The Mountbatten Medal was instituted in 1951 by the Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth and named after the Society's then Grand President, The Earl Mountbatten of Burma. The Mountbatten Medal is given annually for the most gallant rescue or rescue attempt undertaken throughout the Commonwealth by the holder of a Royal Life Saving Society Award.

VANESSA BAILEY
of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
1999

On the afternoon of January 19, 1999, 18 year old Vanessa Bailey from Edmonton, was on the beach at Palau, Malaysia. A rapidly rising tide caused a powerful current between the beach and a small island immediately offshore. A group of eight local vacationers, who were poor and no-swimmers, were caught in this current, lost their footing and were in danger of being swept out to sea.

When the alarm was given, Vanessa and two other individuals entered the sea to assist. Two men waded into the sea and assisted four victims to shore. Vanessa was the first swimmer to reach a group of four victims, approximately 100 to 120 metres out to sea from the beach. Vanessa contacted a lady who appeared to be in the greatest distress and began to tow her to shore. The victim was panic stricken and struggled violently. Vanessa was able to complete the rescue using her lifesaving skills and knowledge. She handed the lady over to a bystander who had waded out several meters to meet her.

Vanessa immediately returned to the sea and contacted an unconscious adult male and carried him to shore. Once more she returned to find that both the remaining male victims had slipped beneath the surface. She completed a surface dive and grasped a third victim some 2 metres under the water, brought him to the surface and delivered him to shore.

Yet again, Vanessa entered the sea in search of the man who was still missing. She searched the area responding to directions being shouted to her by bystanders on shore. While placing her own life in considerable danger, she persevered for some time but was unable to locate the missing man.

Following hospital care and treatment all three of the victims rescued by Vanessa recovered as did the four who had been saved by the other two rescuers.

At the time of the rescue, Vanessa held her Bronze Medallion award and attributed the success of the rescues to the skills she was taught.

Vanessa Bailey is very modest about her role, however, if it was not for her lifesaving skills, quick actions and courage the situation could have been much worse for the victims. It is for this reason that she was awarded the Commonwealth Mountbatten Medal and Canadian M.G. Griffiths Plaque and Alberta/NWT Branch Lifesaving Medal for Bravery.

"Whomsoever you see in distress, recognize in him a fellow man." **Lifesaving Society Motto**

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The M.G. Griffiths Plaque is the highest Bravery Award presented by the Royal Life Saving Society Canada. Recipients must have demonstrated exceptional skill, personal risk, and a high degree of bravery and courage. Recipients of the M.G. Griffiths Plaque must be an Award Holder of the Society. Rescue Personnel who perform a rescue in the course of their duty may not be eligible.

The Lifesaving Medal may be awarded to a person involved in a rescue or attempted rescue that took place in Alberta or the Northwest Territories. It may also be awarded to a resident of Alberta or the Northwest Territories involved in a rescue that took place elsewhere. A **Bar for Bravery** may be awarded when the nature of the rescue placed the rescuer's life in considerable danger.

"Whomsoever you see in distress, recognize in him a fellow man." **Lifesaving Society Motto**