

History of Calgary Division

RCMP Veterans' Association

PART TWO – THE YEARS 1975 - 2000

Calgary Division continues to be a thriving division with a continual growth in membership and a concern for the welfare of its members. In 1996 the division undertook an initiative to bring in members' spouses and any other people who have been closely associated with the Force, such as secretaries, as Associate Members. A good effort and turnout is made to attend funerals of ex-members and their spouses.

In 1986, Calgary Division hosted the Dominion Annual General Meeting (AGM) with 508 people attending the banquet dinner at the Palliser Hotel. The President's Reception was renamed, in keeping with a western theme, the President's Hoedown. This turned out to be a great success and is still often spoken of as being the best. Calgary Division will again be hosting the AGM in 2001, the first year of the new millennium. It takes a great effort on the part of many members to make this function a success.

Calgary Division has been an important supporter and player in assisting the Fort Calgary Preservation Society to restore Fort Calgary, the original location of the N.W.M.P. barracks upon arriving in Calgary. Members volunteer each year to work at Fort Calgary as Ambassadors providing information about the Force and the Veterans' Association to tourists. Members of the division also serve on the Board of Directors. Each year a good number of members volunteer to work at a casino where thousands of dollars are raised for the Fort Calgary Preservation Society.

Remembrance Day celebrations are attended annually with a good turnout of members. Family members of deceased members are assisted financially, when necessary, through the Benevolent Trust Fund. Ex-members and their families are also given moral support during difficult times of illness and death through direct contact by many of our caring members.

In 1997 Calgary Division assisted with the World Police and Fire Games held in Calgary by volunteering as drivers, security and at the registration desk. A Pin project, commemorating the games, was also undertaken.

Also in 1997, Calgary Division was proud to nominate #13724 Bill Westgate for the Governor General's Caring Award. Commissioner Phil Murray personally presented this award to Bill on behalf of the Governor General at the Legion's Dominion Command Convention in Winnipeg on June 15th, 1998.

Since 1996 Calgary and Lethbridge Divisions have been meeting at Claresholm for a day of golf. This is a very much enjoyed day by those attending with many old friendships being renewed and new ones made. Many old stories are told and re-told. Calgary Division

launched their "1st Annual Alberta R.C.M.P.". Veterans' Golf Tournament in 1998. Three successful consecutive tournaments have now been held.

Many socials have become an annual event. In February a luncheon is held at the Legion, Branch 264, which honours our widows and life members; in March a good number of members attend the Calgary RCMP Regimental Dinner at Spruce Meadows; April is the occasion of a well-attended and enjoyed dinner and was the official launch of our 125th celebrations in 1998. June brings a well-attended barbecue. July is a busy month with members volunteering at the Old Morley Detachment, which is a popular attraction on the stampede grounds, as well as attending the annual Calgary RCMP Pancake breakfast with retired Officers assisting in the cooking of pancakes and sausage. For the past two years the division has participated in the Calgary Stampede parade. An open-air antique bus, supplied by Brewsters, is used and occupied by Past Presidents of the division as well as some of our 'old timers'. Octoberfest is celebrated by holding a great dinner at one of our fine eating establishments, such as the Austrian Canadian Club. The year winds up with a wine and cheese party after the November general meeting. In addition, each May and October there is an ex-member luncheon with over 100 ex-members attending. While the Veterans' Association does not sponsor this luncheon, it is well supported by division members. Also, many ex-members meet for coffee twice a week; on Wednesday at Northlands Shopping Centre and on Friday at South Centre Shopping Centre.

In addition to the above, on May 23rd, 1998, several members participated in a commemorative tour of the grave sites of members of the N.W.M.P., R.N.W.M.P. and R.C.M.P., located at Union Cemetery, noted in Part One, which was given by Mr. Donald Sucha of the University of Calgary. During the tour Mr. Sucha gave a brief outline of each member's service. On June 22nd, 2000, a troop of veterans attended a memorial service at Union Cemetery, at which time new headstones were dedicated at two unmarked graves. Calgary division donated \$150.00 towards the cost of these headstones. A troop also performed at Fort Calgary during a Flag Raising Ceremony to celebrate the 125 anniversary of the N.W.M.P. arriving in Calgary.

Calgary Division enjoys a good relationship with Calgary Sub-Division and its members. Since 1998, a member of Calgary Division attends and participates in the Calgary RCMP Recreation Club meetings. This no doubt goes a long way in bring both serving and ex-members closer together in a social atmosphere.

The following are some organizations to which Calgary Division has made financial donations over the past few years to:

- Fort Calgary Preservation Society
- Trans Canada Trail Project
- Salvation Army
- Alberta Slain Peace Officer Fund
- RCMP Long Island Camp
- Restoration of the St. Roch
- Ducks Unlimited

- RCMP Celebrity/Charity Golf
- Robert Rebeyka Memorial Tournament
- Royal Canadian Legion
- Friends of the Mounted Police Museum

The following is an article scheduled to appear in the November, 2000, issue of the Force's magazine entitled Pony Express.

“Life after retirement”
RCMP vets across the country lend a helping hand
By MELANIE ROUSH

From Vancouver to St. John's, RCMP veterans are lending a helping hand to the Force. “We never know what we're going to be asked to do,” says Casey Pendergast, president of the Nova Scotia Veterans' Association.

There are some 6,500 retired members who belong to the RCMP Veterans' Association, which is composed of 32 divisions, in every province and territory. Each division maintains its ties with the RCMP by contributing in a variety of ways.

In Nova Scotia for instance, retired members helped out after the 1998 crash of Swiss Air flight 111 off the shores of Peggy's Cove. Vets provided security during the crash investigation, guarding parts of the plane that had been recovered. Last year, the Nova Scotia Division rededicated a burial plot of one of the original members of the March West in 1873. Currently, the division is designing a veterans' flag that will be carried in parades. The flag should be ready by 2001.

At the other end of the country, some 760 members of the Vancouver division bolster the regular member workforce by volunteering as drivers or security for such events as the APEC conference, the Canadian Figure Skating Championships, and the B.C. Games for Athletes with Disabilities.

The vets also worked closely with the Vancouver Maritime Museum to launch the voyage of the St. Roch II this year. Now the division is talking about someday acquiring the Vancouver Fairmont Barracks to turn into a veterans' rest home. “I enjoy keeping in touch with what's going on in the Force and seeing if I can do something worthwhile to promote the welfare of our members who are in need of caring.” Says Jim Druchet, president of the Vancouver division.

In Calgary, members of the Veterans' Association help out at the Calgary Stampede, often doing some of the cooking at the annual RCMP Pancake Breakfast. They also patrol the old Morley Detachment on the Stampede grounds, which houses RCMP artifacts. In addition, vets act as ambassadors at Fort Calgary. The Fort was built when the Northwest Mounted Police first arrived in the city, and the vets stationed there answer tourists' questions about the RCMP and help with fundraising efforts to rebuild the fort.

"I've always had a great respect for the Force and I've always enjoyed the comradeship of other members," says Clarence Lacey, secretary of the Calgary division. "It's a fraternal organization where we look after each other."

This idea of comradeship is one of the reasons many vets are still active today, according to Ron Sparks, the association's executive director. "The Force is like a family for older members. It was a way of life, more than a job and you would no more leave the Force than leave your family," says Sparks. "Many members joined when they were 18 and stayed for 35 years."

Each division is independent and in addition to these activities, the Veterans' Association also handles applications for the RCMP Benefit Trust Fund and inspects graves of former members. Every Year, there's an annual general meeting. Next year's meeting takes place in Calgary. The Toronto division is in charge of the 2002 meeting. Proceeds from an RCMP boutique, run by one of its members, will provide funds for the meeting.

The Veterans' Association is currently compiling a comprehensive list of what each division is doing across the country which should be released later this year."

Calgary Division Ties to Its Roots

Calgary Division enjoys the prestige of having three members who have direct family ties to the early days of the N.W.M.P. The following is a short overview of these members family history.

Associate Member Marjorie Helen Baxter.

Helen's maternal Grandfather, Reg. #198 Peter O'Hare, joined the N.W.M.P. on May 29th, 1875, and served until October 4th, 1888. He returned to the Force as a Special Constable in 1890 and was in and out of the service until eventually retiring to pension on April 20th, 1920. He was stationed at places such as Fort Macleod, Calgary, Fort Walsh, Maple Creek and Swift Current. Her father, #5200 Frank P. Baxter, joined the R.N.W.M.P. in 1911 and served in the R.N.W.M.P. and R.C.M.P. for 35 years, retiring at the rank of Superintendent. A cousin, #13066 James H. Baxter joined the R.C.M.P. on October 31st, 1938 and served until his retirement, at Calgary, on February 7th, 1963 at the rank of S/Sgt. Both Frank and Jim Baxter were members of the RCMP Veterans' Association. Frank Baxter served as President of both Calgary Division and Dominion Headquarters.

Helen herself has an extensive career in the R.C.M.P. She joined the R.C.M.P. as a Civilian Employee on December 9th, 1940 at Weyburn, Saskatchewan. From June, 1945 to January 1947 Helen worked for the Department of Veteran Affairs in Saskatoon and Calgary as a steno. On January 11th, 1947, she returned to the R.C.M.P. where she worked at Calgary Sub-Division until her retirement on June 30th, 1978, except for 15 months when she worked for Visa Control in England and Sweden. During her later years at Calgary Sub-Division, Helen was secretary for the Officer Commanding. Helen worked for several O.C.'s, training

them all, and no doubt because of her expertise, had a significant influence on the operations of the Sub-Division. Helen joined the RCMP Veterans' Association on January 28th, 1998.

Honorary Member John Kennedy Ryan.

Jack has an extensive family connection to the N.W.M.P., having had five close family members who served with the N.W.M.P. during the Force's early years.

- a. John Ryan Sr., Jack's Grandfather, was born in Ireland and passed away at Fort MacLeod, Alberta. John Ryan Sr. was employed by the N.W.M.P. as a Civilian Member and worked in the office of the Comptroller.
- b. Dr. George de Veber, son-in-law of John Ryan Sr., was also employed by the N.W.M.P. as a Civilian Member and served as a physician.
- c. Reg. #239 Sgt. Charles Ryan, second son of John Ryan Sr., and Jack's uncle, joined the N.W.M.P. on April 19th, 1874, and was a member of the "March West" that year. Charles was promoted to Corporal on October 19th, 1878 and to Sergeant on January 16th, 1880. He took his discharge on June 22nd, 1881, having served nearly 11 years. During his service he served as orderly to then Assistant Commissioner James F. Macleod.
- d. Reg. #752 Cst. Thomas Walter Ryan, second son of John Ryan Sr., and Jack's uncle, joined the N.W.M.P. on May 11th, 1882, at the age of 16 years. He took his discharge on June 22nd, 1892, to assist his father with the farm at Fort MacLeod. He re-engaged on May 11th, 1894, but again took his discharge on July 30th, 1897, to work for the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- e. Reg. #3076, Cst. William John Ryan, third son of John Ryan Sr., and Jack's father, joined the N.W.M.P. on June 2nd, 1894, at Fort MacLeod as a bugler. His application showed Chief Justice James F. Macleod, second Commissioner of the N.W.M.P., and Superintendent Samuel Steele of the N.W.M.P. as his references. William took his discharge on August 23rd, 1897, with service recorded as "Very Good". He re-engaged on December 12th, 1898, and took his discharge on December 11th, 1901, at Regina.

Jack was approved as an Honorary Member of Calgary Division on April 29th, 1998.

Honorary Member Elizabeth M. Aylen.

Elizabeth Aylen is the daughter-in-law of Reg. 1157, Dr. Peter Aylen. Dr. Peter Aylen was born in Aylmer, Quebec on Sept. 5th, 1861. He entered the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University in 1882 and upon completion of his third year, his schooling was interrupted in order to serve as a Hospital Sergeant in the Medical Corps of the N.W.M.P. on April 8th, 1885. He was discharged on June 19th, 1885, at which time he returned to McGill University

to complete his medical training. He returned to the N.W.M.P. on July 1st, 1886, at which time he received his commission and was assigned Officer Number O.76 with an annual salary of \$600.00 per year.

During his service Dr. Aylen was stationed at various detachments including Regina, Battleford, Calgary, Fort MacLeod, Fort Edmonton and lastly Fort Saskatchewan. He retired from the Force on May 1st, 1895, and took up a private practice in Fort Saskatchewan only to accept another contract as Physician and Surgeon with the Force in 1886. Dr. Aylen was to “provide medical service to the local members and prisoners maintained in the Guardroom”, which he did until his retirement from the Force in 1914.

Mrs. Elizabeth Aylen created the Doctor Peter Aylen Memorial Scholarship, which is available to medical students with a preference to members of the R.C.M.P. and their children. Information regarding the scholarship is provided to successful students which specifically makes mention of Dr. Aylen’s contribution to the Force.

Mrs. Aylen was made Honourary Member of Calgary Division on October 27th, 2000, at the age of 95 years.

Fort Calgary Preservation Society

Calgary Division has had a close relationship with Fort Calgary since its inception some years ago. Fort Calgary is located at the original N.W.M.P. site on their arrival in Calgary in 1875. A considerable amount of work and money has gone into Fort Calgary these last few years with a barrack building being constructed in 2000. The following article appeared in the October, 2000 issue of Focus on the Fort.

A Unique Partnership

“Since the beginning of the Interpretive Centre at Fort Calgary, a unique partnership has been maintained with the R.C.M.P. Veterans Association. A representative (currently Frank Gough) sits on Fort Calgary’s Board of Directors, the R.C.M.P. Veterans archives is maintained at Fort Calgary, the Veterans assist in providing a link to the active R.C.M.P., and Veterans have volunteered their time to interpret to the public. The Veterans manned the former “hands-on” room before the era of the new exhibits and, since the beginning of the transformation of the Interpretive Centre, have continued their role, speaking to the public about the role of the R.C.M.P., assisting with uniform try-ons and other aspects of the interpretive program.

This year, the R.C.M.P. Veterans have added even more to the interpretive season. As we planned for the first year of costumed interpretation and “bringing the fort to life”, we approached the Veterans for special assistance. To portray the part of the Northwest Mounted Police well, we felt the Interpreters needed training in aspects of military life that only a Mountie could give them. Our first ever “Boot Camp” was launched, with Ray Sales and Mel McPhee training the Interpreters to salute, stand at attention and at ease, march properly, wear the uniform correctly, and polish their boots and buttons. “Boot Camp”

continued unofficially after Interpreter Training was over, with various R.C.M.P. Veterans providing additional guidance to our Interpreters in flag raising, ranks and protocol, uniforms and badges, drill and other aspects of police life over the season. The results have been terrific and staff, volunteers and public alike have been very impressed with the N.W.M.P. at the fort and how seriously the Interpreters have taken their roles.

The R.C.M.P. Veterans also assisted Fort Calgary in a number of special events, providing extra members at special events to interact with the public, escorting special guests and taking on some additional roles. Marching in their blazers and Stetsons under the command of Retired Staff Sergeant Ray Sales in a N.W.M.P. Sergeant Major's uniform, with "Trumpeter Bagley" (Petty Officer Kristen McKenna) and the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corp "Undaunted" Band, they added dignity and ceremony to the evening performance of the musical ride. They performed the Retreat Ceremony, lowering the flag and giving an "eyes right" as they marched to honour two former Musical Ride members, Bill Ritchie and Chuck White. At Union Cemetery the Veterans formed a Colour Party, with R.C.M.P. Corporal Pat Webb and U of C Pipe Band Piper Will Bailie, to honour original N.W.M.P. "F" Troop members, Acting Constable (Corporal) George Clift King, second mayor of Calgary, and his friend, Sergeant James Colvin in a ceremony to mark their unmarked graves. At the signing of the formal agreement between the Rotary Club of Calgary and Fort Calgary, Ray Sales also assisted in N.W.M.P. uniform with one of our Interpreters to provide an Honour Guard.

Throughout the season, the core of Fort Calgary R.C.M.P. Veteran volunteers have been on duty also most every day without fail, talking to the visiting public about the role of the R.C.M.P., their own experiences with the Force, and the role of the N.W.M.P. at Fort Calgary. They have made many friends with visitors, staff and volunteers alike, and left hundreds of visitors richer for the time spent in conversation with them.

Last, but not least, two of the R.C.M.P. Veterans, C.T.W. "Wally" Wallace and Mel McPhee have worked quietly behind the scenes every Tuesday for many years, with a third volunteer, Jack Crossley, to keep Fort Calgary's archives in order. They organize the rolling storage, find key artifacts for exhibits, create storage trays and holders for valuable items and ensure the artifacts are all properly recorded on the computer.

Whoever began this partnership in the dawning day of Fort Calgary Historic Park showed great foresight. The staff of Fort Calgary, the volunteers and the public continue to benefit each year from this unique partnership, this year perhaps more than ever. Thank you to the R.C.M.P. Veterans who participate in it."

Ellen Gasser
Curatorial Division Manager

Calgary Division holds monthly meetings at Fort Calgary on the last Wednesday of each month at 7:30 P.M., with the exception of July, August and December. From time to time these meetings are supplemented with or replaced by a social dinner or luncheon. Emphasis is placed on letting the Executive Committee run the affairs of the

division, thereby keeping the regular meetings short to allow for more socializing of members. At time of writing, Calgary Division has 367 members (262 regular members, 99 associate members and 6 Honourary members).

#21449 (O.1391) Clarence J. Lacey
Secretary (November 1st, 2000)