

SEVEN YEARS A HORSEMAN

The Altruistic Life of a Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman



FOREWORD

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Foreword



I first met Don at a Koffee Klatch in West Vancouver in the summer of 2009. These informal social gatherings of Royal Canadian Mounted Police retirees took place once a month so we could shoot the breeze about the highlights of our sometimes illustrious 40 year careers as policemen.

On his first visit, Don explained he was working on the writing of two books - ‘Vancouver Exposed A History in Photographs’ and ‘Camp X and the Cold War A History in Photographs’. Luckily for him, a few members had been involved in cloak and dagger exploits between Canadian and Russian spies during and after the famous Russian spy Igor Gouzenko case. The Soviet cypher clerk worked out of the Russian Embassy in Ottawa before defecting to Security and Intelligence members of the force in 1945. It was the very start of espionage in Canada. A former dogged cop, Don seemed to relish chasing down leads for his books.

An ex-member, he fit right in with the group and was happy to share ‘war stories’ with the gang. On his second or third visit, I invited him back to my place for a chin wag. Right away, he commented on one of the many violins I’d made over the years from planks salvaged from ‘The St. Roch’, the forces ‘Workhorse of the North’ made famous for being the first vessel to successfully navigate the Northwest Passage from west to east to lay claim to Canada’s north. During one visit, he interviewed a retired Assistant Commissioner who as a rookie babysat Gouzenko. Don used two cigarette-sized digital tape recorders. I know because he used the same recorders to interview me. The force’s security members whisked the defector Gouzenko away to Canada’s Camp X, a famous spy facility located on the shores of Lake Ontario at Whitby, a town a few miles northeast of Toronto. It was run by William S. Stephenson, the real James Bond.

More recently, he interviewed me and made a video about ‘Canada’s Bonnie and Clyde’ and their crime spree across all of North America from Alaska to the southern United States. My partner and I finally interviewed ‘Bonnie’ and she turned on ‘Clyde’. He was captured and hung for murder.

Over several visits, I realized we had something in common. We both had the ability to connect dots and catch crooks.

I found Don a passionate and detailed writer who effectively portrays historic events about a national police force that has faithfully served law and order for Canada since the year 1873.

Don photographed my personal violin for his Vancouver title.

Former RCMP Staff Sergeant Fred Bodnaruk (Retired)

Founder of the Integrated Homicide Investment Team (IHIT)



From the March West to the Cold War



Charles M. Russell's "When Law Dulls the Edge of Chance." 28.78

Charles M. Russell' painting about the Royal North-West Mounted Police, like all officers of the law, take few chances with suspected characters. The first thing done is to disarm prisoners. This painting represents two mounted policemen who have “the drop” on a pair of horse thieves. They have already disarmed one, who is standing dismounted. They are relieving the other of his weapons.

In September, 1919, Russell attended the Calgary Stampede and met His Royal Highness, Prince Edward, the Duke of Sussex, (later King Edward VIII) of Great Britain. Edward and his brother George (later King George VI) both spent time on their Alberta ranch near High River. Edward's neighbours purchased Russell's painting and gifted it to the future king. Some of the happiest and most relaxing times for the two brothers were digging fence posts, riding horses and dating cowgirls.

A MEMOIR

A Brief History of the R.C.M.P.

DONALD E. WAITE

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1 • The North-West Mounted Police

Origins and the March West

The Dominion of Canada was founded by the British in 1864 inspired by Palm 72 in the Bible which referred to “the dominion from sea to sea to the ends of the earth”. The North-West Mounted Police were the forerunners of Canada’s iconic Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada’s first Prime Minister, wanted to end the American whiskey trade with the First Nations communities on the southern prairies. MacDonald with a stroke of a pen changed their name from a military to a police force. With their Stetson hats, high boots, and the dark blue trousers with the yellow stripe down the sides along the signature bright scarlet jackets, he did not want the Canadian police force to resemble the military uniforms of the soldiers south of the Canadian/ United States border. The “Mounties” derived their name from their horseback riding. Their main purpose was to maintain law and order in an untamed and lawless vast territory. There was also the issue of settling the West to extend Canadian sovereignty from coast to coast.

The original North-West Mounted Police (NWMP), the precursor to the RCMP, travelled from Lake Superior to Winnipeg by a combination of land and water routes, primarily using the Dawson Trail and the waterways of the Lake of the Woods and Winnipeg River systems. This journey, undertaken in the summer of 1870, was part of the larger effort to establish Canadian sovereignty in the West and is considered a particularly arduous feat. Passing through Manitoba, the half-French half-First Nations Métis, under the leadership of Louis Riel, didn’t want to be a part of the Dominion of Canada but instead wished to create their own ‘County of Manitoba’. It resulted in two insurrections to separate from the rest of Canada.

On 8 July 1873, members of the NWMP left Fort Dufferin, Manitoba, to begin their famous “March West”. Fort Dufferin was named for Lord Dufferin, Queen Victoria’s representative for British Royalty in Canada. It was a grand spectacle as a procession of over 200 men with oxen, weaponry, 310 horses, and a three month supply of provisions advanced west with the intent of reaching southern Alberta determined to stop the American whiskey trade infiltrating from south of the Canadian/United States border. Their destination was Fort Whoop-Up (now Lethbridge), one of the earliest, largest, and best known American whiskey trading posts in southern Alberta. Many Americans evaded their country’s ban on illicit liquor sales by relocating across the border to Canada, a country which did not yet have the effective capacity to restrict the trade. At Fort Whoop-Up the illegal whiskey trade jeopardized the Canadian government’s authority over its territories and the NWMP was the solution to the problem. At La Roche Percée, Saskatchewan, the force split in half, with some diverting north to settle at Batosch. The rest continued on to Fort Whoop-Up, which they reached in October, establishing their presence there. With their westward advance, the NWMP

left a lasting impact of law and order to assure their place in the annals of Canadian history.

Fort Livingstone and Treaty 7

To appreciate the fascinating history of the NWMP is to understand the origins of the force. Fort Livingstone, Saskatchewan, was constructed in 1873-74 as the original headquarters and one of the first posts to be built for the newly formed police force. The fort housed 185 men until the headquarters were moved to Fort Macleod, Alberta. Named after James A. MacLeod, the Assistant-Commissioner of the NWM, it was at this post the preliminary negotiations with First Nations communities took place, namely with the Blackfoot Confederacy. It also served as the first capital of the North-West Territories. Macleod, by upholding the First Nations way of life, contributed to the peaceful settlement of the Canadian West.

In December, 1874, Macleod introduced Lord Dufferin, Queen Victoria’s representative, to meet with Crowfoot, the Chief of the Blackfoot Federation. Members of the RCMP were in attendance during negotiations between representatives of the Government of Canada and Chiefs of First Nations to negotiate terms to relinquish

Chief Crowfoot, of the Siksika First Nations, addresses the Marquis of Lorne, Queen Victoria’s representative, along with Royal-Northwest Mounted Police Assistant Commissioner James McLeod and other members of the force, at a Pow-wow. By this time the Canadian Government had snookered First Nations Indians of the prairies, through Treaty 7, into relinquishing most of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, USA



away their ancestral lands in much of the Western half of Canada. It was achieved with a few X's by signing Treaty 7. In short, the First Nations were snookered into giving away much of southern Alberta.

Regina, the Buffalo, and Louis Riel



Louis Riel (1844-1885)

In 1877, Canadian Pacific Railway reached ‘Bag of Bones’, the original name before being given the regal name of Regina in recognition of Queen Victoria, and very quickly, the Canadian government endorsed the extermination of the buffalo. The bison were shot, skinned, their meat left to rot, and their bones shipped east to be used as fertilizer. With the huge herds of buffalo gone, the Canadian government transitioned the First Nations into an agricultural way of life turning the ‘Indians’ into farmers.

Louis Riel’s 10 year attempt to separate Manitoba from the rest of Canada was not in the grand scheme of plans from the Dominion’s capital in Ottawa. As a consequence, Canadian politicians with their top lawyers charged Reil, the founder of the Country of Manitoba, with treason. The trial took place in Regina. The proceedings at Riel’s trial were swift and final. They took the religious martyr to the gallows and hung him.

2 • The Cold War and Canadian Intelligence

Gouzenko, Camp X, and Sir William Stephenson



Sir William S. Stephenson
The Real James Bond, Intrepid,
the Boy from Winnipeg

The Cold War came into existence immediately after the Second World War due to mistrust between Russia and the United States. The Soviet Union participated in the war as a friend of Britain, the United States and Canada in the fight against Nazi Germany but immediately afterwards both sides became suspicious of each other and became enemies. In Canada, espionage began when Igor Gouzenko, a Soviet intelligence officer, defected to the RCMP in 1945. When Gouzenko switched sides, super spy Bill Stephenson intercepted him and whisked him away to Camp X, a 160-acre training facility for spies located on Lake Ontario at Whitby, to conduct an interrogation. Stephenson, The Real James Bond, was placed in charge of the camp during the war to train Canadian, American and British the art of self-defence - AND how to spy. Sir Bill was the only person alive with 24/7 access

to King George VI, Queen Elizabeth II’s father, Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill and American President Franklin S. Roosevelt.

Security and Intelligence Leadership

The force’s Sergeant George B. McLellan was Sir Bill’s assistant assistant. Cliff Harrison was George’s boss. Cliff was commissioner from 1960-1963. George from 1963-1964. Bill Higgins from 1969-1973, and Bob Simmons from 1977-1987. They were all in security and intelligence. George was Canada’s top cop during my time in training. Bill was Canada’s top cop during my time in forensics in Ottawa in 1970. Bob sat as judge and jury at my court marshal in Burnaby. During Bob’s time in office, the McDonald Commission recommended a security intelligence be established.



Igor Gouzenko (Right)
The Russian Spy who defected to the
RCMP, 1945.

A Personal Connection

It’s rather ironic Bob’s wife entered into my life as an author. After my retirement in 2004, I took a contract to write the Hope family history from the City of Langley. My sponsor was married to Bob’s ex-wife. She told me, “Bob wasn’t married to me; he was married to the force.” The Russian rat gave up 22 of his comrades.