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Mississauga's Dohey receives Valor Cross

A Mississauga woman became the only living recipient Monday of Canada's highest award for bravery, the Cross of Valor.

She was presented with the award in Ottawa, for the part she played in preventing a disaster in Canada's worst-ever aircraft hijacking.

Mary Dohey, an Air Canada flight attendant, was working a scheduled flight from Calgary to Toronto, when the aircraft was commandeered by a Calgary man shortly after takeoff.

Guided by "inner voices", the hijacker was armed with a shotgun and several sticks of dynamite.

Miss Dohey's calmness was credited with preventing a disaster as she spent eight hours holding the hijacker's hand and keeping his attention diverted.

At one point during the ordeal the hijacker held a knife to the stewardess's throat, and later threatened her by holding a gun to her head.

The man's gun discharged once during the hijacking, but no one was injured.

He was later sentenced to life in prison.

The first recipients of the Cross of Valor were given the award posthumously. They were two men killed in a fire and explosion aboard the destroyer Kootenay on Oct. 23 1969.