

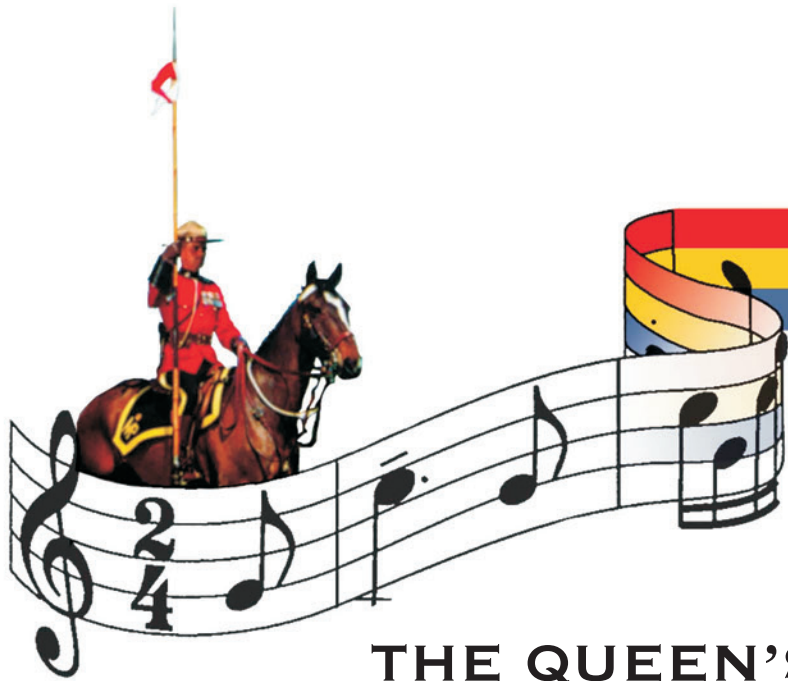
# FRIENDLY NOTES

Friends Of The Mounted Police Heritage Centre

Les Amis Du Centre Du Patrimoine De La GRC

# NOTES AMICALES

VOLUME 22  
ISSUE 4 FALL 2012



## THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION COMES TO REGINA

PROUD  
SUPPORTERS  
OF/FIERS  
D'APPUYER

RCMP  
HERITAGE  
CENTRE



LE CENTRE  
DU PATRIMOINE  
DE LA GRC

RCMP  
HISTORICAL  
COLLECTIONS  
UNIT



GRUPE DES  
COLLECTIONS  
HISTORIQUES



**AUGUST 11-12, 2012.**

The two-day Diamond Jubilee Celebration at the Brandt Centre on Saturday, followed on Sunday with the official opening of Elizabeth 11 Gardens, celebrated not only the 60th anniversary of the Queen's reign, but also the 100th. Anniversary of the Saskatchewan Legislative building, the 50th anniversary of Wascana Centre Authority and the official retirement of the provincial landau.

The RCMP Heritage Centre is proud to have played a role in hosting and helping to organize this two-day celebration. The "Friends" of the Mounted Police Heritage

*continued on page 7*

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## AN EXHIBIT FROM THE “BLACK MUSEUM”

“TWO CONSTABLES KILLED NEAR MANITOBA BORDER” and “THREE FARMERS HUNTED” screamed the headlines of newspapers across the country.

It was October 1935. The bodies of Benito Town Constable William Wainwright and RCMP Constable John Shaw had been found stripped of their identification and valuables and thrown in a slough by the side of Highway 49. Their unmarked police car was missing.

Sought for the crime: three young Saskatchewan men, John Kalmakoff, Joseph Posnikoff and Peter Woiken. Last seen outside Banff National Park. The RCMP began putting up road blocks.

Before long the fugitives were snared. But as Sgt. Thomas Wallace and Cst. George Harrison approached the car the young men opened fire. Although both men were hit they returned fire. With a second police car arriving on the scene of the gun fight, the three killers ran into the bush. Harrison and Wallace were rushed to hospital, but Sgt. Wallace would succumb to his wounds.

It was now a hunt on foot, one that included Sgt. John Cawsey and his police service dog, Dale. The next day, in the Seven Mile Hill area, the



fugitives were trapped. When they fired on police this time they did not escape. Posnikoff was dead. Kalmakoff and Woiken mortally wounded.

These death masks of the “Benito Bandits”, who left a trail of blood across three prairie provinces over six days in 1935, were made by Banff sculptor and artist, Mr. C.A. Beil. To this day, we don’t know the motive behind their killing spree.

The death masks will be on display again briefly as the RCMP Heritage Centre hosts a limited exhibition of artifacts from the RCMP Historical Collections Unit criminal cases collection. For the last two weeks in October, the “Black Museum” will be open to the public. Enter with care; you might also bump into a ghost or a ghoul during your visit. Happy Hallowe’en.

*Jodie Eskritt, Curator, Heritage Centre*

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## CHEQUE PRESENTATION - JUNE 27, 2012



At the June 27th, 2012 meeting of the “Friends” Board of Directors, a cheque in amount of \$15,000.00 was presented to Al Nicholson, Chief Executive Officer of the RCMP Heritage Centre, by Director Kenn Barker. Al expressed his thanks and gratitude to the “Friends” for their continued support and financial contributions over the years.

*Photo: Bob Cocks.*

# THE POLAR MEDAL

*The foregoing are excerpts from Wikipedia, and publications regarding Sgt. Henry Larsen and the NWMP schooner St. Roch, and the awarding of the Polar Medal.*

The Polar Medal is a medal awarded by the Sovereign of the United Kingdom. It was instituted in 1857 as the Arctic Medal and renamed the Polar Medal in 1904.

The existence of the Polar Medal came to my attention while reading the obituaries in the Winter 2012, Volume 77, No. 1, issue of "The Quarterly" when reporting the death of the following Veteran:

*Reg. No. S/8719, S/Cst. John Stanley McKenzie, 92, died April 12th, 2011, at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Born July 1, at Port Aux Basques, N.F, he joined the Force May 20, 1944 at Halifax, NS. He served in the "Marine" Div. - RCMP St. Roch, until purchasing his discharge Dec. 7, 1944. He was awarded the **Polar Medal**. He was a member of the crew of the RCMP St. Roch on its return voyage through the Northwest Passage in 1944.*

The foregoing item then prompted my further research to learn more of the origin and existence of this historic award.

## History

The first polar award was called the Arctic Medal which was presented twice in the 19th century. The Admiralty issued the medal in 1857 for several expeditions, including the expedition to discover the fate of Sir John Franklin and his crew who were lost while looking for the Northwest Passage in 1847:

*HER Majesty having been graciously pleased to signify her commands that a Medal be granted to all persons, of every rank and class, who have been engaged in the several Expeditions to the Arctic Regions, whether of discovery or search, between the years 1818 and 1855, both inclusive.*

The second presentation of the Arctic Medal was to the crews of three ships exploring the Arctic in 1875-76.



Reverse of medal and ribbon

Awarded by UK and Commonwealth

Type Medal

Awarded for extreme human endeavour against the appalling weather and conditions that exist in the Arctic and Antarctic

Established 1857

## Henry of the "Big Ship"

On October 11, 1942 a 104 foot schooner, belonging to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, was escorted without fanfare, through the antisubmarine net of mines into Halifax harbor in Nova Scotia. Under its captain Sgt. Henry Larsen, the St Roch had left Vancouver BC in June 1940. This is the voyage that Henry Asbjorn Larsen is best known for. That trip alone would have placed the ship and her crew in the annals not only of Canadian history but also of global maritime history.

He and the crew were awarded the coveted Polar Medal and later he received the bar, Pacific and Atlantic Stars, and the 1939 to 1944 War medal.

Subsequent research and enquiry with our RCMP Historical Collections Unit revealed the following Special Constable George Brydon Dickens, with the N.W.M.P ship St. Roch, was awarded the Polar Medal with "Arctic 1940-42" bar. This medal Set is currently on public display in the Heritage Centre Exhibit, "Protecting the North"

*Barrie F. Nowell, Editor*

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# LATTER DAY TROJAN HORSE

*NOTE: The following story is of a true and factual case involving the Royal Bank at Leask, Saskatchewan in the Blaine Lake Detachment area, in the 1960's. Editor*

To think that the imagination and ingenuity of a warrior of ten-thousand years ago could be successfully applied to a modern day situation, would raise nothing but doubts in the minds of many. But the end result of this story once again proves – that there is nothing beyond the grasp of the dedicated investigator, including Greek Mythology, that can't be applied if there is the determination to succeed in the face of considerable odds!

It was with this type of determination that the senior N.C.O. proceeded to co-relate the use of the General Investigation Section, Detachments, Highway Patrol and Police dog, to construct a net and foil the well-laid plans of certain would-be safe-crackers. The resultant success was largely due to the employment of – Greek Mythology.

The target was an old Bank in a small Town. A new Bank was planned and construction begun but the old faithful landmark, with flimsy doors, antiquated alarm system and vulnerable safe, was carrying on business as usual although its' days were numbered.

These facts were not overlooked by certain enterprising safecrackers who had the situation well cased and the possibilities figured out. In fact, the prospects of a big, and easy haul were so good that they couldn't resist bragging to their pals – a little ahead of time. Therefore they caused a leak in their barrel full of good intentions.

Now the foolproof advantage favouring the thieves was the location of the Bank. In the early years when the Rail-road was the nucleus of a town, the "main drag" and location of importance was – facing the rail-road. True to form, this town was no exception. But the main-drag eventually extended away from the rail-road and that left the bank and the old hotel on the right, and closed-

down garage on the left, out on the edge of town facing a parking lot and empty field.

Beyond were the railway tracks and grain elevators and then bush and farm land. This afforded the culprits an advantageous approach under cover, an open view of the front of the bank and a clear view of anyone approaching from three sides. There was no suitable cover area for the reception party and no adequate hiding place in the bank interior due to its small size. Furthermore, it was suspected the safe-men would be using nitro. Therefore it was deemed safer to surround them in the bank rather than surprise them from the inside. The prospects of an air-tight reception were momentarily dimmed.

While surveying the situation from a distance a school bus was observed to drive up into the parking lot, the driver stepped out and walked off down the street leaving it for the night. Enter Greek Mythology.

"Yes", was the willing answer from the bus driver, 'I do leave the bus there every night after I make my rounds and have done so for six months.' He then listened with interest and nodded agreement as the N.C.O. proposed his plan. Why not? Something as exciting as this didn't happen very often and wouldn't he be the envy of coffee-row when it was over!

The robbers decided on their night and the word leaked out to the police. At 5:30 p.m. the school bus rolled up Main street, turned right across from the bank into the parking lot and stopped in the usual place. The driver stepped out, closed the door and sauntered away down the street.

To all intents and purposes the bus was empty, yes, as empty as the Trojan Horse!

To the would-be robbers it appeared the same way as they scurried through the weeds, over the tracks and up to the front of the old bank.

To the six stiff and weary policemen on the floor of the bus, the sight of the cons was a relief. Although



### **Trojan Horse.**

they were in touch with surrounding Units by portable radio, movement and conversation was stifled until the exact location of the culprits was known. Cautiously they peered at the robbers and were as surprised as the cons when the old flimsy bank door refused to budge. It then became apparent that more prying tools were necessary, which precipitated a trip to the garage next door, thus two break-ins were witnessed.

The old door finally succumbed to the second onslaught and two slipped inside. They could be dimly observed crouching in front of the massive safe, when a set of car lights flashed into view

two blocks away. The outside-man gave them the signal and ran. A hasty decision was made in the bus and six Trojans piled out, feverishly trying to get circulation going in cramped legs. Finally, the two inside-men ran out into the waiting arms of the reception party, and eventual Justice and incarceration.

Another case was successfully concluded, thanks to the use of Greek Mythology!

The end.

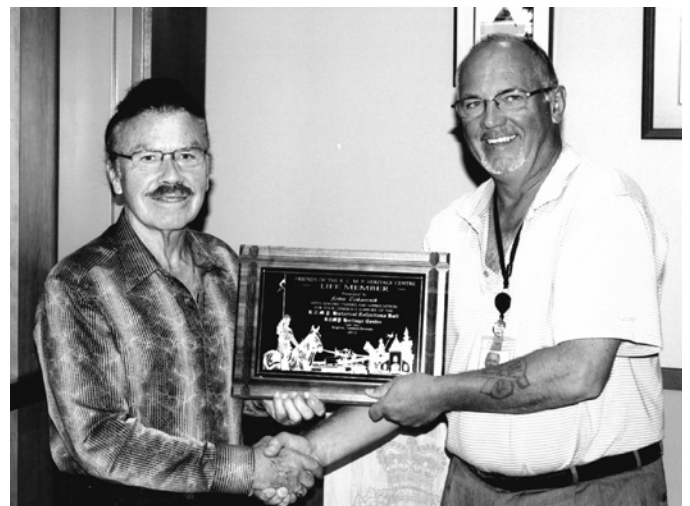
*Sgt. B.F. Nowell*  
*R.C.M. Police.*

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## **PRESENTATION**

On Sept. 4th. 2012 on the occasion of the Regina Veterans Association September Meeting, a Life Membership Plaque and Pin was presented to RCMP Veteran John Tokarcsik, on behalf of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre, by Bill Greenslade, Secretary/Treasurer of the Regina Veterans. The presentation is in recognition of John's generous support and service over the years.

*Photo by Kenn Barker*



## READERS WRITE

The following self-explanatory message and photo was received from one Roger Phillips, who is trying to identify the member of the RCMP in the background, wearing a police forage-cap and badge:

*The old fellow at left is (was) Placid Morin, a Green Lake Settlement water witcher of some renown; Gerry Savage of Saskatchewan Photographic Services is holding Placid's watch-witching willow (forked) and playing at water witching; Ross Green a Saskatchewan Government Bureau of Publications editor is standing next to the RCMP member I hope you ID; next to him is Jim Elliot, position unknown and his daughter Marilyn. I took the picture in the fifties and since I don't remember precisely*

*when, I say the mid-fifties. I understand that the Green Lake settlement was set up by the Patterson government as a Metis "colony"... part of an effort to try to alleviate poverty conditions amongst prairie Metis at the time. We may have been in Green Lake for some affair related to the colony's establishment.*

If you recognize the RCMP member or are familiar with the circumstances, please advise Mr. Phillips by e-mail at: [roger.phillips@sasktel.net](mailto:roger.phillips@sasktel.net),

or write us at:

Editor,  
Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre  
5907 Dewdney Avenue  
Regina, Saskatchewan Canada S4T 0P4



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## DIAMOND JUBILEE *continued from page 1*

Centre are pleased to bring to our readers of the “Friendly Notes”, awareness of the momentous events that are projected annually by the staff, volunteers and the RCMP members at the Training Centre here in the Queen City of Regina.

The highlight of the celebration of course was the RCMP Musical Ride performed at the Brandt Centre and specializing the participation of a thirteen year old girl, who is the Champion Youth Rider for the Saskatchewan Reining horse Association, Brooklyn Braun. Brooklyn is a Grade 8 student at Beechy High School, and lives on a north-west Saskatchewan ranch. She had the honour of giving a horse reining demonstration and then took the final salute to the Lieutenant Governor, with the Ride Commanding Officer.



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## THE STETSON HAT

*If you have ever wondered about the development of the NWMP and current RCMP headgear, John Peter Turner in his “Volume 11” of the Historic accounts of the NWMP from 1873 to 1973, gives us the colourful story of the evolution of the Stetson that is proudly worn today with the iconic Red Serge. Editor.*

An interesting corollary to the prevailing need of some suitable headgear on the prairies of the West had long been developing. Far back in the '60s, a young man, John B. Stetson, the son of a Philadelphia hatter, had gone West seeking a cure for tuberculosis. While camped on the Colorado prairies he converted rabbit skins into a rough felt and made a big broad-brimmed hat that would protect him from the sun and rain. His hat became the talk of the mining camps—not without some ridicule. He won back his health, returned to Philadelphia and took up his father's trade—the making of hats. He had noticed that cattlemen were crowding into the West, and an idea took hold of him. He made a number of large, natural-coloured felt hats, and sent them to dealers in the West under the name of “The Boss of the Plains”. Enquiries soon poured in. The Texas

Rangers adopted the new hat. Cowboys were all for it. Stetson turned his entire attention to filling orders for the West. His hat quickly became the most distinguishing feature of the cowboy's “get-up”. With it, the cowhand could fan the embers of his camp-fire, use it for drinking purposes, momentarily blinding refractory horses, slapping steers, fighting grass fires, for a dozen or more useful purposes. And he liked himself in it when he went to town, especially if it had a bullet hole or two. It didn't have to be new; in fact the older it was the better, and the prouder its possessor. It wore well. Along with high-heeled boots it formed a conspicuous place in stories of the West, became an essential part of Western fiction. Decorated with a band of woven horsehair or rattlesnake skin, it was complete.

By 1889, when officers and men of the North-West Mounted Police were in dilemma regarding suitable headgear, John B. Stetson was making thousands of hats in an attempt to meet the continual demand for an article that had become a Western institution. It was inevitable that, with an eye to the practical, the N.W.M.P. should someday adopt the “Stetson”.

# DONOR WALL OF APPRECIATION

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

- LIFE – John Tokarcsik, Regina
- \$500 – Archie Copland, Kent, ENG'
- \$500 – Patricia Dinnen, Qualicum Beach
- \$500 – Thomas Dunlop, Sherwood Park, AB
- \$200 – Jean Thue, Regina – in memory of Ivan Thue

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<hr/>	
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**Return or Mail:**

Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre, 5907 Dewdney Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan Canada S4T 0P4