

# THE BEECHWOOD<sup>WAY</sup> MAGAZINE



RCMP Veterans'  
Legacy Pathway



# Introduction to the RCMP Veterans' Legacy Pathway Honouring Service, Preserving Legacy

The RCMP Veterans' Legacy Pathway at the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood stands as a permanent and public testament to the men and women who served with honour in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This pathway features ten commemorative granite stones, each affixed with bilingual plaques in English and French, narrating the storied evolution of the RCMP. At the heart of the installation stands a central monolith engraved with the RCMP Veterans Association crest—a symbolic anchor for remembrance, pride, and unity.

Each stone was quarried from the same historic site that provided stone for Canada's Parliament Buildings, linking the pathway both physically and symbolically to the foundations of our country. This careful choice reinforces the legacy of the RCMP as inseparable from the Canadian story.

## A Symbol of Canada

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is one of the most enduring and recognizable symbols of Canada. Formed in 1873 as the North-West Mounted Police, the RCMP has been a constant presence throughout Canada's nation-building journey—from establishing order in the Northwest Territories to serving on global peacekeeping missions.

With its iconic red serge uniform and unyielding commitment to the rule of law, the RCMP is a visual and institutional embodiment of Canadian values: service, accountability, justice, and respect. As Canada's federal police service, it serves eight provinces, three territories, hundreds of municipalities, and Indigenous communities—while also working across international borders to combat transnational crime, terrorism, and cyber threats.

## The RCMP National Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood

Inaugurated in 2004 through a partnership between the RCMP Veterans' Association, the RCMP, and the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood Cemetery—Canada's National Cemetery—is a place of lasting honour. This sacred ground recognizes Regular Members, Civilian Members, and Public Service Employees of the RCMP, as well as their loved ones.

This cemetery is more than a final resting place—it is a site of reflection, remembrance, and recognition. It honours a collective legacy, standing proudly within a national institution that safeguards the memory of those who have served Canada in all capacities.





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## The Legacy Pathway

The RCMP Veterans' Legacy Pathway consists of ten granite monoliths installed in sequence to represent key moments in the history of the RCMP—from the March West and early frontier law enforcement, to wartime service, national modernization, and commitments to diversity and reconciliation.

Each monolith bears an interpretive plaque in both official languages, enabling visitors to engage fully with the RCMP's rich and complex history. The central stone, featuring the RCMP Veterans Association crest, serves as the visual and ceremonial focal point of the pathway—symbolizing honour, fraternity, and continued service to Canada.

This pathway is more than a commemoration—it is an educational and inspirational journey. It ensures that the contributions, sacrifices, and evolving role of the RCMP are remembered and respected by future generations.



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# NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE 1873-1903

Under the authority of an Act of the Parliament of Canada, assented to on May 23, 1873, the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) was established on August 30, 1873. Its purpose was to administer the laws of Canada in the Northwest Territories after the transfer of jurisdiction from the British Crown.

Assembling near Winnipeg in Manitoba, a province since 1870, a mounted unit of 300 men recruited from Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, with local Métis guides, set out in the “March West” in 1874. They established posts in the areas that would be the future provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and formed a headquarters in Regina.

Establishing relations with First Nations and Métis, the NWMP enforced and administered Canadian law. They brought smugglers and murderers to justice; facilitated the treaty-making process (especially Treaties No. 6 and 7), and employed First Nations and Métis as scouts, guides and interpreters. Their service was vital to the success of the NWMP. The NWMP kept the peace when Sioux fleeing the US Army sought refuge in Canada; and provided food supplies during famine following the disappearance of the bison herds.

Despite their warnings to Ottawa, when tension between the Canadian Government and some of the Métis and First Nations erupted into violent conflict in 1885, the NWMP participated in the fighting, suffering 8 constables killed, whose names are inscribed on the Honour Roll and Cenotaph in this cemetery.

As the non-Indigenous population grew, the NWMP fought crime, administered justice and, through the Patrol System, provided a vital service by keeping in contact with inhabitants.

The discovery of gold in 1896 led to the Klondike Gold Rush, and the NWMP expanded its operations into the Yukon Territory to enforce Canadian law and to maintain the peace over what might otherwise have been law-less chaos.

Canada was a new country, it was also a self-governing Dominion within the British Empire. The NWMP stepped onto the international stage in 1897 attending Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, and became more widely recognized in 1900 by providing men and horses to fight in the South African War (1900-1902) alongside Canadian troops in their first overseas deployment.



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## ROYAL NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE 1904 - 1919

Having participated in the 1902 Coronation of King Edward VII, the NWMP was granted the prefix “Royal” as part of the 1904 Coronation Honours. The economy was booming as never before and more and more immigrants chose Canada as their new home.

The Royal North-West Mounted Police (RNWMP) began to expand operations into the Canadian Arctic, first in Hudson’s Bay and the MacKenzie River Delta, and then into the Arctic Islands, in doing so established relations with the Inuit and relying on them for assistance and support.

The First World War represents a real coming of age for Canada. The Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917 was a key event in Canada’s development as a nation. Vimy became a shared symbol for Canadians and a source of national identity and pride. The First World War also brought immense change to the RNWMP. Two Cavalry Drafts were raised - “A” Squadron was deployed to the Western Front in Europe and “B” Squadron to Siberia during the Russian Revolution.

After the Armistice in November 1918, the strength of the RNWMP was increased to meet the demand, and new Divisions and Detachments had to be opened in the three Prairie provinces, British Columbia, and northwestern Ontario, while continuing local policing in the northern territories.

In the aftermath of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, the Government of Canada decided to re-organize national security and federal policing. The RNWMP would absorb and take over the Dominion Police and its Federal policing jurisdiction in Eastern Canada, and become the sole Federal policing agency for all of Canada.

## ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE 1920 - 1938

On February 1, 1920, the re-named Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) came into being. National headquarters moved from “Depot” Division in Regina, Saskatchewan, to Ottawa, Ontario. The RCMP absorbed the officers and jurisdiction of the former Dominion Police to become the sole Federal policing agency for all of Canada. New Divisions and Detachments were opened in Ontario, Quebec, and the three Maritime Provinces.

That the RCMP was now a truly national police service was a reflection of a new sense of national pride created by our wartime experience. If Canada entered the war as a colony of Great Britain, it emerged with a strong sense of national identity and would continue to develop.





In 1928, Saskatchewan became the first province to contract with the RCMP for provincial policing. Then in 1931, beginning with Flin Flon, Manitoba, the RCMP began to enter into contracts with cities in provinces other than Ontario and Quebec to provide municipal policing services.

In 1932, the Preventive Service of the Department of National Revenue was absorbed into the Force, creating “Marine” Division with its own fleet of ships. In 1937, the aircraft and pilots of the RCMP were formed into “Air” Services, later expanding in size and capability as “Air” Division. These services were established to combat smuggling during the Prohibition Era and to reach remote detachments in the far North.

During the 1930s the RCMP modernized to provide the most up-to-date policing services and techniques. Motor vehicles replaced horses, radio and telecommunication links were established, and forensic laboratories were built and staffed with scientists. Specialty units such as Identification and Police Service Dogs were formed. A Canadian Police College was established, and recruit training facilities at “Depot” and “N” Divisions were provided with more rigorous curricula.

If the war brought Canadian from the various provinces closer together, advances in air travel and the creation of the Canadian Radio Broadcast Corporation (now CBC) did the same.



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## ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE 1939-1973

Canada made a significant contribution to the Second World War, 1939-1945. Over 1 million men and women served in uniform on land, in the air, at sea and on the home front; individuals and communities all across the country were affected by world events.

The outbreak of the Second World War also had a profound impact on the RCMP. Because of the pressing need for national security and counter-espionage duties during wartime, members were prohibited from discharging in order to enlist in the Canadian Armed Forces. Nevertheless, a “representative unit” was permitted, which became No. 1 Provost Company (RCMP), which served overseas with distinction in England, Italy and Northwest Europe. The names of those who gave up their lives are inscribed on the Honour Roll and Cenotaph in this cemetery.

At the start of war, all ships and crew of “Marine” Section was transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy, and they served with distinction during the pivotal Battle of the Atlantic. Similarly, all the aircraft and pilots of “Air” Section were transferred to the Royal Canadian Air Force. The names of those RCMP members who perished are inscribed on the Honour Roll and Cenotaph in this cemetery.

At home, the RCMP northern supply vessel ST ROCH became the first ship to traverse the North-West Passage in both directions between 1942 and 1944. It was an incredible achievement and served to highlight the RCMP’s role in preserving Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic.

Canada emerged from the war with a new standing in the world, the country was now a player on the world stage, a founding member of both the United Nations (1945) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (1949).

The 1950s saw the expansion of the RCMP, especially with additional contract provinces and new duties and responsibilities related to modern police operations and administration. In 1966 recruit mounted training was discontinued, and the equestrian legacy of the RCMP would be perpetuated in the permanent Musical Ride.

To meet the more specialized needs of the RCMP, the Civilian Member category was created on April 1, 1960. For the first time, many women became members of the organization under this new category.

The country itself continued to strengthen its own identity within the Commonwealth. In 1965, Canada adopted its own distinctive flag and in Centennial Year, the country hosted Expo 67 in Montreal, a world’s fair that put the focus on Canada, its people, resources and resourcefulness. Between 1939 and 1974, Canada’s population doubled from 11 to 22 million, fueled by immigration and the “baby boom” in the immediate post-war years.

With the Official Languages Act in 1969, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police – Gendarmerie royale du Canada (GRC) became fully bilingual including all uniform insignia and public signage.

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## ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNT POLICE 1974 - 1998

In the afterglow of Centennial Year, Canadians became more conscious of our shared history, culture and diversity. From around the globe, immigrants chose Canada as their new home, thus enriching the cosmopolitan nature of the country and contributing to our unique nature. Canada's population continued to grow, passing 30 million by 1998, a full fifty percent increase since 1967.

With renewed confidence, Canada repatriated its constitution from Great Britain in 1982 and continued to find its place in the international community.

During the decades of the "Cold War", the RCMP through the development of its own Security Service, enhanced its national security capabilities to meet the global threat. In 1984, following the recommendations of a Royal Commission, a new civilian agency was mandated to assume this responsibility. A large number of RCMP regular and civilian members chose to continue their careers with the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS).

In a new role, the RCMP began providing both personnel and training to United Nations' civilian policing missions. In 1989, the first RCMP contingent for a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation was deployed to Namibia. Other missions to conflict zones such as Haiti and the former Yugoslavia followed.

As the RCMP approached the new millennium, significant changes were made to the organization in the 1990s to better meet the evolving expectations of Canadians. A new community-based policing model was rolled out across the country focusing on citizen needs, a reorganization of personnel and locations, improved services and a generational change in basic police training to a modernized cadet learning program at Depot Division in Regina.

Over its long history, the RCMP greatly benefitted from the vitally important role played by many Indigenous peoples as scouts, guides, interpreters and special constables. This relationship was enhanced by increasing the representation of Indigenous people in the RCMP as special constables in the 1970s, the commissioning of the first Indigenous officer in 1988 and the establishment of a National Aboriginal Advisory Committee in 1990.

In the same year, the famous red serge uniform worn by male Members was adopted for female Members as well, and articles of religious or spiritual significance, such as turbans for members of the Sikh faith, were permitted to be worn. In 1982, the first black woman joined the Mounted Police and by 1998, the RCMP promoted its first woman Assistant Commissioner and Commanding Officer.





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## 1999 – Present

Following the emerging and complex threats and risks to Canada's safety and security, such as international terrorism, cybercrime, human smuggling and transnational organized crime, the RCMP improved and enhanced its policing and crime prevention capabilities. The RCMP continued to lead and deploy officers on international policing missions, including to Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014 to train and mentor the Afghanistan National Police.

As their numbers grew since 1974, female officer members continued to assume greater leadership responsibilities. Bev Busson, served as the first female Commissioner in 2006 and after retirement was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 2018.

In 2007 the RCMP Heritage Centre in Regina (Saskatchewan) was opened. The Centre hosts a research facility and a comprehensive collection of artifacts relating to the history and traditions of the RCMP. The Heritage Centre while highlighting the Force's important contribution to Canada also shines critical light on some of the most difficult and negative parts of RCMP history, particularly with people of color, First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008-2015) and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2016-2019) brought attention to the often painful role played by the RCMP in the history of Indigenous peoples.

In 2021, the RCMP-Indigenous, Co-development, Collaboration and Accountability Office was established. In the spirit of reconciliation and using a comprehensive, inclusive and respectful approach, the goal was to cultivate trust with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and employees.



The year 2023 is noteworthy as the 150th anniversary of the RCMP, a history and legacy that mirrors the history of Canada, its diverse population and its evolving role on the world stage.

As Canada faces challenges at home and abroad, the RCMP – a proud Canadian institution, is evolving and modernizing to ensure excellence from coast to coast to coast. The RCMP acknowledges the mistakes of the past and are using them to drive positive change for the future. The RCMP remains committed to keeping Canadians safe by enforcing the law, preventing crime and protecting our national security.



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# The RCMP Veterans' Association Crest

The RCMP Veterans' Association is a dedicated family of former employees of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The members of the Association possess shared life experiences and unique skills and abilities that are reflected in all we do for the greater good of our membership and all of the RCMP family. We are proud of our career contributions to the preservation of peace and security in Canada and our role in the rich history and traditions of the Force.

The Veterans' crest is patterned after the Force's own crest and includes the Royal Crown to represent our Monarch, the Bison who signifies our origins in the prairie grasslands where the Mounted Police performed their first duties and depended on this majestic animal for food, fuel and clothing.

Our Veterans' crest also includes the maple leaves and scroll with "Canada" representing our service to our great Nation and our lifelong commitment to *Maintiens le droit*.



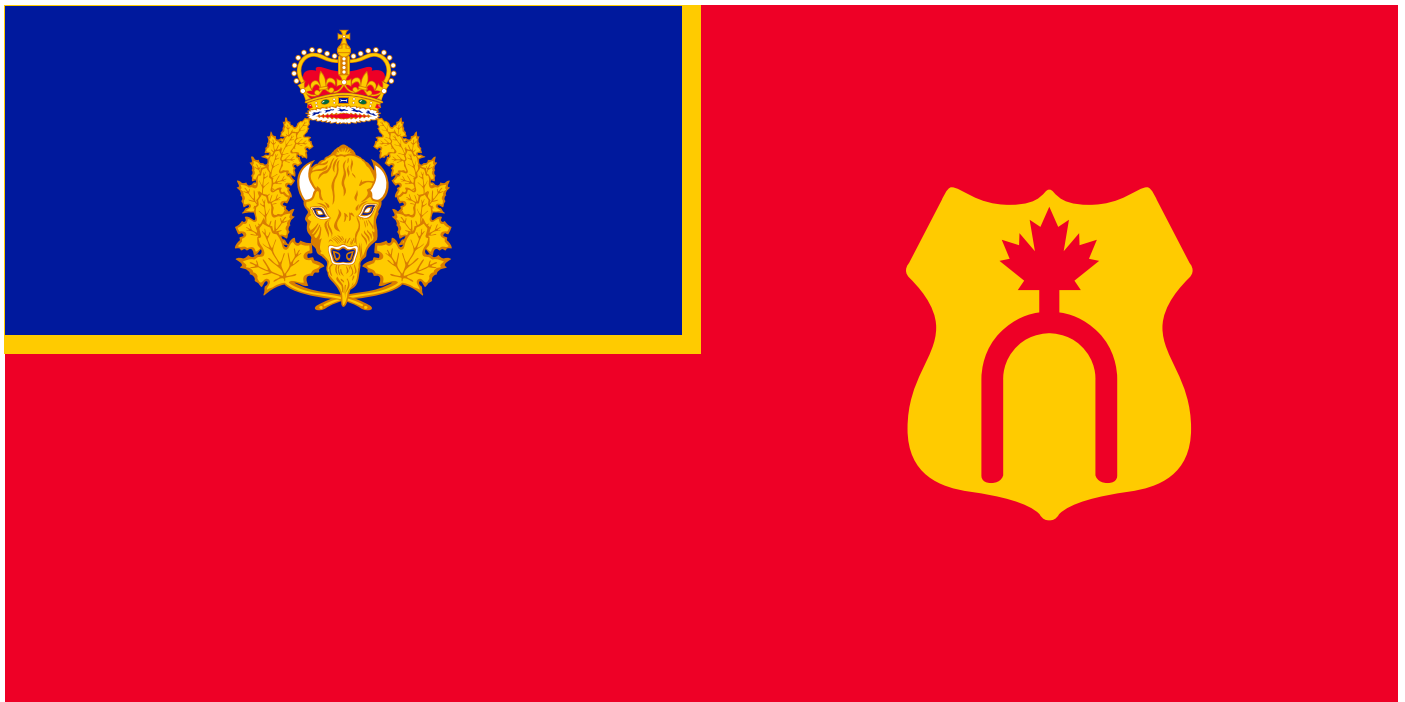
## Interpreting the Symbolism of the RCMP Veterans' Association Ensign

The Ensign of the RCMP Veterans' Association is based on the RCMPQ Corps Ensign and features an emblem of deep symbolic meaning to all who have served in the Force. This emblem consists of three key elements: a gold police shield, a red spur, and a red maple leaf in place of the spur's traditional rowel. Together, these components represent the history, values, and legacy of RCMP Veterans.

### The Gold Police Shield

At the heart of the emblem lies a gold-coloured police shield—modeled after the identification badges issued to RCMP Members, each inscribed with a regimental number. This shield signifies the policing role of the Force, whether members served in uniform or plain clothes.

The use of the shield also honours the legacy of the Dominion Police, established in 1868, which was merged into the Royal North-West Mounted Police in 1920 to form the modern RCMP. As plainclothes policing evolved, the RCMP began issuing "Detective Badges" in 1921 using this distinctive North American shield design—instantly recognizable as a symbol of law enforcement.



By 1944, updated badges clearly identified officers as RCMP members. In the 1960s, a design review reinforced the shield's symbolic clarity, and in 1965, the badge was officially renamed the "RCMP Identification Badge."

From 1974 onward, all members received badges bearing their regimental numbers, a tradition that continues to this day. These badges, including bilingual designs introduced in 1980, serve as a visual link between modern RCMP Members and their predecessors and are a fitting symbol for Veterans who proudly carried them in service.

### **The Maple Leaf Rowel**

Replacing the traditional rowel at the tip of the spur is a stylized red maple leaf, a direct reference to the Canadian flag. This element reflects the national service and sacrifice of RCMP Members and Veterans from every region of Canada. It symbolizes the Force's mission to protect Canadians across all landscapes—on land, sea, and air—and honours the diversity of those who have served. The maple leaf also signifies the RCMP's evolving role in building a safer, stronger Canada and the ongoing contributions of its Veterans to that mission.

### **A Unified Symbol**

Together, these elements form the core of the RCMP Veterans' Association Ensign, including The St. Edward's Crown—ROYAL, The Maple Leaf Rowel—CANADIAN, The Spur—MOUNTED and The Police Shield—POLICE

Each component tells a part of the RCMP story. Together, they represent the full legacy of those who served—and the proud, continuing bond between the RCMP and the country it serves.

*Originally written by Mark Gaillard/Historian/RCMP Veterans' Association/  
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## With Deepest Gratitude

The RCMP Veterans' Legacy Pathway stands today as a powerful and enduring tribute to the service, sacrifice, and legacy of the men and women of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This achievement would not have been possible without the generosity, vision, and unwavering support of our donors.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all individuals, families, organizations, and partners who contributed to bringing this national commemorative initiative to life. Your support ensures that the story of the RCMP—its history, its people, and its role in shaping Canada—will be preserved and shared for generations to come.

We wish to extend special recognition to the following key donors whose leadership and contributions were instrumental in the success of this project:

- Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada / La Ministre des Anciens Combattants Canada
- Canada Life Assurance Company / Canada Vie, compagnie d'assurance
- Peter W. Webster
- RJW Stonemasons Ltd.
- Family of Sergeant Doug A. Smith
- Ford Motor Company Canada
- Pilatus Aircraft Ltd.

Your commitment to honouring Canada's national police force and preserving its legacy exemplifies true civic leadership and national pride.

On behalf of the RCMP Veterans' Association and the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, thank you for helping us build this lasting monument to honour all who have served.

Together, we remember. Together, we honour.

