

A Brief History of the President's Gavel and the Vancouver Division RCMP Veterans' Association



At the last General Meeting of 2017, before the summer break, President Donna Morse asked if I would do some research on the names of past presidents of the Vancouver Association etched on the President's Gavel box. Upon opening the box there was the gavel and knocker inside laying on some bubble wrap. Upon closer examination, there was an envelope under the bubble wrap containing two documents authored by Past President Dave Turnbull in 2004.



The first was a letter explaining the *President's Gavel and Case* dated December 24, 2004;

"We ran out of space on our old gavel stand or base to mount any future plaques to recognize past president. Therefore, I took it upon myself to construct a new one. A few words about this project and the end result might be in order.

The gavel is the mallet, the case is variously known as the gavel case or the gavel mount and the third piece is the knocker which is also known as the striker.

The gavel stand is made from teak wood that I was able to secure from a wood products recycling company. The purple colour trim is known as purple heart, the gavel head and striker are from an Alberta tree known as Caragana Bush or Caragana Tree. I chose this particular piece of wood because it is from a Caragana Bush that I planted for my mother in 1952 the year I joined the RCMP. I removed this piece from the bush in 2002 therefore I can say with a lot of certainty that it lived for 50 years and will hopefully live on for many more years in it's second life.

Teak has a very high oil content and is therefore left unfinished with the exception of maybe a little teak oil and wax. At the time of its construction the teak was a middle brown colour but it will likely darken considerably over the years. The fact that the name plaques are nailed to the case is because of the high oil content of the teak. Given time this oil would penetrate the double backed tape usually used to mount plaques and cause them to be released. Inside the case I have left a sample of a plaque which gives the size and colour to be used along with the nail hole placement for future plaques. I have also left a quantity of mounting nails so that the conformity might be maintained. You will note that there is space left for 15 name plaques. This should be sufficient until the year 2034.

For old times sake and obviously for the last time, I will sign off the way so many of us did while on detachment in the in the "Good Old" days.

I have the honour to be sir, your obedient servant,

Reg # 18011, S/Sgt. Turnbull, D.C."

The following document also found in the gavel box outlines a brief history of the RCMP Veterans' Association - Vancouver Division.

"As a part of a project I am doing for the National Executive Committee, I came across some very interesting material which I am sure will be of interest to members of our Vancouver Division. This material in the main is a report prepared by M.J. "Joe" Olson, Reg # 10372, whom many of you old timers will surely remember. Joe was president from 1967 to 1968. My initial interest was kindled when I took possession of our gavel and stand to mount the names of our last two presidents. On that base is the name Major Arthur Edward Snyder, Officer # O.58, Joined With Commission, (JWC), the NWMP in 1885, Charter President, 1913. The next sequential name in 1920 is Lt. Col. Lawrence William Herchmer, former Commissioner, Officer # O.72, Joined With Commission, (JWC) the NWMP in 1887. (Officers often retained their rank equivalent from the military or were given an honorary rank upon retirement). I asked Bob McKee if he was aware where I might find any historic material about our association and God Bless him he recalled reading this old account. Thankfully, he was able to find it again and I am reproducing it for your enlightenment."

"It would appear that it was in the early spring of 1913 that some old timers met and decided to place and advert in the local newspaper announcing that a meeting would be held for ex-members of the NWMP to get together and discuss the possibility of forming an association and it was on May 19, 1913 that a first meeting was held in the hall of the Anglican All Saints Church on Victoria Drive in Vancouver at the invitation of the minister, the Rev. Cannon, ex-Sergeant Major Henry Charles Lewis Hooper, Reg # 878, who joined the NWMP in 1883. Hopper served at sea in the Merchant Marine, had fought in South Africa, later became an ordained Minister of the Gospel, who was most interested in this proposal of an association composed of Veterans of the NWMP and RNWMP.

About seventy ex-members of the Force attended this meeting and retired Commissioner, Lieutenant Colonel, L.W. Herchmer chaired the meeting with Acting Secretary Percy Sewell Howard, Reg # 4101, taking minutes and Charles Robert Filtness, Reg # 3095, Treasurer. A motion was passed unanimously accordingly and then a committee was struck to study By-Laws and a Constitution which was subsequently adopted and passed.

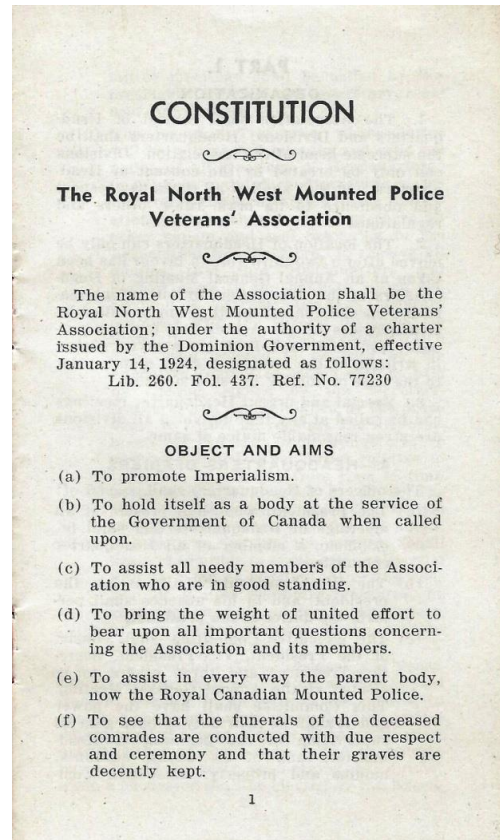
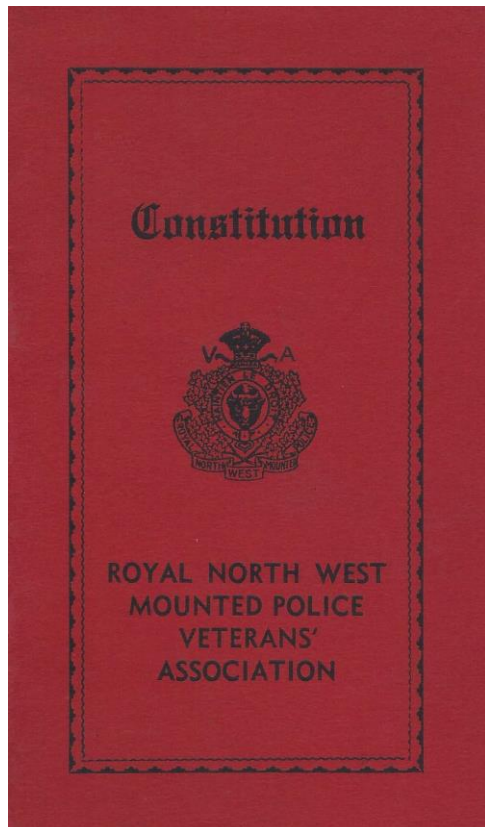
Elections have been held in November each year, and the new Officers installed at that time and take over. From the beginning Vancouver was known as "A" Division right to 1969/70 when Dominion Headquarters ordered that all Divisions should be called by their geographic names. Our division was from the start recorded and registered un provisions of the Societies Act in Victoria as the R.N.W.M.P Veterans' Association and annual reports were submitted.

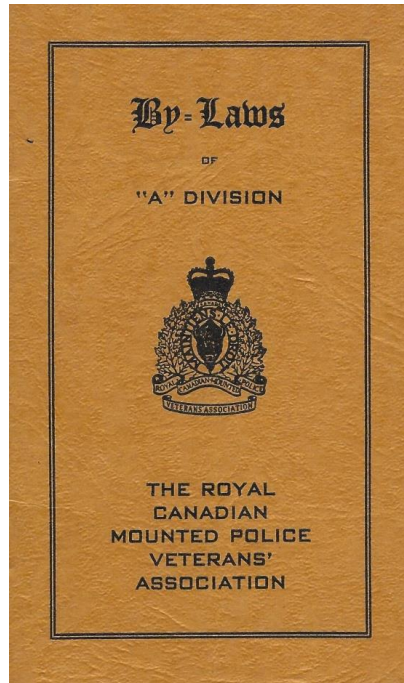
It should be mentioned that in early years a group of old timers in the Calgary area decided to form an association and in 1901 a convention was organized which appeared to be successful in forming an Association. A constitution was drafted and officers elected and an emblem drafted. The South African war erupted at about this time and by 1910 the Calgary Association had all but died away. Shortly after Vancouver started up a new association and a delegation visited Edmonton and Calgary to form associations and as a result new life was breathed into the association and shortly after other cities across the country were organized over the succeeding years. Edmonton was named Dominion Headquarters in about 1924 but Headquarters returned to Vancouver in 1935. Later Calgary was to take on the Headquarters designation and was known as "E" Division, Calgary held that distinction until the mid-1950s when the association opted for Ottawa being better suited by reason of the Seat of Government and central, where it remains."

"That concludes Joe Olson's report and for that information we are thankful. It however has been pointed out to me by "K" Division types that there is a discrepancy. I am told that Edmonton formed the very first association in about 1890, some ten years before Calgary, but it appears not to have lasted very long. I now know where I can get some more information about this and it will be passed along when available. In the meantime, we Westerners can take some satisfaction from knowing that our association had its roots in the west. Anyway, someone

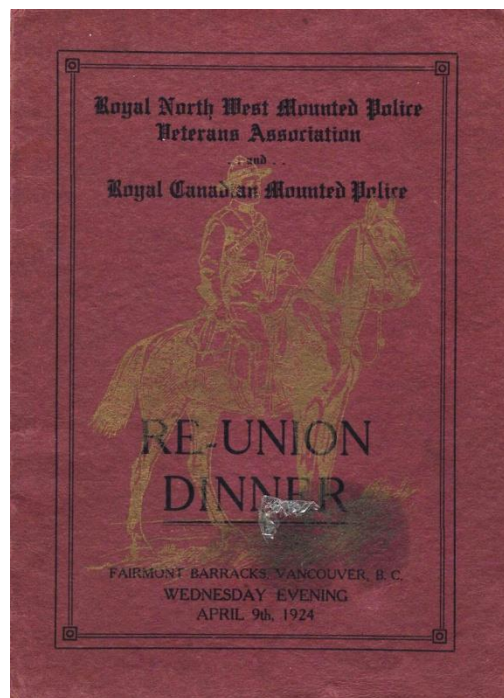
once said, or if he didn't say it he should have, "if we don't know our history how do we know who we now are?"

Regards Dave Turnbull"





"A" Division RCMP Veterans' Association By-Laws - later the Vancouver Division



I located a history of the Edmonton Division of the RCMP Veterans' Association written by Donald George Fraser, Reg # 15922, in 1991. In it he wrote the following: *"The RCMP Veterans' Association, however, really got its start in Vancouver, BC, prior to the spring of 1913 when several ex-members met and were talking over old times, spinning a few yarns and enjoying each others company."*

He mentions the meeting held on May 19th, 1913 with about seventy members present at All Saints Church... *“The members present enthusiastically declared that an association should be formed and a motion to that effect was carried.”*

“Elected at the first organizational meeting were:

President: Lt. Col Herchmer – Ex-Commissioner
Vice President: Lt. Col J.H. McIlvee DSO -Ex Assist Comm’r
2nd Vice President: Major A.E. Snyder – Adjutant
Secretary P.S. Howard
Chaplain: Rev. H.C. Lewis Hooper
Executive Committee:
H. desBarnes
S.H. Goodall
S. Burgoyne
W. Latimer
G. Mathewson
A. Meaken

His report offers a bit of a discrepancy as to who was the first President of the Vancouver Division. Snyder shows on the President’s gavel box and the history prepared by Dave Turnbull with Herchmer taking on the roll in 1920

The following is a listing of all individuals who served as President for the Vancouver Division of the Veterans’ Association:

1913	President	Major Arthur E. Snyder	Officer # O.58
1920	President	Lt Col. Lawrence W. Herchmer	Officer # O.78
1921	President	John J. Roberts	Reg # 884
1923	President	Rev. H.C. Lewis Hooper	Reg # 878
1927	President	H.C. Lewis Hooper	Reg # 878
1928	President	Charles W. Whitehead	Reg # 1577
1929	President	Charles W. Whitehead	Reg # 1577
1930	President	Stephen Garnham	Reg # 1246
1931	President	Stephen Garnham	Reg # 1246
1932	President	Sidney Marshall	Reg # 2438
1933	President	Stephen Garnham	Reg # 1246
1934	President	Stephen Garnham	Reg # 1246
1935	President	Stephen Garnham	Reg # 1246
1936	President	Stephen Garnham	Reg # 1246

1937	President	R.F.B. Smiley	Reg # not found
1938	President	Thomas C. Goldsmith	Reg # 3989/O.222
1939	President	Thomas C. Goldsmith	Reg # 3989/O.222
1940	President	Thomas C. Goldsmith	Reg # 3989/O.222
1941	President	William J. Bowdridge	Reg # 2357
1942	President	Charles R. Filtness	Reg # 3095
1943	President	Charles R. Filtness	Reg # 3095
1944	President	Charles R. Filtness	Reg # 3095
1945	President	Llewellyn M. Lloyd-Walters	Reg # 4741
1946	President	Edward A. Simmons	Reg # 7741
1947	President	Jim Fripps	Reg # 4870/O.246
1948	President	Hugh A. Stewart	Reg # 6461
1949	President	Jim Fripps	Reg # 4870/O.246
1950	President	Jim Fripps	Reg # 4870/O.246
1951	President	Jim Fripps	Reg # 4870/O.246
1952	President	Theodore B. Hutchings	Reg # 5387/O.280
1953	President	Theodore B. Hutchings	Reg # 5387/O.280
1954	President	Jim Fripps	Reg # 4870/O.246
1955	President	Jim Fripps	Reg # 4870/O.246
1956	President	Edward A. Simmons	Reg # 7741
1957	President	Edward A. Simmons	Reg # 7741
1958	President	Theodore B. Hutchings	Reg # 5387/O.280
1959	President	Theodore B. Hutchings	Reg # 5387/O.280
1960	President	Edward A. Chamberlain	Reg # 10634
1961	President	Edward A. Chamberlain	Reg # 10634
1962	President	Edward A. Chamberlain	Reg # 10634
1963	President	Edward A. Chamberlain	Reg # 10634
1964	President	James T. Lines	Reg # 10841
1965	President	James T. Lines	Reg # 10841
1966	President	William J. Durnin	Reg # 11269
1967	President	Mical J. Olsen	Reg # 10372
1968	President	Mical J. Olsen	Reg # 10372

1969	President	Johnny Doyle	Reg # 11768
1970	President	Roland K. Gervin	Reg # 9909
1971	President	Roland K. Gervin	Reg # 9909
1972	President	Roland K. Gervin	Reg # 9909
1973	President	John W. Duggan	Reg # 14049
1974	President	John W.Duggan	Reg # 14049
1975	President	H.F. MacNaughton	Reg # not found
1976	President	H.F. MacNaughton	Reg # not found
1977	President	John Doyle	Reg # 11768
1978	President	John Doyle	Reg # 11768
1979	President	Roland K. Gervin	Reg # 9909
1980	President	Roland K. Gervin	Reg # 9909
1981	President	Roland K. Gervin	Reg # 9909
1982	President	Roland K. Gervin	Reg # 9909
1983	President	John W. Duggan	Reg # 14049
1984	President	Frank Brien	Reg # 12846
1985	President	Frank Brien	Reg # 12846
1986	President	Frank Brien	Reg # 12846
1987	President	Frank Brien	Reg # 12846
1988	President	John W. Duggan	Reg # 14049
1989	President	Paul Starek	Reg # 14796
1990	President	Jim Warren	Reg # R1422
1991	President	Bill McCheyne	Reg # 15156
1992	President	Bill McCheyne	Reg # 15156
1993	President	Bill McCheyne	Reg # 15156
1994	President	Bill McCheyne	Reg # 15156
1995	President	John Hooper	Reg # 176/O.942
1996	President	John Hooper	Reg # 176/O.942
1997	President	Dave Turnbull	Reg # 18011
1998	President	Dave Turnbull	Reg # 18011
1999	President	Jim Druchet	Reg # 19556/O.1073
2000	President	Jim Druchet	Reg # 19556/O.1073

2001	President	Les Holmes	Reg # 19209/O.844
2002	President	Les Holmes	Reg # 19209/O.844
2003	President	Bill Schindeler	Reg # 17781/O.790
2004	President	Bill Schindeler	Reg # 17781/O.790
2005	President	Alf Erickson	Reg # 21108
2006	President	Alf Erickson	Reg # 21108
2007	President	Ed Wilson	Reg # 18942 /O.914
2008	President	Ed Wilson	Reg # 18942/O.914
2009	President	Bob McKee	Reg # 22026
2010	President	Bob McKee	Reg # 22026
2011	President	Dick Hawkshaw	Reg # 21132
2012	President	Tom Quilley	Reg # 19526/O.1089
2013	President	Keith Leishman	Reg # 22222
2016	President	Donna Morse	Reg # 31800
2019	President	Robert Underhill	Reg # 31719
2021	President	Gordon Cave	Reg # 36045
2023	President	Ron Morse	Reg # 30980
2025	President	John Sherstone	Reg # 25438
2026	President	Ray Power	Reg # 25031



**First President of "A" Division (Vancouver)
Veterans' Association – 1913
Lawrence Herchmer**

Prepared by Ric Hall 24394/0.1330

Revised: 25 June 2026