

The Orders and Medals Society of America

Army Order Number 256 of 1906 extended the period for applying for the medal to 1 July 1907, and this was later extended to 1928. It is worth noting that the original order gave approval to the Canadian Government to issue this medal. Although it was produced at the Royal Mint, it was paid for by the Canadian Government and it is a Canadian medal.

Obverse

The design of the Canada General Service Medal was prepared in Canada and approved by Queen Victoria on 8 October 1897. The obverse was designed by Thomas Brock and displays a veiled bust of Queen Victoria with the legend **VICTORIA REGINA ET IMPERATRIX**. The designer's initials (T.B.) appear below the bust in approximately the 5:00 o'clock position. The obverse of the medal was struck from the dies used for the Egypt Medal (1882-1889) and is the same as the obverse to the India Medal (1895-1902).

Reverse

The reverse of the Canada General Service Medal was designed by George W. DeSaulles and shows the (former) Canadian flag on a staff in the center of a wreath consisting of two branches of maple leaves tied at the base with a ribbon. Above the flag, and in the top/center of the medal (directly below the suspender) is the word **CANADA**.



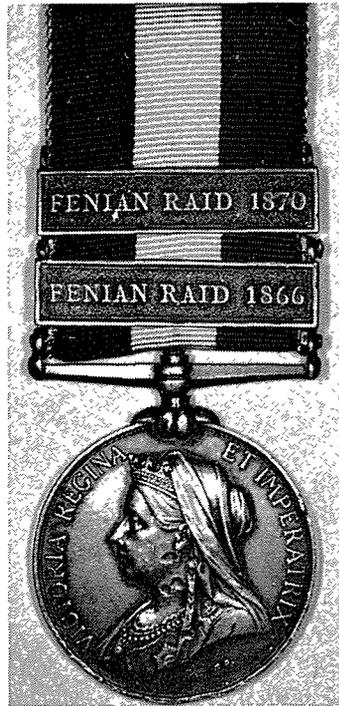
Bars

The Canada General Service Medal was not awarded without a bar, three of which were authorized. The bars were die-struck and are one and three-eighths inches long and five-sixteenths of an inch high. The inscription is in relief against a finely pebbled back-ground with a very fine border inside the raised edge of the bar.

Fenian Raid 1866: Four different dies were used to strike this bar, and thirteen thousand of them were issued: 11,200 as single bar medals and 1,800 in combination with the other two bars.

Fenian Raid 1870: Five dies were used to strike this bar, and 5,925 were issued: 4,500 as single bars and 1,425 in combination with the other two bars.

Red River 1870: A total of three different dies were used to strike this bar, and a total of 502 of them were awarded. Of this total, 355 were given as single-bar medals; 120 were awarded with the **FENIAN RAID 1866** bar; 15 were issued with the **FENIAN RAID 1870** bar, and 12 were issued with both the **FENIAN RAID 1860** and **FENIAN RAID 1870** bar. As Neale and Irwin note, "Fewer than half of the men who participated in the Red River Expedition ever actually received a medal, due in large part to the fact that the medal was not instituted until about 30 years after the event, by which time many of the men had died. One may therefore conclude that any C.G.S. medal with a verified **RED RIVER 1870** clasp is in the rare to extremely rare category."



Dimensions and Composition

The Canada General Service Medal was struck in silver and is 1.42 inches in diameter.

Ribbon

The ribbon is one and a quarter inches wide and consists of three equal bands of red, white and red (the colors of Canada).

Suspension

The Canada General Service Medal is suspended by a plain, straight swiveling suspender. Note: Some late issues may have been fitted with modified swiveling suspenders of the kind used on the British War Medal.

Naming

All of the Canada General Service Medals were named with the recipient's rank, name and unit. There are a number of naming styles. Members of the Canadian Militia had their medals named in impressed upper and lower case Roman letters. The naming on some of the medals is a little irregular and

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uneven. Most of the medals to members of Imperial units had the names engraved in capital letters sloping to the right; however, some of them were impressed with small capital letters. Medals that were claimed late have names impressed in large capital letters without serifs.

Numbers Awarded

A total of 17,623 Canada General Service Medals were issued. Since the medal was not issued without a bar, the following distribution of medals by clasp and combination of bars accounts for the total:

One bar: Fenian Raid 1866:	11,220
One bar: Fenian Raid 1870:	4,510
One bar: Red River 1870:	350
Two bars: Fenian Raid 1866 and Fenian Raid 1870:	1,411
Two bars: Fenian Raid 1866 and Red River 1870:	105
Two bars: Fenian Raid 1870 and Red River 1870:	15
Three bars: Fenian Raid 1866, Fenian Raid 1870, and Red River 1870:	12

Canadian War Museum Specimen Issues

Apparently, a stock of unissued medals remained on hand after the medals were finally distributed. Many of these medals were released by the Canadian War Museum. Some of them were released without any inscription, but others are impressed on the rim **CWM SPECIMEN**. These medals are identical to those issued to recipients except for this inscription and the quality of the bars.

Sources

- Gordon, L.L. *British Battles & Medals*, 4th edition. London: Spink & Son, Ltd., 1971, pages 186-189.
- Johnson, Stanley C. *The Medal Collector: A Guide to Naval, Military, Air Force & Civil Awards*. London, England: Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 1921, pages 147-148.
- MacDonald, John A. *Troublous Times in Canada: A History of the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870*. Toronto, Canada: Published by the Author, 1910. Reprinted by The London Stamp Exchange, Ltd.
- Neal, Graham H. and Ross W. Irwin. *The Medal Roll of the Red River Campaign of 1870 in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: The Charlton Press, 1982.
- Payne, A.A. *A Handbook of British and Foreign Orders, War Medals and Decorations Awarded to the Army and Navy*. Sheffield, England: J.W. Northend, Printer and Lithographer, 1911, pages 118-119.