

When a passer-by, Jay Hammill, heard the woman scream, he tried to stop the man and was punched in the face for his efforts. Unfazed, he gave chase. A second person, Helen Murphy, tried to help by blocking the thief's path. He knocked her to the ground, injuring her in the process. Then the thief threw the watch and kept running. Two other witnesses, James Van Emmerik and Timothy Bedard, joined the chase.

Mr. Bedard didn't hesitate, dropping the man with a flying tackle. The three men pinned him down and held him for police. Mr. Hammill removed the ring from the crook's hand and personally returned it to the store's owner.

For exceptional courage and an outstanding sense of civic duty, Jay Hammill, Helen Murphy, James Van Emmerik and Timothy Bedard are all awarded the Vancouver Police Department's highest award for civilian bravery, the Vancouver Police Board's Certificate of Merit.

7. – MR. MINAZ KURJI

For many of us, the most frightening fear is the fear of the unknown. It is a fear that Minaz Kurji had to conquer on June 23, 2004 at 1:30 in the morning, when he plunged into the inky darkness and chilling waters of False Creek to save a woman's life.

Mr. Kurji was walking with his friend, off-duty Constable Ivis Lee, when they heard a splash and learned from a witness that a woman had just jumped off the bridge. They could hear moaning coming from the water, but couldn't see a thing in the blackness.

Neither man was a strong swimmer, but both of them entered the water and the unknown. They didn't know whether they could find the victim or whether they could survive if she struggled with them. They were alone and literally over their heads without help of passing boaters or emergency services.

Mr. Kurji turned back, returning moments later with a dinghy he found nearby. Constable Lee, struggling in the current, also was about to turn back when he saw a shadowy figure emerge from the water near the base of a pillar. They stayed with the distraught woman attempting to keep her warm until a Coast Guard boat summoned by the original witness arrived.

For outstanding courage and an exceptional sense of civic duty, Minaz Kurji is awarded the Vancouver Police Department's highest award for civilian bravery, the Vancouver Police Board's Certificate of Merit.

8. – MR. ROBERT ROBINSON

Sometimes you witness something so abhorrent that you just can't let it stand. At least that's what Robert Robinson thought on October 6, 2005, when what he saw bothered him so much he stopped his car in the middle of traffic and jumped out.

An 87 year old woman had been knocked to the ground by a man who was trying to steal her purse. She desperately struggled to hang on, while a second elderly woman hit the thief with her umbrella. When Mr. Robinson joined the fray, the thief ran. Mr. Robinson chased him into a nearby store where they struggled, but the thief broke free and bolted. Mr. Robinson didn't give up. For ten minutes he chased the thug back and forth through traffic, ignoring his own safety in the pursuit.

When he eventually lost sight of the thief, he continued to search until officers with a police dog found the man hiding in some bushes.

Mr. Robinson's selfless act of courage helped police arrest a man wanted on two national warrants and suspected of being responsible for a string of purse snatchings. For his exceptional sense of civic duty, Robert Robinson is awarded the Vancouver Police Department's highest award for civilian bravery, the Vancouver Police Board's Certificate of Merit.

For performance of duty that went Beyond the Call, Constable Kevin Barker is awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

6. – CONSTABLE FRED ULLRICH

It has been said that it takes a village to keep a village safe. No one knows that better than Constable Fred Ullrich.

When Constable Ullrich was assigned to the Citizen Crime Watch program, he inherited a good initiative that had been devastated and demoralized by the department's massive retirements. But he turned defeat into victory by rallying the group's enthusiasm, increasing the number of volunteers and patrols, and obtaining new equipment. The program had a banner year in 2005, making 37 arrests from volunteers' observations and recovering 247 stolen cars.

Constable Ullrich takes extraordinary steps to recognize and reward the efforts of his volunteer team. He has personally mentored 12 volunteers through the hiring process to become VPD recruits. Through his efforts the Citizen Crime Watch program has become one of the best and most highly regarded volunteer police programs in North America.

For his enthusiasm, excellence at work and outstanding service to the community, Constable Fred Ullrich is awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

7. – CONSTABLES BRIAN BAIRD, BARRY MILEWSKI AND MR. GINO MISSANA

Seldom is the phrase, "he who hesitates is lost" more true than it is in police work. On the night of May 17, 2006, Constables Brian Baird and Barry Milewski had just seconds to decide whether to shoot a man who was in a murderous rage armed with a machete

or try to take the weapon away from him. Shooting meant taking a life and endangering the safety of the nearby crowd. Wrestling with the man meant putting their own lives at risk and saving his.

Without a moment's hesitation they took the man to the ground in a life or death struggle. The nightclub doorman, Gino Missana, with no regard for his own safety, immediately joined the fray. His assistance would be crucial in preventing any injuries or fatalities that night.

The man they were fighting had been violent with the club's doormen earlier that night and had threatened to come back and kill them. He returned from his car brandishing a 16-inch machete that he concealed later in his shirt. The man had a record of gang activity and was high on cocaine and alcohol. His muscular build and drug-frenzied rage led to a lengthy struggle that took all the strength of the two officers and Mr. Missana to control.

Their quick and selfless actions prevented the grave consequences that seemed otherwise inevitable. For their outstanding courage, Constables Brian Baird and Barry Milewski are awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation, and Mr. Gino Missana is awarded the Vancouver Police Board's highest award for civilian bravery, the Certificate of Merit.

8. SERGEANT DERRAL DANIELS, CONSTABLE FRED OLDENDORF

Every police officer knows that even though they receive limited training in this area, car chases can be a regular part of the job. They also know that every time they enter into a pursuit, they are putting themselves and the public in harm's way. Many chases end in crashes, injuries or even death.

Sergeant Derral Daniels and Constable Fred Oldendorf don't believe it has to be that way. They have dedicated themselves to exhaustive research in finding effective and safe alternatives to police pursuits. They have designed and implemented a patrol officer training program that teaches them

to end or avoid chases with lower-risk boxing and pinning techniques. Their recommended use of widely-installed push bars and advanced driver training are aimed at saving lives and property.

For their impressive report and insightful recommendations that will have a major impact on patrol policing and the VPD, Sergeant Derral Daniels and Constable Fred Oldendorf are awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

9. – CONSTABLE JANA MCGUINNESS

During their careers, police officers witness more than their share of tragedies. Among the most tragic are the deaths of innocent people that could have been avoided. When two senior citizens died in separate motor vehicle collisions early last year, Constable Jana McGuinness took it upon herself to help keep seniors safe.

She called senior care homes that were near the fatal collisions and asked if she could visit to talk about pedestrian safety. Her presentations were so gratefully received that demand for them began to grow. To reach even more seniors, Constable McGuinness enlisted the aid of various partners within the department and with outside donors. Her efforts resulted in a poster, brochures and highly reflective arm bands, all designed to keep pedestrian seniors safe.

So far, Constable McGuinness has delivered her safety messages to more than a thousand seniors. The program has spread to seniors' homes all over the city.

For her excellent initiatives designed to save lives and prevent needless tragedies, Constable Jana McGuinness is awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

10. – CONSTABLE JEFF SCHWENNEKER

In early August of 2005, Vancouver was experiencing an unusual heat wave, but no place in the city was hotter than the two major entrances to the Port. Without the immediate and thoughtful actions of Constable Jeff Schwenneker, that heat could have quickly risen to explosive and violent levels.

A protracted truckers' dispute was severely disrupting the flow of goods in and out of the Port. Tensions quickly mounted as businesses faced with shortages applied political and media pressure that reached national proportions. Those tensions, in many cases, also became racial as virtually all of the picketers, numbering as many as 70 at each entrance, were Indo-Canadian and largely unorganized.

Constable Schwenneker took immediate ownership of the situation, creating an operational plan that lowered the temperature considerably. His actions mirrored those of an incident commander overseeing a police response to a major incident. But in this case, less was more, as he rejected suggestions of a major police response and instead took charge with just one other officer.

This innovative low-key approach allowed these two officers to develop personal rapport with the picketers, leading to a successful conclusion without anyone being injured or property destroyed.

For outstanding leadership and dedication to duty, Constable Jeff Schwenneker is awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation.

11. – MR. GLEN RICHMOND

Police departments around the world share a common and vexing problem: false alarms. Each year officers and civilians are put at risk in the rush to answer them and thousands of hours are wasted in the effort to respond to them. In 1992, one out of every five calls for police service was for a false alarm.

