



FRIENDLY NOTES

Friends Of The Mounted Police Heritage Centre

Les Amis Du Centre Du Patrimoine De La GRC

NOTES AMICALES

VOLUME 29
ISSUE 2 SPRING 2018

‘SOVEREIGN’S MEDAL FOR VOLUNTEERS’ RECIPIENT RONALD OSTRUM (RETIRED INSPECTOR)

PROUD
SUPPORTERS
OF/FIERS
D’APPUYER

**RCMP
HERITAGE
CENTRE**



**LE CENTRE
DU PATRIMOINE
DE LA GRC**

RCMP
HISTORICAL
COLLECTIONS
UNIT



**GROUPE DES
COLLECTIONS
HISTORIQUES**



Police Heritage Centre. And Ron Ostrum has been front and center since 1990 having given thousands of hours to the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre.

Ron Ostrum has been a Board Member of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre since 1990 to current date. The Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre is a not-for-profit organization whose current

goal is to do all it can to support programming, education and historical collections at the RCMP Heritage Centre, thus enabling it to carry on the vision of commemoration and sharing the story of the RCMP to the world.

continued on next page

SOVEREIGN'S MEDAL FOR VOLUNTEERS' RECIPIENT RONALD OSTRUM (RETIRED INSPECTOR)

continued from page 1

Originally the Friends focus was created to support historical collections at the then RCMP Centennial Museum at RCMP Depot Division. Additionally to volunteer in the Scarlet & Gold gift shop and provide improved services to visitors. Net profits from Scarlet and Gold gift shop sales were for supporting improvements to the RCMP Centennial Museum, and later on to develop the new Heritage Centre starting 1999. Over the years the "Friends" donated \$1M to the Centennial Museum and more than \$1M to capital development of the Heritage Centre.

Apart from volunteering at the gift shop, Ron assumed the duties of secretary for the Friends and was an integral part of the effort to increase the Friends membership by liaising with Division of the RCMP Vets Association and the RCMP itself. Ron has driven this aspect of the "Friends" since 1990 and today we have grown from our original membership of 40 to more than 1,100.

In 2007 the Heritage Centre was officially opened and the Friends moved to its new location there. From that point forward Ron took on the additional

duty of treasurer becoming our Secretary/Treasurer from that point forward to current date. Part of those duties included tracking status of our more than 1,100 members on an ongoing basis, processing membership fees, donations and other contributions from individuals and corporations and issues tax receipts. He also prepares and reviews monthly financial statements for our Board, liaises with Heritage Centre personnel on ongoing issues. Ron has also volunteered at special events open to the public at the Heritage Centre.

Since I became a Board member six (6) years ago, I know Ron attended our offices at the Heritage Centre on an almost daily basis to stay on top of these duties.

Ron possesses the corporate knowledge and history that all board members and Friends draw on as we continue to commit to the success of the Heritage Centre which would not be where it is today without the generous support of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre. And Ron Ostrum has been front and center since 1990 having given thousands of hours to the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Wide Ranging Exhibits at the Rcmp Heritage Centre Technology Has Taken Over!	1-3
Notice of General Meeting	4
Astounding Distances Covered by Early Mounties in the Line of Duty	5
Life Membership Presentations	6
Special Donation	7
Friends Board of Directors and Committee Chairpersons	7
Membership Committee Report	7
Becoming a Member/Renewals	8

RECOGNITION AWARDS

SOVEREIGN'S MEDAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers recognizes exceptional volunteer achievements from across the country and abroad, celebrating a wide range of voluntary contributions. As an official honour created by the Crown, the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers is part of the Canadian Honours System. The program has incorporated and replaced the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award, which was created in 1995, by then-Governor General the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc. The Chancellery of Honours, part of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, administers the program.

Description of the Medal

The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers consists of a silver circular medal that is 36 mm in diameter with a suspension ring. The obverse depicts a contemporary effigy of the Sovereign, circumscribed with the inscription in capital letters of the Canadian Royal Title and the word "CANADA", separated by two maple leaves. The reverse bears a large and a small heart interlaced, set with five maple leaves on the outer edge of the large heart which is surmounted by a coronet bearing three maple leaves. The edge of the reverse is decorated with a sunburst pattern. The medal is suspended from a ribbon that is 32 mm in width, the edges of which shall consist of 9.25 mm deep red stripes and the centre of which shall consist of five 1.5 mm gold stripes interspersed with four 1.5 mm blue stripes.



FRIENDS INTRODUCE NEW CHALLENGE COIN

"The Friends" President, Bob Smart unveiled and presented the first two of 300 Limited Edition Challenge Coins at the AGM on March 21, 2018.

These 300 limited edition coins are performance based challenge coins that serve two purposes.

First: to recognize individuals who have made a significant contribution, above and beyond reasonable expectations in one or more of three categories, time, talent & treasure, thereby assisting "The Friends" achieve its mission to support the RCMP Heritage Centre.

Second: to commemorate the original 300 members of the NWMP who mustered at Fort Dufferin in 1874 to begin their historic march west.

Each individual challenge coin is engraved with the surname of the recipient as well as one other identifying inscription such as Regimental Number, in the case of Members and Veterans.



RECOGNITION AWARDS

continued from page 3

The challenge coin is accompanied by a certificate that highlights the contribution of the recipient and reminds the recipient of the “Original” member of the NWMP who is assigned the Regimental Number that corresponds with the numerical order in which each challenge coin is presented, from 001 to 300.

By Command of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre at Regina, Saskatchewan, home of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Veteran **Ron Ostrum** was awarded the first Challenge Coin in recognition of his outstanding and significant contributions for more than a quarter century of dedicating his time and talent as a member of “The Friends” Board of Directors to help preserve, promote and share the unique Canadian history, heritage and traditions of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

As the first Recipient Ron was also reminded of the original NWMP member, assigned Regimental # 001, Sam Steele, originally listed as Regimental # 003 but after consolidation of Regimental numbers in 1878 was assigned 001.

President Smart also had the honour of simultaneously presenting Ron Ostrum with “The Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers”, officially recognizing his exceptional and sustained volunteer contributions to our community through his role with “The Friends” for more than twenty five years.

President Smart also, amplified the role of family support as he presented the 2nd challenge coin by Command of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre to **Marj Ostrum** in recognition of her outstanding and significant contributions in the true spirit of “the second man” in assisting her husband to preserve, promote and share for more than a quarter

century, the unique Canadian history, heritage and traditions of the Force. As the 2nd recipient Marj was reminded of the original NWMP member assigned Regimental #002, John Henry Gresham Bray, originally issued Regimental # 092, he was re-assigned Regimental # 002 following consolidation in 1878.

President Smart also advised those attending the AGM, that over the next period of time, other individuals who have dedicated their time, talent and/or treasures, above and beyond expectations, will also be recognized for their outstanding contributions to help fulfill the mandate of the “The Friends” to support the RCMP Heritage Centre and RCMP Historic Collections Unit.

Since inception, “The Friends” have provided financial support in excess of \$2,300,000 and countless hours of volunteer service, to say nothing of the direct contributions to the “Heritage Centre” in support of our mission.

The Friends Board of Directors is very cognizant and appreciative of the corporate and individual support in meeting our mission and recognize same through various Membership categories defined by financial contribution.

The Friends Challenge Coin was introduced to recognize those “individuals” who have made significant contributions of their time, talent and/or treasures above and beyond normal expectations, be they directly to the RCMP Heritage Centre, RCMP Historic Collections and/or indirectly through the Friends of the RCMP Heritage Centre.

THE MORE NORTHERLY ROUTE - LOOKING BACK 70 YEARS.

By Doreen Larsen Riedel

The following article is re-printed with the kind permission of Doreen Larsen Riedel, the daughter of Henry Larsen.



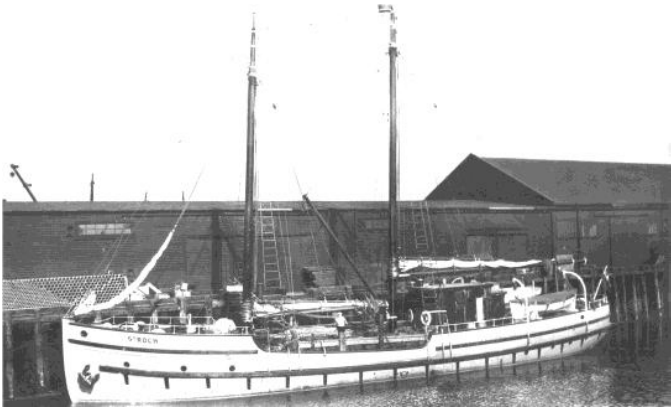
Captain Henry Larsen - on arrival of MV St Roch, Vancouver, B.C. October 16 1944. (Vancouver Sun, Vancouver Maritime Museum).

For over 400 years, economic factors drove the British and European search for the Northwest Passage. By the time of the Victorian age at the end of the Napoleonic wars, many British naval officers and men had become un-employed, creating pressure for northern expeditions to provide employment for them. Yet it took many more decades before the Norwegian polar explorer, Roald Amundsen, made the first documented, successful transit of the sea route above the North American continent in 1905-06. This transit was not in a big warship or trading vessel with hundreds of men, but in a small Norwegian fishing vessel with a crew of 8. Nearly forty more years passed before the next two transits. These were made by Henry Larsen, a Norwegian Canadian, in a small wooden Royal Canadian Mounted Police schooner, *St Roch*, especially built as a floating police detachment, and with a crew of 7 and 10.

Ten years later, when the Northwest Passage became important for defence reasons, the Canadian icebreaker HMCS *Labrador*, the American icebreakers USCGS *Storis*, *Bramble*, *Spar* and American submarines USS *Nautilus* and *Seadragon*, took up the icy challenge. By the end of 2012, 135 vessels (excluding submarines) had crossed the Arctic Circle on each side of the North American continent, the points that officially mark the limits of the Northwest Passage.¹ Today we hear about so many cruise ships, research vessels, military vessels and commercial ships passing through these waters, as well as open rowboats, canoes, kayaks and small yachts, that we almost dismiss the difficulties of the earlier voyages.

The historic west to east voyage of the *St Roch* in 1940-42 is reasonably well known, although the breadth and difficulties of jobs carried out by the crews of that ship over its whole career, from 1928-1948, are not. The 1944 voyage is usually dismissed as taking only 86 days, leaving the impression that it was an easy passage. However, on this 70th anniversary year of that voyage it is my intention to dispel this notion.

Up until the mid-1950s, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police assigned to Arctic service, including those on the *St Roch*, carried out activities outside the normal range of police work. They conducted regular patrols by dog team to conduct census, monitor game, issue licences and permits, distribute family allowances, carry mail, and check living conditions in Inuit communities. They administered federal regulations, enforced territorial ordinances, acted as notaries public, commissioners of oaths and inspectors of weights and measures. They wrote extensive reports, monitored weather, transmitted messages by radio, recorded flow in rivers, collected biological specimens, determined suitability of sites for posts and harbours, built new posts and relocated others. They transported children to school and cared for the sick, transporting the very ill to hospitals at Aklavik. They also moved trappers, ministers, priests and other Royal Canadian Mounted Police



MV St Roch moored at Evans Coleman Evans, wharf, Vancouver, prior to maiden Arctic voyage June 1928 (Larsen fonds VMM).



A protective covering was built over St Roch when overwintering. Here shown at Tree River in 1930's (Larsen fonds VMM). 7

members from one post to another. They acted as coroners, justices of the peace and occasionally investigated murders or transported prisoners. They explored and mapped large and remote Arctic areas, raised and trained dogs for their patrol use, hunted walrus, bear, seals and fished for themselves and their sled dogs. During the long winters they dressed and travelled in native fashion, usually hiring a local man to go along to help. Their objective was the maintenance of Canada's sovereignty over the Canadian Arctic.

The crew of the St Roch was appointed in the same manner as any other Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment, usually for a year or two, and without prior maritime training. In addition to the myriad of responsibilities previously outlined, the crew loaded supplies in Vancouver or at the mouth of the McKenzie River and carried them to land detachments along Coronation Gulf. By 1948, St. Roch had overwintered 11 years. At the beginning of each of these winters, the crew selected a harbour and built a protective cover over the ship. They collected water for winter from freshwater pools on the sea ice or cut blocks of ice from nearby lakes. When spring approached, they used a pick and shovel to remove ice from around the hull and particularly from around the propeller, then scraped and re-painted the entire ship.

On seeing the St Roch as she is today, preserved in the Vancouver Maritime Museum safe on dry land, one can hardly imagine the experience of the crew aboard the ship when they voyaged in ice-ridden,

dangerous northern waters years ago. The interior space was small and cramped; most of the crew were berthed below deck. It was impossible to see over the bow from the wheelhouse, a serious defect when navigating in ice. There was no satellite system, radar, weather report, ice reconnaissance, coast guard patrol or search and rescue. They carried all food and fuel supplies north with them. Radio contact extended about 200 miles, so messages were relayed between various posts. When the main engine was not running, kerosene or gasoline lamps were used until batteries were installed for electric light in 1940. The waters they passed through were largely uncharted, there was no depth sounder. The single magnetic compass in the tiny wheelhouse was impossible to use for taking bearings. Larsen was the only navigator until 1940. When the weather was good, he took his sightings using a sextant and a pocket stop watch because the chronometer in the wheel-house was inaccessible. He spent many hours observing from the crow's nest, signal-ing directions by hand to a man on the deck who then passed the information to the man at the wheel, who in turn relayed orders to the engine room. Larsen, aware of the deficiencies of the ship wrote this after its historic 1940-42 voyage through the North-west Passage: "In Halifax, the St Roch, being ugly, slow and uncomfortable to live on, was now like an unwanted stepchild, and looked upon with a criticizing eye by people who did not know her many good qualities in a tight spot and especially in the waters she was built for."

continued in the next issue...

Footnotes

1. R. K. Headland, *Transits of the Northwest Passage to End of the 2012 Navigation Season, Re-revised 3 March 2013, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge, United Kingdom, CB2 1ER*

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

*FRIEND – \$500.00 +

Michael Purdy, Ottawa, ON
 Bill Foreman, Canora, SK
 Daniel B.Lemieux, West Vancouver, BC
 Des & Eunice Gore-Hickman, Saskatoon, SK
 Robert W.Copeland, Ottawa, ON
 Therese Ayotte, Ottawa, ON
 Ugo D Poltronetti, Les Cedres, QC
 Howard Ellis, Windsor, ON

*LIFE MEMBERS – \$1,200.00 +

Patrick & Greta Wilson, Burnaby, BC

IN MEMORIAM

\$100.00 William J. Smith, Baddeck, NS
 in memory of Lois I. Smith

*These are cumulative amounts over the years

FRIENDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

President	Bob Smart, RCMP (Rtd.)
Past President	Bill Greenslade, RCMP (Rtd.)
Secretary	Ron Ostrum, RCMP (Rtd.)
Director	Bob Cocks
Director	Murray Klatt, RCMP (Rtd.)
Director	Dave Hoeft, RCMP (Rtd.)
Director	Glen Berger
Director	Al Nicholson
Director	W. Douglas Keam
Force Observer	SM Ben Gibault
Historical Collections	
Unit Observer	Rhonda Lamb
Heritage Centre Observer	Marty Klyne
Membership Committee	Ron Ostrum, RCMP (Rtd.)
Newsletter Editor	Murray Klatt, RCMP (Rtd.)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP PRESENTATIONS



Photo of President Bob Smart presenting Life Member plaque to Mrs. Shirley Williamson, at AGM Mar 21st, 2018.

Photo: Marj Ostrum



SPECIAL DONATION

President Bob Smart presenting a cheque for \$110,000.00 to Marty Klyne, CEO of the Heritage Centre at AGM Mar 21st, 2018.

Photo: Dan Toppings

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Membership One Year (\$35) Three Years (\$90)
Life Membership \$1,200 single payment or cumulative over several years to \$1,200 level. Existing members will have past membership payments credited towards the \$1,200 level.
Donation _____ (Any amount is eligible for a Canada Customs and Revenue Agency tax receipt. Canada Only)

American residents please add \$5.00 extra per year and international residents please add \$10.00 extra per year, to cover postage costs.

Total Enclosed Amount \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov./State _____

Postal Code _____ Country _____

E-mail Address _____

My membership/donation will be paid by:

- Cheque/check (payable to the Friends of the Mounted Police Museum)
 Credit Card # _____ (Visa or Master Card) Expiry _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

Return by Mail:

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

Join or Renew Your Membership Online:

Purchase your membership of the *Friends* with a simple, secure, on-line transaction using Pay Pal. When we receive your payment, a receipt will be sent to you by mail. Visit our website at www.rcmpfcfriends.com and click on "Join the Friends".