



RCMP VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

SOUTH OKANAGAN DIVISION

April 2024 News Bulletin

In this issue:

- Supt. Beth McAndie is special guest speaker at April 20th Luncheon in Summerland
- Celebrating 50th Anniversary of Women in the Force
- Executive Meeting Summary and Strategic Planning Notes
- Upcoming Regional Activities including Skeet Shoot and Osoyoos Luncheon and reminder when Koffee Klatches are held.
- Bruce Cieslikowski's Benefit Corner –
- Is your family prepared for Wildfire Season?



Pictured Above – Troop 17 Graduates - March 17, 1975

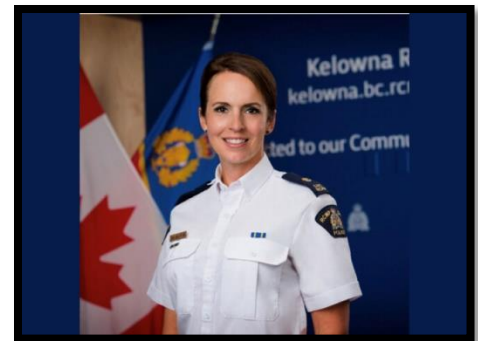
SUMMERLAND LUNCHEON MEETING SALUTES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST FEMALE TROOP GRADUATION:

On Saturday, April 20th Summerland Director and Past President Orv Robson welcomed our special guest, Supt. Beth McAndie, Officer in Charge, Penticton Detachment and South Okanagan Similkameen District along with 44 Division members to the Summerland Legion for a delicious lunch and special presentation by Supt. McAndie.

Dir. Orv called the meeting to order at 11:50 following an hour of busy social visiting and catch up among the attendees. He thanked all for attending, acknowledged the special guest and members. O Canada was followed by a moment of silence for departed members, and he then called on our Division Chaplain Rev. Rick Gay to offer prayers and say grace.

After a delicious lunch of chef carved ham, baked salmon in lobster/shrimp sauce with full array of vegetables and a large piece of strawberry cheese cake!! Director Orv called on our South Okanagan President, Rob Boulet to introduce our guest speaker – Supt. Beth McAndie.

Supt. McAndie provided a very personal and interesting summary of her career noting she is in her 27th year of service having joined at age 21. She mentioned she has great affinity and respect for the Veterans' Association in particular the Vancouver Division with which she is quite familiar and believes in the continuing legacy of the Force that is secure with the Veterans' Association across Canada. She mentioned a number of interesting details of her service which included being the first female member at Hope Detachment for five years prior to being joined by other female members.



She noted that the fellow Hope Detachment members became as brothers to her and secured her choice of selecting a police career. She spent 6 years in the Serious Crime Unit, worked cold cases and travelled on various assignments across Canada. Supt. McAndie noted she is married to a retired member, Fred, and has the joy of being a mother to two wonderful children.

On a more policy part of her presentation Supt. McAndie paid tribute to the first Female Troop 17 that courageously paved the way for others such as herself to seek a career in the RCMP. As she said, Troop 17 underscored the fact that the only limit holding one back is oneself. She has now been Officer In Charge for 4 months and has a passion to ensure any changes will be for the better and to establish an environment that provided an opportunity for success for all members under her command. Holding the members accountable is important but she also has strong views on the benefits of emphasizing wellness and healthy relationships amongst members and their families. The physical area of her command which includes the South Okanagan from Summerland to Osoyoos and Keremeos Detachments is large but she is very pleased with the dedicated and professional members within that region. One major challenge is to maintain the

designated number of police on each watch, typically 7 per shift in Penticton but if calls require members to attend outside Penticton it leaves a significant shortfall in ability to respond to all calls. But, she pointed to the improved support from the Mayor and others in increasing the numbers of new members being approved under municipal budgets. In closing Supt. McAndie paid special tribute to former Officer In Charge Brian Hunter who as she said had a “big heart” and was a very special and successful head of the region before her.

Division President Rob thanked Supt. McAndie and presented her with a special hand-made wooden bowl by Division Member Glenn Hooper and a business card holder made by Director Orv (**Pictured at right Supt. McAndie and Director and Past President Orv Robson**)



April 20th Business Meeting after Speaker Presentation:

- **Members interested in attending Inter-Division Lunch in Shuswap are asked to email their interest to Secretary Kerry Bennington at: kerrybennington52@gmail.com.**
- **Pres. Rob spoke of the need for members to get involved in the executive and committees (Entertainment, Sick and Visiting, Honour Guard, Special Events) to ensure our continued existence. A number of executive and committee openings are available now and for 2025. Please contact Rob or any executive member.**
- **Winner of the 50/50 a very happy Dee Sellner. Congratulations Dee!!! (with Pres. Rob and Dir. Orv)**
- **Pres. Rob asked if any knowledge of member or family sick or needing assistance/visit?**
- **Inquired if any input for Good of Association?**
- **Director Orv thanked the Catering group and all for coming. Meeting adjourned after “The King”.**



IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE FIRST FEMALE TROOP 17:

- ❖ Troop 17 was sworn in and commenced training on Sept. 16th, 1974 and graduated on March 3rd, 1975.
- ❖ Troop 17 paved the way for equal opportunity in law enforcement
- ❖ By 2023 the Force consisted of 22% female members
- ❖ Troop 17 included many teachers with troop age from 19 to 29
- ❖ Training was 6 months in Depot Division and copies the training for male recruits with exception of a reduction in the required weight lift of 125 pounds.
- ❖ Major Doris O'Toole was seconded from the Canadian Military to act as training liaison and general assistance due to her previous experience in training female army recruits.
- ❖ Instead of a 32 person barrack the female recruits shared 2 bed rooms.
- ❖ The Over the Shoulder Purse contained their firearm, ammo and handcuffs
- ❖ 1960 saw the adaptation of the same uniform for all members.
- ❖ In 1981 female members joined the Musical Ride.
- ❖ By the 1990s female members were posted as detachment commanders.
- ❖ In 2006 Bev Busson (nee MacDonald) was promoted to RCMP Commissioner.
- ❖ On Sept. 16th, 2009 Troop 17 held a reunion at Depot to celebrate 35 years Anniversary.



MINUTES for the EXECUTIVE MEETING 2024-04-12

LOCATION: Penticton Golf and Country Club Boardroom **TIME:** 10:00am

ATTENDEES: Pres. Rob Boulet, Oliver Director Lin Springer, Newsletter Director Finn Nielsen, Penticton Director Bob Ogden, Summerland Director Orv Robson, Governor Bill Hacock, Osoyoos Director Ted Cronmiller, Secretary Kerry Bennington.

REGRETS: Treas. Beth McGifford, Governors Mel Murton, Bill Newhouse, Jack McDonald, Advocate Bruce Cieslikowski

AGENDA:

1. **Approval of the Minutes of the last Executive Meeting:** 2024-03-15 Motion Bob O/Second Rob. Carried by all present.
2. **Treasurer Update** on the 20th of April Luncheon. Requested Sec. to send out a second email to further advise membership on the speaker etc.
3. **Membership** of Pasquale Domodossola and asking member to come to a coffee Klatch. – Bob O.
4. Consideration to hold the **Book of Memory** which contains the names of the South Okanagan Division members who have passed recently. No positive responses from membership – Discussion decision to not hold the service this year.
5. **Inter Division Luncheon in Shuswap** – to date we have had six members who have advised they would be interested in going to the luncheon
6. **Regional reports:** Osoyoos - May luncheon @ Smitty's date will be confirmed for May 25th, order off menu. Oliver – The May executive meeting will be held in Oliver (May 10) and on May 29th the annual skeet shoot will be held at the Oliver Sportsman Club Penticton – Best Ball Golf tourney – September 22nd will be confirmed.
7. **Organizational Structure Review** – Rob is part of the National working group
8. **Update on the Advocacy Course** – Bruce is unable to attend the Advocacy Course in Edmonton - we are seeking a second Advocate to assist Bruce
9. **Succession Planning Initiatives** – Several positions on the Executive and on Division Committees are vacant for 2025. Please contact anyone on the Executive for information.
10. **Keep Connected List** – Finn has updated the list so we can keep checking in with our membership
8. **NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING:** Date: May 10, 2024 Fairview Mountain Golf Club

Submitted by Secretary Kerry Bennington.

Report on Strategic Planning Session Held on April 12th, 2024

Present: Pres. Rob Boulet – (Facilitated Session), Past Pres. Orv Robson, Secretary Kerry Bennington, Penticton Director Bob Ogden, Oliver Director Lin Springer, Osoyoos Director Ted Cronmiller, Governor Bill Hacock, Newsletter Director Finn Nielsen.

Regrets: Governors Bill Newhouse, Mel Murton, Jack McDonald, Benefit Advocate Bruce Wieslikowski, Treasurer Beth McGifford.

RESULTS OF SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- Our Association is supported by an efficient and well organized National Office that provides support, certificates to recognized members, liaison with government on policies affecting our membership such as “marriage over 60”.
- National Office has updated their website which permits better information to all members and offers a direct link to review their biographical data and dues status etc.
- Our Division continues to have the benefit of an experienced and dedicated executive.
- Our Division establishes annual objectives and monthly executive meetings ensures important items are dealt with promptly.

Weaknesses:

- Dwindling membership results in difficulty in finding replacements for an aging executive. Succession Planning remains a major challenge.
- Limited membership results in poor attendance at some Division functions.
- There are no current “committees” in such areas as: Sick and Visiting; Entertainment; Ladies Activities; Special Events; Honour Guard.
- A degree of negativity exists within retired members of the Force who have no wish to continue any association with a formal association such as ours and prefer to attend coffee klatches or join such institutions such as the Legion.
- We currently have a large presence in the Kootenays but could lose up to 10 members if that region joins Kelowna or other division.

Opportunities:

- Our experienced membership and executive have the ability to be creative and seek new solutions to minimize and mitigate our noted weaknesses.

- Our Division could energize a renewed membership drive and seek current members to join committees and executive positions including such positions as “Assistant Director”; “Assistant Benefit Advocate” etc.
- The degree of liaison with current members and detachment commanders and new O i/c provides an important opportunity to recruit new members.
- Given the existence of the new union in the Force requires we form a link with this association and provide for example, benefit and retirement assistance which is an area that appears wanting if one reads the questions on MP Mates Facebook. Murray Macham is busy responding and clarifying many questions asked by current or recently retired members. Our Advocate Bruce can assist in this area. The delivery of our newsletters and brochures to all detachments within our area is an important initiative.

Threats:

- Most critical is the lack of a clear succession plan in our Division which will require constant discussion and attention in the coming months.

CONCLUSION:

Specific deliverables and times to complete were not formalized, however, a number of initiatives are currently being undertaken by all members of the executive and will be reviewed and updated at the next Division Executive Meeting in May.

Prepared by Newsletter Director Finn Nielsen from notes taken by Pres. Rob Boulet.

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SOUTH OKANAGAN DIVISION UPDATES:

Welcome New Members:

- **Regina Lyons, Reg. No. 36919, Resides in West Kelowna.**
- **Thomas Johnson, Reg. No. 29586, resides in Penticton.**

Regional Coffee Klatches:

- **Osoyoos – 1st Tuesday of month at Smitty’s Restaurant at 9:30 AM**
- **Oliver/Okanagan Falls – 2nd Wednesday at M & J’s Country Kitchen – 9:30 AM**
- **Penticton – 3rd Tuesday at Penticton Golf Club – 10 AM**
- **Summerland – last Tuesday of Month - Second Home Café – 9:30 AM**

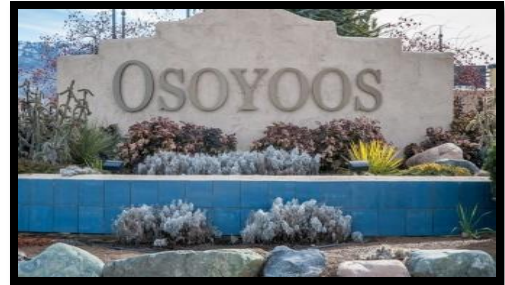
Benefit Advocacy Training: Pres. Rob advises our Division member Elizabeth Smith will be attending the Edmonton Advocacy Training Course in June and will become part of the South Okanagan Division Advocacy Team along with Bruce Wieslikowski who is slated to attend the same training program later this year. Welcome to the Team Elizabeth!!

Jim McMahon re-joins the Executive : Jim who was previously Vice-President and Penticton Director will become Assistant Director, Penticton to assist Dir. Bob Ogden in this busy portfolio. Welcome back Jim!

Inter-Divisional Lunch: “Breaking News” – the lunch will be held at the Armstrong Golf Course on Saturday July 20th. The menu includes soup, salad, meat and bun buffet for \$25.00. More details to follow. “Book it Dano!”

Plan to Attend the May 25th Luncheon Meeting in Osoyoos

Continuing the Division program of regional lunches, Osoyoos Director Ted Cronmiller has arranged a special program for the May 25th Luncheon as detailed below:



- ❖ **LOCATION:** Smitty’s Family Restaurant, 8906 Main Street, Osoyoos
 - ❖ **TIME:** Social Hour 11:00 AM, Lunch 12:00, Guest Speaker, 1:00 PM
 - ❖ **MENU:** For this lunch it will be “order off the menu” from the many delicious options Smitty’s offer.
 - ❖ **GUEST SPEAKER:** Retired C/Supt., Kevin Harrison will discuss his current role as RCMP Conduct Recourse Adjudicator in which position he has been since 2017. Prior to that Kevin served as a Recourse Analyst ghost writing grievance decisions. Kevin retired in 2015 from his position as District Commander of the Southern Alberta District.
 - ❖ **All Division members, spouses/partners and friends of the RCMP are invited to this special occasion in the heart of Canada’s Desert.**
 - ❖ **RSVP: IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND PLEASE ADVISE OSOYOOS DIRECTOR TED CRONMILLER VIA EMAIL: cronmill@telus.net or phone 250-495-4040, before May 22nd.**
 - ❖ **Plan to stop in to check out the many wineries en-route Osoyoos.**
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BENEFIT ADVOCATE'S CORNER

Miscalculation of Disability Pensions Class Action Settlement: *Are you a current or former member of the CAF or RCMP or their spouse, common-law partner, survivor dependent, or executor of their estate, who received disability benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) between 2003 and 2023? If so, you may be a Class Member and quantifiable for compensation from a class action settlement related to alleged miscalculations of disability pensions and benefits.*

Class members with an existing payment relationship with VAC will automatically receive the compensation for which they are quantifiable through the usual payment process. These Class members do not have to submit a Claim Form to receive payment.

Class members who do not have an existing payment relationship with VAC must submit a Claim Form or they will not receive compensation.

NOTE: THE DEADLINE TO SUBMIT A CLAIM FORM IS MARCH 2025.

Please contact South Okanagan Division Benefit Advocate Bruce Cieslikowski at 778-476-1154 or via email: papabruce50@shaw.ca if you require help or advice on any RCMP Benefit matters.



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South Okanagan Div., Executive for 2024:

President Rob Boulet; Past President and Summerland Director Orv Robson; Treasurer Beth McGifford; Secretary and Membership Director Kerry Bennington; Penticton Director Bob Ogden; Oliver Director Lin Springer; Osoyoos Director Ted Cronmiller; Benefit Advocate Bruce Wieslikowski; A/Director Penticton Jim McMahon; Newsletter Director Finn Nielsen; Governors: Bill Newhouse; Jack McDonald; Mel Murton; Bill Hacock; Chaplain Rick Gay.

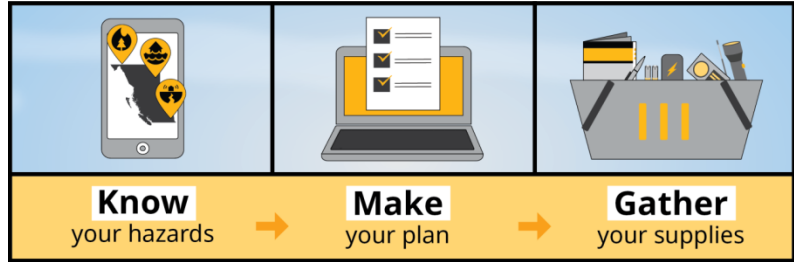
Note: IF YOU WISH TO CONTACT ANY MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE PLEASE CONTACT OUR DIVISION SECRETARY AND COMMUNICATIONS LIAISON KERRY BENNINGTON AT 250-826-8143, Kerry bennington52@gmail.com

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Is Your Family Prepared for the Okanagan Wildfire Season?

A number of important steps are outlined below May 5 to 11, 2024 is British Columbia Emergency Preparedness Week:

1. Know the hazards in your community. By now we have all experienced being on Alert or Evacuation Order or know someone who has. As such one should be fully aware of what are the fire hazards on your property or in your neighbourhood. RDOS will do a fire smart plan at no cost and some cost reimbursements may be available.



2. Make an Emergency Plan so your family know what actions to take, what is the best exit route and where can you seek safety and comfort. We have a list on several doors as to what to take – don't forget the pets!
3. The recommended "Grab and Go Bag" is a good idea, particularly for your fire insurance policy and medications, etc.

Our South Okanagan Division is committed to support our Veterans' Association members and families in time of need or emergencies. It is important to communicate your family needs in case of fire or any other disaster in your area. Many members are volunteers for the provincial emergency services or have had their training course. In your emergency kit make sure you have the contact information for the Director in your area who will mobilize our Division members to provide support in various ways. Photos below from Kelowna in 2023.



Have a safe and enjoyable summer season and take care of each other!