

*Researched and Written by: Capt (N) (Ret'd) M. Braham
Edited By: Ted Ronberg*

Victoria Cross Background: The Victoria Cross (VC), instituted in 1856 by Queen Victoria, is the Commonwealth's highest military decoration for valour. It is awarded in recognition of the most exceptional bravery displayed in the presence of the enemy, although in rare instances the decoration has been given to mark other courageous acts.



Since its inception during the Crimean War, the VC has been awarded 1,356 times, 300 of them posthumously. Depending on which of a variety of sources is cited and on the selection criteria applied, somewhere between 94 and 98 Victoria Crosses have been awarded to Canadians or to others serving with the Canadian Forces.

A distinctly Canadian version of the medal was introduced in 1993. To date no one has been awarded the Canadian medal.

Lt. William Snyder Nickerson: Born March 27, 1875 in Dorchester, New Brunswick, his family returned to England when he was a child and he was educated at Portsmouth Grammar School, Manchester Grammar School and Owen's College, the forerunner of the University of Manchester, graduating in medicine in 1896.

Nickerson was a 25 year old lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, of the British Army, attached to the Mounted Infantry during the Second Boer War when his actions at Wakkerstroom led to the award of the Victoria Cross.



VC Citation: *At Wakkerstroom, on the evening of the 20th April, 1900, during the advance of the Infantry to support the Mounted Troops, Lieutenant Nickerson went, in the most gallant manner, under a heavy rifle and shell fire, to attend a wounded man, dressed his wounds, and remained with him till he had him conveyed to a place of safety.*

London Gazette: no. 27283, Feb. 12, 1901

In addition to earning him the VC, the deed resulted in Nickerson receiving a Mentioned-in-Dispatches.

Post War: He later achieved the rank of major general after service in World War I and was appointed Colonel-in-Chief of the RAMC in 1933. He died April 10, 1954 at the age of 79.

Gravesite: His grave is in the private burial ground at his home in Cour, Kintyre, Scotland.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM SNYDER NICKERSON, VC, CB, CMG

Page 2 of 2



MGen Nickerson's Headstone

Medal Location: His medals are not publicly held.

Post Script: He was the first Boer War VC recipient with a Canadian connection.

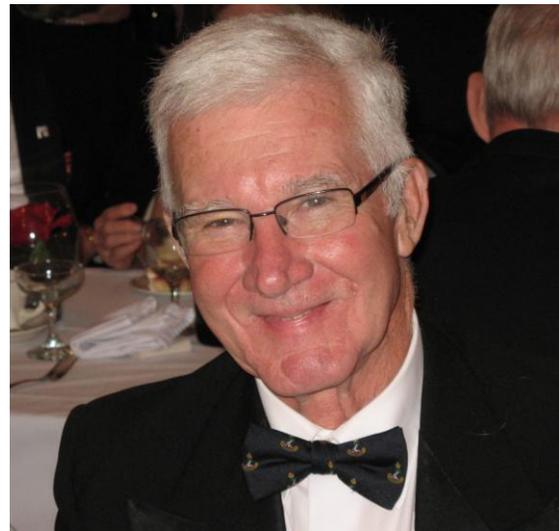
Author's Note: This is one of those cases that makes counting the number of Canadian VC's difficult. Although he was born in Canada, Nickerson moved to England at an early age and subsequently served in the British Army where he earned his medal, and later died in Scotland.

References:

1. Veteran's Affairs - http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/sub.cfm?source=collections/cm dp/mainmenu/group01/cdn_vc
2. Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Henry_Snyder_Nickerson
3. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=8130794>
4. <http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/vcross.htm>

5. Bishop, Arthur, *Saving the Guns in South Africa*, Legion Magazine, 1 May 2004
6. Braham, Michael, *Chronicles of Courage*, FCWM Research Paper, 2010

Captain (N) (Ret'd) M. Braham, CD



Mike Braham is a graduate of the Royal Military College (1965) and a former naval officer and senior official with DND. He has an abiding interest in military history.