



FRIENDLY NOTES

Friends Of The Mounted Police Heritage Centre

Les Amis Du Centre Du Patrimoine De La GRC

NOTES AMICALES

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THE 'DEAD MAN'S PENNY' THAT HIS NAME NOT BE FORGOTTEN

PROUD
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HISTORIQUES



Memorial Plaque RCMP
Historical Collection Cat. 1991/76.
Photo by Jodi Ann Eskritt



Photo of J.A. Burke, RCMP Historical
Collection Cat. 1991.76.5
Photo by Jodi Ann Eskritt

They thought it would be over by Christmas. But Christmas 1914 came and went yet still the fighting continued. The Great World War for Civilization had begun and it would be a war unlike any that had come before. Few would be spared from loss and grief.

Among the collections of the RCMP Historical Collections Unit (RCMP HCU) sits one of the tangible reminders of that loss: the Memorial Plaque, often called the "Dead Man's Penny" by the soldiers themselves.

In October 1916, as some of the worst fighting of the war was taking place on the Somme, a committee was struck to consider the matter of a memorial for the next of kin of the fallen. By August 1917 the "Times" was announcing a public competition to decide the design of the committee's proposed commemorative bronze plaque.

The response was beyond anyone's expectations. Over 800 entries came in from across the British Empire, the Dominions, the Western Front, and the

Balkan and Middle Eastern theatres. So many serving soldiers entered the competition that the committee had to extend the deadline. In the end, Edward Carter Preston of the Sandon Studios Society, Liverpool took first prize.

Twelve centimetres in diameter, the round medallion is dominated by the figure of Britannia, her head bowed respectfully towards the rectangular tablet bearing the name of the deceased. No ranks were used. All were equal in making the supreme sacrifice. In her left hand Britannia holds a laurel wreath, symbol of victory. Around her appear two dolphins, symbols of Britain's sea power, and in the foreground, a lion "striding forward in menacing attitude" to represent Britain's strength. In the exergue, a second British Lion symbolically pounces on German Imperial Eagle.

Production began in December 1918, at first in a disused laundry in Acton, West London, then at the Woolwich Arsenal factory. Over time a number of disused armaments factories were used to make the medallions. It is not recorded what the families thought of this ironic, albeit practical, decision. Originally, the British Government had planned on needing only 800,000 plaques. In the end, they issued 1,150,000 (600 honouring women) and used 450 tonnes of gunmetal to do so. Even so the scheme ended before all the fallen could be recognized.

The Memorial Plaque in the RCMP HCU collection was issued in honour of James Alexander Burke (Reg. No.3101). Burke was no stranger to the Mounted Police. His father, Patrick "Paddy" Burke (Reg. No.402) served as a Trumpeter during the North West Rebellion, succumbing to wounds received in May 1885 during the Battle of Cut Knife Hill. James' brothers, Patrick (Regt No.3124), Joseph (Reg. No.2814) and Frederick (Reg. No.3196) all served -- even his sister married a member.

James joined the Force for a short time as a Special Constable before being engaged as a bugler in 1894 at the age of 15. He joined the Canadian Mounted Rifles in 1899 and served during the South African War, returning to Canada and the North West Mounted Police in 1901. He was transferred to Whitehorse in 1901, returned to Regina, spent a short time at Prince Albert before returning once again to Regina. The South African War seems to have left James troubled. A mounting number of infractions appeared on his record following his return

from overseas. By 1904, he was dismissed from the Force after ten years service.

It's not entirely clear what James did after leaving the Force. When he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) in 1914, he listed his occupation only as "laborer" a common practice at the time and one that covered a wide variety of occupations. But it was clear that his previous overseas service and his years with the Force made him a valuable recruit for the CEF. He was quickly accepted into the 6th Battalion, CEF and en route to the battlefield of Europe.

During the fighting, James Burke was wounded during a gas attack. He survived the attack itself, but as was so often the case, the gassing had lingering effects. Burke was declared unfit for further duty and returned home for treatment at the Military Convalescent Hospital at Saskatoon. He died on August 17, 1917 and was laid to rest in Battleford, Saskatchewan.

Editor's Note: the foregoing Intriguing historical article by our new Curator, Jodie Ann Eskritt, gives us an indication of the exciting stories we can expect to hear from her in the future.

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PRESENTATIONS



On Sept 13th. 2010 on behalf of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre, Veteran Member Tony Brezinski presented Joan M. Ray a Life Membership plaque and lapel pin. Joan Ray is a grand-neice of the legendary Sam Steele, former RCMP Commissioner and a Canadian Icon. The presentation to Joan took place at the Heritage Centre on the occasion of her visit to Regina from Medicine Hat, Alberta. Joan was accompanied by her husband Louis Anderson and her brother Ed Steele, a grand-nephew of Sam Steele, and Ed's wife Renee.

Photo by Kenn Barker

Note: Ed Steele was the recipient of a Life Membership in the "Friends" in a former presentation at Weslaco, Texas, on November 24th. 2009 as reported in the "Friendly Notes" newsletter in Volume 20, Issue 1, 2010.



On August 4th. 2010, Bill Greenslade, President of the "Friends" was pleased to present a cheque in amount of \$50,000 to Robin Etherington, President and C.E.O. of the RCMP Heritage Centre. President Etherington thanked the "Friends" on behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff, for the significant contribution to the operations of the Heritage Centre.

Photo by Kenn Barker



Attending the Life Membership in the "Friends" presentation, is Joan M. Ray, recipient; Renee Steele; President and C.E.O. of the Heritage Centre, Robin Etherington third from left, and Ed Steele, brother of Joan Ray.

Photo by Kenn Barker



The photo presentation of a Life Membership in the "Friends" to Joan M. Ray depicts the attendees from left to right; Bill Greenslade, President of the "Friends"; Colleen Brezinski; Louis Anderson; Joan M. Ray; Tony Brezinski; Renee Steele and husband Ed Steele.

Photo by Kenn Barker

CORRESPONDENCE

Readers offer new and interesting information regarding LEGACY OF THE DOLLS and Cst. Ross Gibson. FRIENDLY NOTES, VOL.20,ISSUE 2,SPRING 2010

FROM; David Grindlay , Bancroft, Ontario
- e-mail sent: April 30th, 2010

Good Morning,

I found Barry and Pat Nowell's account of their trip to B.C. and subsequent encounter with Hank and Sylvia Graber most interesting. That the Graber's would donate the two dolls and accompanying letters to the Museum is a kind and generous offer.

What was not included in Barry's background on Cst. Gibson and something that your readers might be interested in is Gibson's involvement in a significant period in Canadian, Force and Inuit history.

From the late 1930's through to the early 1960's the Canadian Government embarked on an initiative to relocate Inuit families within what was then the Northwest Territories to areas where better services could be provided or where better hunting conditions might exist.

One of these relocations occurred in the early 1950's when several families from Port Harrison (now Inukjuak) Quebec were moved to locations in the high arctic, specifically Resolute Bay and Bache Peninsula/Grise Fiord. The reasons for these moves was to alleviate what was perceived to be a significant decline in available wildlife for food in northern Quebec.

Rightly or wrongly the moves were undertaken and Cst. Gibson, then stationed at Port Harrison, Quebec was ordered by the CO of "G" Division, Insp. H. Larsen, to assisted in the selection of several families and then accompany them to Resolute Bay where he remained for upwards of 2 years.

The relocation of these families continues to resonate throughout Canada and much has been written about the reasons for the moves. Regardless of the governments rational Cst. Gibson and other members of the Force undertook to perform their duties, living with the Inuit in a new land and facing new challenges together. From most accounts members of the Force, including Cst. Gibson performed those duties well.

Readers of *Friendly Notes* interested in learning more about these moves might like to consider the following books; *Relocating Eden* by Alan Rudolph Marcus, *Tammarniit (Mistakes)*, *Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939-63* by Frank James Testor and Peter Kulchyski and (my favourite) *Arctic Smoke and Mirrors* by Gerard Kenney. Mr. Kenney goes so far as to dedicate his book to Cst. Gibson.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The desire to increase the Membership of a worthy organization is an ongoing challenge and must be addressed with imagination and consideration of all the players involved. Such was the situation when the "*Friends*" Board of Directors authorized Ron Ostrum, our Secretary, to proceed with his plan to implement a unique procedure to solicit and encourage the involvement of numerous RCMP Veterans and/or their spouses to learn about the "*Friends*" and their support of the RCMP Heritage Centre.

The project that was initiated in 2009 and finalized in 2010 resulted in an insert being placed in the June 2010 pay-cheque envelopes, which resulted in a resounding success as the New Applications to the "*Friends*" flowed in to the tune of two-hundred and fifty, and totalling approximately \$15,000.00 in revenue. As new applications continue to arrive we take this opportunity to express our wholehearted appreciation to the applicants, whom we have designated as the "*Friends*" Class of 2010". Thank-you "*Friends*"!

CLASS OF 2010

A warm welcome to the following persons who have become members of the *Friends* during the period from June 30th. 2010 to Sept. 30th. 2010.

Christine Law, Unionville, ON

H.C.(Duke) MacInnis, Dartmouth, NS

Quetin W. Wenaus, Dartmouth, NS

Allan LaRocque, Liverpool, NS

Bernice V. Wyatt, Regina

A. Doug Watt, Edmonton
Wayne C. Way, Regina
Fidelis Ward, Ottawa
Ron Savidan, Elbow, SK
John M. Flynn, Orleans, ON
Royce D. Greene, Wilmot Valley, PEI
Tom Aucoin, Dartmouth, NS
Wally Dempster, West Kelowna, BC
Gary Hewins, Grand Prairie, AB
Dennis Farrell, Vancouver
Allan C. Potter, Calgary
Mrs. Elizabeth Kohle, Bon Accord, AB
Mrs. Barbara Davidson, Nepean, ON
Patrick B. Madden, Vermont, USA
John Veldman, Agassiz, BC
Mrs. Joan Peters, Medicine Hat
John T. Wylie, Peterborough, ON
John F. Miles, Nepean, ON
Joseph B. Mamela, Edmonton
Darcy Gollan, Blind Bay, BC
Warren Sweeney, Burlington, ON
Harry V. Shardlow, Chilliwack, BC
Gilles Favreau, L'Ange-Gardien, QC
Kenneth Hunt, Shawnigan Lake, BC
Guy Baril, St. Antoine-Richelieu, QC
Dennis Groenhof, Strathmore, AB
Dorothy A. Luross, Saskatoon, SK
Mrs. Patricia Brockbank, Burlington, ON
Alvin J. Levitt, Wetaskawin, AB
Bob Bilodeau, St. Albert, AB
Mrs. Janet Clatbey-Bertsch, Saskatoon, SK
Miss Dorothy Ann Buck, Ottawa
Miss Lois Boal, Edmonton
James A. Moore, Delta, BC
Frances Burkholder, Bridgewater, NS
P. Stephan White, Courtenay, BC
Renald J. Jodoin, Ottawa
Miss Evelyn Morrison, Coquitlam, BC

Miss Eunice Sutton, Orleans, ON
Jack L. Gard, Waterdown, ON
Victor B. Peterson, Red Deer, AB
Joseph W. Brennan, Orleans, ON
Tom Lindeman, Nepean, ON
Miss Ann Metcalfe, Arnprior, ON
Dennis McCulla, Brampton, ON
Jean Lamarche, Bromont, QC
Miss Caroline V. Hossfeld, The Pas, MB
Ron Neidig, Ottawa
Ron Riley, Cornwallis, NS
Mrs. Eva Evans, Regina
Mrs. Patricia Birtwistle, Tillsonburg, ON
Garry S. Mydlak, Kamloops, BC
Robert Farnham, North Hartley, QC
Glen G. Frazier, Victoria, BC
Gladys Donnan, Leduc, AB
Renald Gauvin, Brossard, QC
Ross Graham, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, QC
Kenneth Washington, Kelowna, BC
John P. MacPhee, Ottawa
Margaret Shopa, Hinton, AB
Michael Hryb Sr., Grand Prairie, AB
George Cutting, Sherwood Park, AB
Lauchie McMullin, Ottawa
Weldon E. Snow, Riverview, NB
Lorraine Millan, Ottawa
Keith C. Dunn, Lively, ON
Charles Couture, St. Adolphe D'Howard, QC
Luc Boivin, Ste. Famille, QC
Ada R. Mercer, Bay Roberts, NL
Francois Beriau, Sainte Dorothea, QC
Margaret Rolstone, Victoria, BC
Dennis Brown, Ladysmith, BC
Charles P.S. Neher, Edmonton
Donald G. Fraser, St. Albert, AB
Eric Falkenham, Calgary
Phillip Py, Calgary

Harry R. Hartlin, Head Jeddore, NB
 Francesco Sirianni, Brampton, ON
 Bill Gray, Saskaton
 Barb Dressel, London, ON
 Beverly A. Leaman, Thunder Bay, ON
 Thomas A. Dobbie, Camrose, AB
 Gerald J. Gilfoy, Brampton, ON
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 Herma J. Griemann, Chilliwack, BC
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 David G. Roberts, Port Coquitlam, BC
 Melvin Dickle, Orleans, ON
 Reg Alspash, New Westminster, BC
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 John Lucas, Richmond
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C.Michael Gareau, Orleans,ON
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Jean-Paul G.Patenaude, Laval,QC
Harvey Gorsline, Kelowna,BC
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Gerald Walker, Bowman,QC
Robert Bennington,Langley, BC
Maureen V. Boisclair, Vanier,ON
Winifred Kippen,Ottawa
Maxine Cummins, Penticton, BC
Garry R.Wade, Maple Ridge, BC
Hugh J. Westheuser, Kelowna, BC
Donald Bechtel, Okotoks, AB
Thomas S.Coxen, Cranbrook, BC
Bruce M.Laing, Richmond, BC
May Franks, Peterborough,ON
Richard J.Cudmore, Selkirk,MB
Dennis Lane, Regina
Daryle McAndrew, L'Original,ON
G.S.Scott Sutton, Cochin,SK
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Yves Gagnon, St.Eustache, QC

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Thanks to those Members of the *Friends* who have already indicated they would like to receive the *Friendly Notes* electronically.

DONOR WALL OF APPRECIATION

The following changes/additions to the "Donor Wall" have been made since our last issue.

\$100
Jean Thue, Regina, Sask.

Life Members (\$1200 to \$2999)
Ruth E. Gongos, Winnipeg, MB
Joan Ray (Steele), Medicine Hat, AB

Friends (\$500 to \$1199)
Paul Schauerte, Creston, BC
Herman Beaulac, Orleans, ON

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