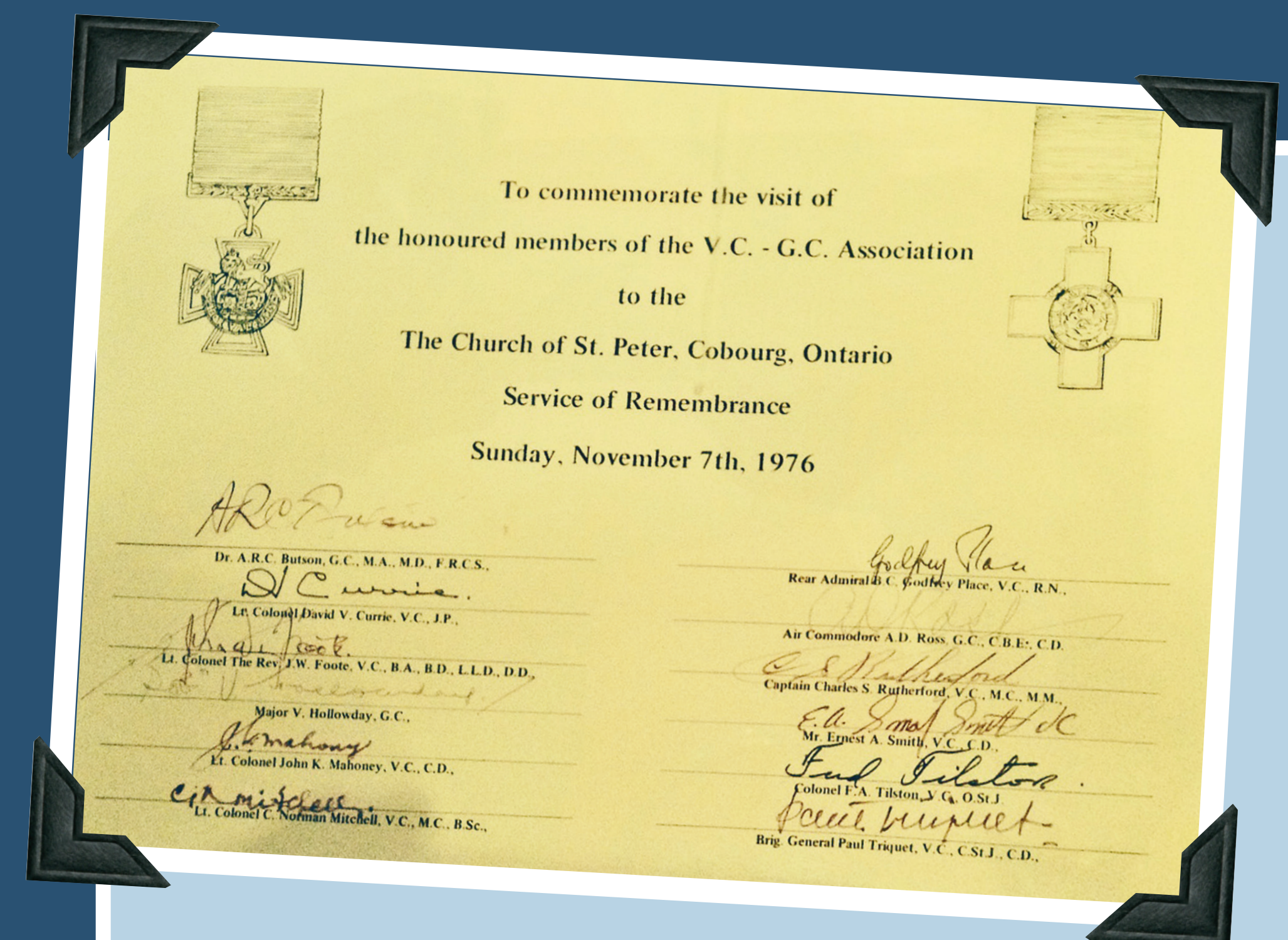
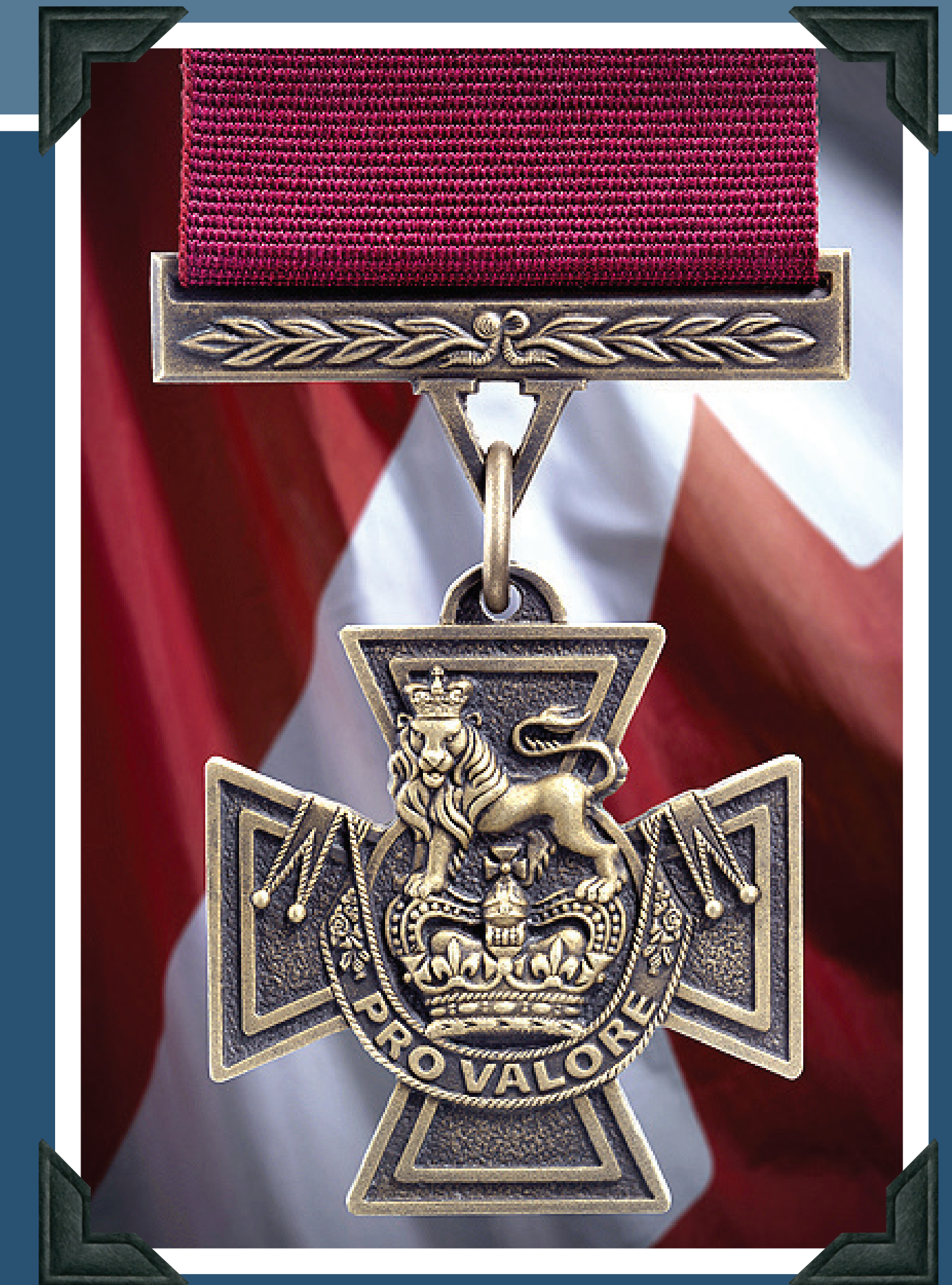
To date no Canadian Victoria Cross has been awarded.

In the Canadianization of the Victoria Cross, fleurs-de-lis were added to the insignia's scroll, alongside the traditional rose, thistle and shamrock, in keeping with the floral elements found within the Royal Arms of Canada. Further, the *“For Valour”* text was changed to Latin to be inclusive of our two national languages.

For the actual creation of the medal, gunmetal from the original Victoria Cross source, an 1867 Confederation Medal and metals from various parts of Canada were combined. In keeping with British tradition, the medal was not struck but cast.

The first two specimens of the Canadian Victoria Cross were sent to the United Kingdom in January 2007 to become part of The Queen's Royal Collection. 20 Victoria Crosses and extra ingots of the Canadian mixture are safely kept at Rideau Hall while other specimens will be added to the collections of Rideau Hall, the Department of National Defence, Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian War Museum.

It is fondly hoped by many that there will never be occasion to award a Canadian Victoria Cross.



Scroll showing the presence of both John Foote and Charles Rutherford at St. Peter's Church, November 1976



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