

# FRIENDLY NOTES

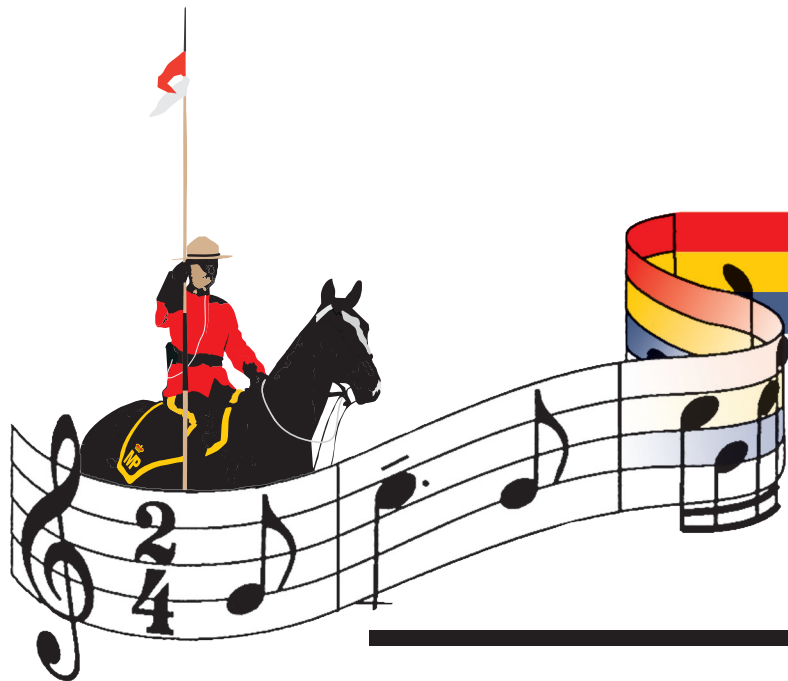
Friends Of The Mounted Police Heritage Centre

Les Amis Du Centre Du Patrimoine De La GRC

# NOTES AMICALES

VOLUME 25

ISSUE 3 SUMMER 2015



## RE-ENACTMENT OF THE MARCH WEST

MAY 8 To JULY 24, 1999

PROUD  
SUPPORTERS  
OF/FIERS  
D'APPUYER

RCMP  
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LE CENTRE  
DU PATRIMOINE  
DE LA GRC

RCMP  
HISTORICAL  
COLLECTIONS  
UNIT



GROUPE DES  
COLLECTIONS  
HISTORIQUES



The following is the continuation of the article which began in the Spring 2015 issue of the *Friendly Notes*. This account was edited by Murray Klatt from reports that were published for the reading pleasure of the rank and file members of the RCMP during the re-enactment.

\* \* \*

The actual March left Peiron, Manitoba on May 21st and travelled to Camp Gainsborough, just south east of Carnduff, Saskatchewan. Cst Jerry Bomersine was the Ridemaster, Retired Sgt Andy Anderson was the Corp Sargent Major (CSM). "The Saskatchewan crew of Bomersine, Hoeft, Rob and Denita Taylor and Bob Cocks bunked down at

the camp site. CSM Anderson toughed it out for the night at the Motel."

Carnduff Detachment and the Town of Carnduff hosted a Regimental Dinner which was attend by about 300 people and deemed an outstanding success. Cst Gord Stewart organized the event which included a life-size black plastic horse on display. It was the first formal event and almost all riders and support staff attended. Historic uniforms were issued to support staff and student workers. "The Big News: The sun came out this afternoon and all weather reports suggest sunny days to continue. Much happiness at camp."

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## MARCH WEST *continued from page 1*

May 22 – *“The Downs-Saunders (Sue and Steve) wedding was quite a hit. First time in years traffic was backed up in Carnduff. The local residents saw a 20 horse and rider escort for the bride, who arrived at the church in a horse drawn carriage. She was wearing a specially made 1874 wedding dress. French CBC, CTV, The National Post, The Winnipeg Sun and some weeklies were present for the ceremony.”* (This was an actual wedding of volunteers involved in the March.)

*“Rumours and tall talk about snake and tick infested campsites and bathing once a week in rivers or dugouts were two such concerns brought to my attention by two female riders. We even heard some talk of mass desertion if we changed the program. Amazing!”*

*“After 15 days of riding through horrible conditions, the riders have bonded and developed a definite esprit d’corps. It will be a challenge to maintain this level of morale while trying to convince them to conform to our way of doing things.”*

*“Residents and visitors were very resilient and determined.... I was humbled and proud to watch so many people, many of whom were senior citizens, applaud as the 20-25 scarlet clad riders went by. I believe they admire and honour the Force and our tradition more than some of us.”*

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May 23 – The biggest concern was communication from the top down. *“...riders never knew in advance what was happening at their stops, where they were expected to go and what to do.”*

May 24 – The first full day in Saskatchewan:

*“At 07:30 hrs, CSM Anderson lines up the riders and wagons. He explains the parade routing and then runs through a quick rehearsal. The riders number, count off by sections and get ready for inspection. The CSM reports to the Ridemaster and informs him that everyone is accounted for and ready to proceed. The Ridemaster acknowledges the CSM, who then barks out an order to proceed by half sections. A very impressive departure witnessed by approximately twenty visitors, including Deputy Commissioner Roy Berlinquette, who was extremely impressed and proud.”*

*“Throughout the March today, the riders wore their scarlet tunics. Although there were less than 40 riders, they were an impressive sight, riding in formation.”*

May 25 – South East of Oxbow to Ray’s Park.

The March set out at 08:00 hrs. It was a beautiful day. Sixteen riders and two wagons did a parade through Oxbow. It was extremely well received by the community. Even the school cleared out to get a glimpse.

May 26 – Ray’s Park to Roche Percee.

*“As luck would have it, a thunderstorm and down pour, predicted for the 27th hit at lunch time. Our riders were able to shelter themselves and stayed out of the rain. The pasture, rougher than the roads, resulted in a double-tree on one of the wagons being broken. Our troops were only held up for about 10 minutes while they did a repair on the run. One little spill of note occurred along the way when a horse backed into a small ravine and fell backwards over the rider. Others described it as seeing the horse and then seeing the horse’s legs sticking up over the ravine. The horse got up and took off to the front of the line and, to everyone’s relief, the rider got up and was not hurt.”*

*“Our troops arrived at Roche Percee in column formation at 16:00 hrs and looked quite impressive*

*coming down the valley into town. Forty-five riders in column with four wagons in tow, stood out just as they did 125 years ago.”*

*“CSM Anderson formed the troops at 19:45 hrs. Commissioner French (Cst Bomersine), Inspector Jarvis (Cpl Hoeft) and Sargent Major (SM) Steele (Maureen Watt) were in attendance as the troops were inspected by the Mayor of Roche Percee. Commissioner French called upon Insp. Jarvis to prepare ‘A’ Troop to leave for Fort Saskatchewan.”*  
(via the North Route)

*“Mayor Wayne Evanson of Roche Percee inspected the troops and spoke about the relationship with the Force. He then presented a painting to Cst Bomersine, and Cst Bomersine read a letter prepared by Commissioner Murray and a painting was presented to the Mayor. The flag was lowered and the troops dismissed. Afterwards, mingling was encouraged and visiting took place with 200 plus people in attendance. The horse shoes which were to last six weeks are looking pretty thin. The farrier is getting quite a work out.”*

May 27 – The March stopped at a location where the original March West had stopped in 1874.

*“The landowner had a picture depicting the camp in 1874 and he explained same to the troops. Troops arrived at Woodend for lunch and were quickly joined by several residents from the area. A ceremony took place at which time a cairn was unveiled. The Retired Teacher’s Association undertook the project of erecting a stone cairn dedicated to the original NWMP Detachment set up here in 1874 and also to pay tribute to the settlers who came after and did much to develop this country.”*

The troops rode in a parade in Estevan and then performed a sunset ceremony in front of the Woodend Detachment which had been moved to the museum in Estevan and restored. This was the first sunset ceremony held in front of the Woodend Detachment since 1874.

May 28 – Torquay.

*“Friends joined up with the March just east of Torquay when the Queen’s Cowboys (a re-*

*enactment group from Brandon Manitoba) arrived. They added authenticity to the March by towing a cannon. On their arrival just after 1600 hrs, they paraded into Torquay.”*

*“This was the final day for many riders who had journeyed from Emerson and west. A discharge parade was held for ‘A’ Troop who were leaving the ride at this time. ‘A’ Troop marched over to the parade square, led by Right-marker Cst Tom Lowden. Cst Gerald Bomersine and Bob Cocks (Sgt Bob Cocks of the March West Office) issued discharge certificates. Those departing were very good ambassadors for the March and as may as possible were personally thanked during the evening.”*

May 31 – uneventful travel to Tribune, Sask.

*“Today, like previous days, several vehicles found us along the route. Many stopped and people disembarked to watch the March go by. But, about 2:30 pm a vehicle coming from behind the riders struck one horse and a wagon as it tried to go by. The horse bolted into the ditch and bucked off its rider, a Moose Jaw Police Service member. The wagon team also bolted forward into the other horses, but was calmed very quickly. The 85-year-old operator of the vehicle, a local resident who had come to see the March, was very much under the influence of alcohol. He was quickly stopped and detained until our Radville detachment member arrived and took control of the situation. The riders couldn’t help noting a large supply of refreshments left in his vehicle. I think at least six different peace officers played some role in this incident; all perhaps looking to come back to Radville, Saskatchewan for Court. You think? When it was over Cst Kate Wheatling remarked. ‘Well, we got our whiskey runner, now let’s get ourselves a horse thief!’ ”*

June 1 – Ceylon, Sask.

*“Standing on a knoll about 100 meters from the camp site, trying to get the cell phone to work, I looked around and saw very few farms. Large fields seemed to stretch out in all directions. But this was to be the site of ‘a huge’ wiener roast and*

*continued on page 4*



## **MARCH WEST** *continued from page 3*

*quite frankly I felt the organizers overplayed the event. By 6:30 pm, the 380 or more people who were enjoying hot dogs and good conversation with each other and our riders certainly proved the organizers knew the community better than I did. It was an amazing experience. Most of the visitors stayed for the sunset ceremony which also featured a discharge ceremony for one of our riders. We also took this opportunity to present the Commissioner's parchment to the Reeves of three Municipalities and the Mayor of Radville. Despite all the work these communities did to put on these events and to ensure we had good roads, water and shower sources, they insisted on thanking us for coming through their communities. This is what the re-enactment is about and all members and civilians who participated felt the pride, respect and admiration of the 380 visitors."*

June 02 – Pangman, Saskatchewan.

*"Ridemaster Gerry Bomersine timed the March very well, arriving at Pangman about 15:50 hrs (they were asked to arrive at 16:00 hrs). A group of riders and two wagons, all members of the South Country Riding Club, met us and led us into town and to the welcoming reception. Mayor Roger Sangbrook and Reeve Chuck Jacques officially welcomed the March to Pangman and presented our Ridemaster a key to the village. A special ceremony was held for Sue Downs, the first RCMP bride to come to Pangman. Sue has done very well along the route collecting gifts at many locations. But knowing Sue and Steve, meeting new people and making new friends is all they expect and what they most cherish."*

June 03 – destination Dummer, Saskatchewan.

A route change was made necessary this day by heavy rains and impassible roads. Today saw two riders sick or injured and two horses unable to travel much like the original March West.

June 04 – destination Avonlea, Saskatchewan.

No events this evening.

June 05 – day off.

*"The day started out with a pancake breakfast which was followed by craft shows, old tyme music and then a pow-wow by Piapot First Nations. The afternoon included entertainment by performers Stephanie Thomson, Gary Kincaid, Cowboy Poets, Cloggers and another pow-wow by Piapot First Nations."*

*"At 14:45 hrs the March West troops paraded down to the arena. After being introduced, they marched around the arena and back towards camp, to the enjoyment and applause of the more than one thousand people who watched from bleachers and hill sides. The Phantom riders then performed for the crowd. Once they were done the RCMP Musical Ride put on a performance which was up to their usual excellent standard and enjoyed by the crowd. It was also the first time some of the March West Troops had seen the Musical Ride. Quite impressed, but our troops had nothing to be ashamed of as they looked pretty sharp while marking in and out for the arena area. After the performance, March West participants, in their period uniform, posed for photographs in front of the Musical Ride."*

June 06 – Spring Valley, Saskatchewan.

Uneventful ride through the Dunnet Hills – this area was videoed by helicopter to show the March in uncharted areas.

June 07 – destination Mossbank, Saskatchewan.

*"At 10:30 hrs we encountered a group of wagons and riders along with several youth just on the West side of the highway. Being one of the first groups we encountered along the trail itself, our interest was peaked. Alas, these were neither whiskey traders or strangers threatening the sovereignty of our great country. We had met up with a group of fine settlers called the Willow Bunch historical Trail Riders, who were accompanied by the Red Coat Trail School Division 69 students from Crane Valley."*

*"A brief ceremony was held and a presentation made to the March West of a sash, 4-H plaque, Canada Post 125 stamp set and historical books for the area."*

*“We then departed company with these fine people and headed off toward Mossbank. Wash outs along the original intended route making wagon travel there virtually impossible as well as a land owner having a change of heart about letting our troops pass on land resulted in further changes to the route. Miles and time were added for our weary troops to contend with. It made for a long journey, closer to 35 miles than 26, and a long day with our troops not arriving in to Mossbank until 17:45 hrs.”*

*“Our troops were given a warm welcome by more than 300 people lining the streets. A march past and salute was given to Saskatchewan’s Lieutenant Governor. Our troops then headed off to camp, dismounted and tended to their horses.”*

*“After a blessing by Reverend Higgs of Depot Division, speeches were given by the Mayor, the Lieutenant Governor and Insp Daryl McFadyen to the crowd. Crowds then enjoyed festivities put on by the town, including a steak supper, aboriginal dancing, a drama based on the Old Wive’s Lake Massacre as well as a sunset ceremony by our troops of the March West. They then took the signs they’d made and had them autographed by members in attendance.”*

June 8 – destination Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan.

Heavy rain and muddy roads for the entire day. A discharge ceremony was the only event to take place this date.

June 9.

*“At 2:30 pm, 13 scarlet clad riders accompanied by four local riders and two antique vehicles, paraded down Main Street (in Gravelbourg) to the town office where they were met by Henri Lepage, the Mayor and other dignitaries. Hundreds of people lined the sidewalks along the parade route and at least 500 people gathered for the official greeting. D/Comm Berlingquette and our Ridemaster Gerry Bomersine, accepted a gift from the Mayor and then presented a parchment and framed print to the community. Special recognition was given to Trailtech, a Gravelbourg company which supplied the March with three flat deck trailers and the marketing trailer.”*

*“Later in the evening, a community supper and dance was a sell out. Three hundred tickets were sold, and we were informed they could have sold 500 tickets if they had been available. The weather, which was keeping the farmers off the fields, had lots to do with this; although we like to think everyone wanted to join us for a celebration. For the first time during the Saskatchewan portion of the trek, the new riders participated in a public swearing in ceremony.”*

*“Recruit riders such as Harper Boucher, Gerry Snodgrass, Tony Randall and Celine Dunlop were among the 16 who swore their allegiance to the Queen. Entertainment for the evening was provided by the high school band and a traditional French and Metis dance group.”*

June 10 – farm near Hodgeville, Saskatchewan.

*“During the Original March, Gravelbourg was the site chosen by Lt Col French to set up his cripple camp for those men who had been injured or had become sick along the march. This morning our administrative coordinator received a minor injury and was taken to the local hospital. We were fortunate the injury was very minor and we did not have to re-establish the cripple camp.”*

*“The main column of riders departed shortly after 7:30 am. Six riders and horses stayed back and were trailered to the Wood Mountain Post Provincial Historical Park, about one hour south of Gravelbourg, for a special celebration. The Commanding Officer of ‘F’ Division, Harper Boucher, was among the riders travelling to Wood Mountain Post. Our riders were met about seven miles outside Wood Mountain by several local riders. The entire group then travelled across the back country to the park. The riders enjoyed the trip most of which was across open pasture and hills. The scenery was outstanding. They saw numerous deer and antelope, but were especially pleased to have an opportunity to travel by a 100-year-old Sioux burial site on the Wood Mountain Indian Reserve. One rider stated they were seeing the Saskatchewan very few travelers see. Everyone associates Saskatchewan with*

*continued on page 6*

## MARCH WEST *continued from page 5*

*endless miles of flat prairie, but the uninhabited rolling hills they crossed were a site to behold.”*

*“Rory Thomson, 25 years, was among the many local residents who greeted the riders at the park. His great grandfather, James Thomson, was a member of the NWMP who had been posted at Wood Mountain. There, he met and married Mary Hawk, a member of the Hanpapa Band of the Lakota Tribe which formed part of Sitting Bull’s Sioux Confederacy. The Thomson family have lived*

*in the Wood Mountain area for over 100 years.”*

*“The entertainment included Andre Rondeau, a Metis fiddler from the area, and the school children from Limerick, Sask. The grades two and three class recited a special poem and the grade one class performed their version of the RCMP Musical Ride. A play, put on by local actors portrayed the arrival of the NWMP to Wood Mountain in 1874. ...*

\* \* \*

**“Re-Enactment of the March West” will continue in the Fall 2015 newsletter.**

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

A warm welcome to the following persons who have become members of the *Friends*:

Rene Danis, Ottawa

## FRIENDLY NOTES BY E-MAIL

Would you like to receive the *Friendly Notes* electronically?

This e-mail delivery allows you to view the *Friendly Notes* online rather than through the mail. If so, please provide your e-mail address to [m.klatt@sasktel.net](mailto:m.klatt@sasktel.net) and your e-mail address will be added to the mail-out list. The *Friendly Notes* will be sent in the Adobe Acrobat pdf format.

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It’s easy! All you need is access to the Internet and an electronic mail address.

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 have been made to the “Donor Wall” since our last issue:

### \$1200 – LIFE\*

E. Fay Plomp, Edmonton, AB  
Helen A. Taylor, Torbay, NL  
Donald I. Harlock, Kamloops, BC

### \$500 – FRIEND\*

Greg Albright, Alliston, ON  
Peter & Hilda Keller, Sherwood Park, AB  
Mrs. Doreen Young, Delta, BC

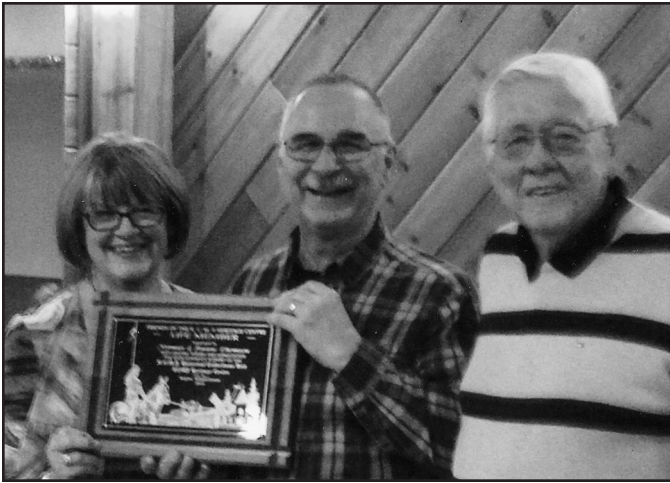
\*These are cumulative amounts over the years

### IN MEMORIAM:

\$100 – Ken Fader, Regina, SK –  
in memory of Ted Andrew, Regina  
\$100 – Ken Fader, Regina, SK – in  
memory of John Worthington, Regina  
\$100 – Ken Fader, Regina, SK –  
in memory of Tony Breszinski, Regina  
\$100 Doreen Young, Delta, BC – in memory  
of #18822, C.C. “Tinker” Young  
\$1200 Helen Taylor, Torbay, NL –  
in memory of Cpl. Clyde Taylor



# LIFE MEMBERSHIP PRESENTATIONS



A life membership plaque and lapel pins were presented to **Norm and Joanne Thomson** on behalf of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre. The award was presented on November 27, 2014 at the Prince Albert Vet's Christmas Party by Bob Hemsworth of the Prince Albert Division of the RCMP Veterans' Association. The presentation is in recognition of generous support and contributions over the years. In the photo, viewed from left to right are Joanne Thomson, Norm Thomson, and Bob Hemsworth.

*Photo: Skip Antonson*

A life membership plaque and lapel pins were presented to **Doug and Laura Weber** on behalf of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre. The award was presented on April 23, 2015 at the Medicine Hat Branch of the NAFR/FSNA AGM, in recognition of generous support and contributions over the years. In the photo, viewed from left to right are Doug and Laura Weber. Doug followed by making a short but very informative presentation on the history and purpose of the *Friends* society.

*Photo: Lionel Provost*



A life membership plaque and lapel pins were presented to **Andre and Deborah Gauthier** on behalf of the Friends of the Mounted Police Heritage Centre. The award was presented on May 27, 2015 in Kentville, NS at the meeting of the Nova Scotia Veterans Association by Barry Gerrard, vice-president. The presentation is in recognition of generous support and contributions over the years. In the photo, viewed from left to right are Barry Gerrard, Deborah Gauthier, and Andre Gauthier.

*Photo: Donald LeGrow*



**REQUEST FOR  
SUBMISSIONS  
TO THE  
FRIENDLY NOTES**

Anyone who has an interesting article, note, or photo relating to the history of the RCMP and wishing the same to be published in the *Friendly Notes*, may submit it to Murray Klatt at: m.klatt@sasktel.net, or mail to:

The Editor, Friendly Notes  
c/o Friends of the Mounted Police  
Heritage Centre  
5907 Dewdney Avenue  
Regina, Saskatchewan Canada S4T 0P4

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