



RCMP VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

SOUTH OKANAGAN DIVISION

May & June 2024 News Bulletin

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WHEN YOU NEED TO CATCH THE BAD GUY WHO DO YOU CALL??

The answer is of course the Dog Master and his/her loyal police dog companion. From the early days of the RCMP Police Dog Section when most dogs were donated or purchased the Force's involvement as a top world ranking breeder of police dogs and the wide variety of tasks these special canines provide is a study in commitment and belief in their considerable value to law enforcement. Their value goes well beyond catching the bad guys to rescuing and finding lost or endangered citizens to identifying everything from explosives to an assortment of drugs and even lost items such as money.

We want to thank Cpl. Goodfellow and Dug for allowing us to feature their picture and be the lead story as we pay tribute to the men and women who are often in the forefront of law enforcement action. Coincidentally, this effective team was instrumental in the arrest of 2 car thieves in the South Okanagan a few days earlier.

WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT CPL. GOODFELLOW AND "DUG"

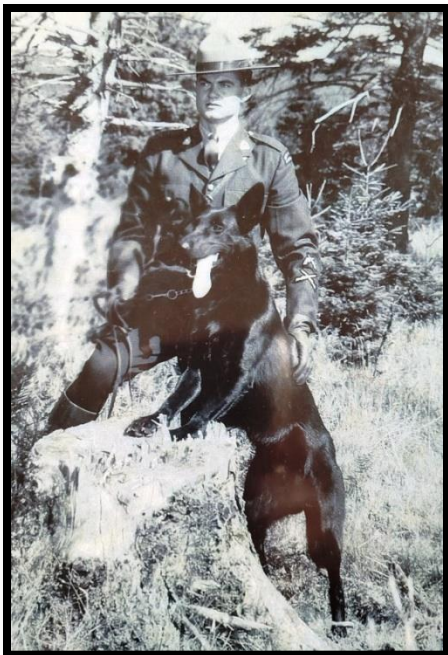
Cpl. Jason Goodfellow arrived in Penticton in 2016 with his family after PDS assignments in Swift Current and Surrey and general policing duties in Carnduff, SK, Stony Rapids, SK Bella Bella, BC and Nelson BC. Jason presently has 26 years service with 16 of those being in the Dog Section. Jason finished training PSD Dug in November 2023, who is a 2 year old German Shepherd. Many people has asked about the name "Dug". That is not his original name but Jason renamed him as he was not fond of his birth name "Phlax". Dug has not yet been trained with a specialty profile which has traditionally been drug or explosive searching. Jason is intending on training Dug in the newly developed Human Remains Detection (HRD) profile, and will be attending Innisfail this fall to complete that three week training. At present there is only one dog handler posted in Penticton with the recent transfer of the other handler to Kelowna. The coverage area for Penticton PSD services is from Manning Park, east to Bridesville and Summerland in the north. With vacancies in Nelson and Cranbrook presently, Penticton PDS is often required to cover for those PSD units. Most of the calls for Penticton PDS consist of lost hikers/missing persons, as well as those fleeing from crime scenes.

Penticton has been a dream posting for Jason and his wife and they intend on retiring here. Jason does not intend on retiring until Dug reaches an age where he will not be reissued to another handler so they can both retired together. Of interest, Jason’s oldest son is an RCMP member with 7 years service and posted to Prince Albert, SK. His youngest son will be attending Medicine Hat College in their Police Studies Program. (Jason said he is looking forward to joining the monthly coffee klatch at the Penticton Golf Course and the Veterans Association in a couple of years.)

MEET OUR FORMER DOG HANDLERS CLEM, MEL, TOM AND CURTIS:

Several of South Okanagan Division members are former Dog Masters having served from the 50s to the 90s. We are proud to present Mel Murton and Duke, Clem Jones with Billy; and Tom Linning and Ruff and Curtis Horton with Toby, p. 4. Curtis and Toby were posted to Penticton from 1983 to 1999. While today’s PSD Sections have increased in numbers (38 now serve the BC Lower Mainland – 69 total in BC) our members in their day were responsible for covering large areas of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia respectively.

Mel Murton exemplified the mobility of the Dog Masters. He and Duke after training in Sidney Forks, N.S. were posted to Grand Forks, B.C., followed by assignments to “M” Div., Prince Albert SK, where he covered the whole province. Next to New Westminister covering all the Lower Mainland, then to Burnaby where Mel established the Dog Service and then transferred to General Duties completing his service as NCO i/c Oliver, BC. Detachment retiring in 1979.





Today the Police Dog Training Centre in Innisfail, Alberta is the busy location for preparing fully trained police service dogs for assignment to the field. Back in the 1950s to 1960s the training took place in Nova Scotia. As many current and retired members know, the life of a Dog Master is one of always on call, ready to travel long distances, working in unfriendly terrain and provide important support to RCMP Emergency Response Teams while also finding time to conduct community and youth relations. We salute these dedicated and important members, past and present!! When attending a coffee klatch ask them to relate their favorite stories and the challenges working with their canine partner who had varying skills and personalities!!

Key Information About the RCMP Police Service Dogs

- ❖ **Only German Shepherds are used due to their versatility, strength and courage and ability to adapt to a variety of climactic conditions.**
- ❖ **Both male and female dogs are utilized and must display excellent physical condition, a keen hunting instinct, intelligence and trainability.**
- ❖ **The trained dogs can search a car in 3 minutes, training starts at 14 to 18 months and retirement usually at 7 or 8 years of age.**
- ❖ **The formal breeding program started in 1999, prior dogs were purchased or gifted. Currently 18 breeding females live with volunteer civilian brood keepers. Since 2010 50 % of puppies born at the Training Centre will become working dogs.**
- ❖ **A key is the Imprinting Program in which potential dog handlers will select a one week course and on completion are assigned potential police dogs to imprint in such areas as socialization, informal obedience, tracking and prey and defence drives.**
- ❖ **Dogs that pass the imprinting process will return to the Training Centre at 14 to 18 months for training and teaming with a new or existing trained handler.**

OSOYOOS LUNCHEON MEETING HELD ON MAY 25TH

Osoyoos Director Ted Cronmiller welcomed 35 members of the South Okanagan Division Vets to Smitty's Family Restaurant on Saturday, May, 25th. Despite a brief rain storm that cooled the window enclosed patio, the attendees enjoyed an active social hour from 11 AM until Dir. Ted called the meeting to order. Our member Bill Newhouse led in the singing of O'Canada followed by a moment of silence for departed members and the saying of grace.

Following a delicious "order off the menu" lunch (the chefs and staff know how to put on an excellent lunch); President Rob Boulet introduced our Division member, Chief Supt., Kevin Harrison (Retired) as our guest speaker. Kevin provided an excellent presentation on the Force's new disciplinary procedures that came into effect under the new Accountability Act as of November 2014. While Kevin retired in March 2015 from his position as District Commander of the Southern Alberta District he began his contract assignment for the Force in October 2015. Initially his position was a Recourse Analyst ghost writing grievance decisions. In 2017 Kevin began first of three term contracts as a Conduct Recourse Adjudicator. That title will be changed to Conduct Hearing Officer and he will preside over conduct hearing when the RCMP seeks to dismiss members from the Force for their conduct. As such Kevin will travel to various locations to conduct the hearings that could culminate in the termination of the member under the conduct hearing.



Kevin highlighted the new procedures under the Enhanced Accountability Act which expedites conduct cases and provides a variety of measures including forfeiting leave, mandatory counselling, transfers, demotions and terminations. Essentially the hearings are similar to criminal court proceedings with the member facing the conduct hearing able to bring in outside counsel to represent them. Such is increasingly the case as a result of the new union for non-commissioned officers. The union hires the lawyers to represent the union member and as most are criminal lawyers it can make it more difficult as the process becomes very litigious. The Force is moving towards a policy of presumptive dismissal, which means that if a member is found to have committed sexual misconduct, the starting point for the conduct board is that the member will be dismissed. Mitigating factors can walk the conduct measures back off that. On a happy note, Kevin noted that only 2% of members face any kind of conduct proceeding (not limited to conduct hearings) during their careers. Of course a few bad apples can become major news given the social media world in which we reside. Also body cams are on the horizon.

There are currently 6 Conduct Hearing Officers with process underway to approve another 8. Kevin is the only one not resident Ottawa.

President Rob thanked Kevin for his excellent presentation and reconvened the business portion of the luncheon meeting with the following items:

- Our Division continues to seek current members both regular and associate to serve on important committees such as sick and visiting, ladies events, entertainment and special events, and, current or upcoming vacancies within our executive. If interested please contact Rob or your regional director.
- Your Executive has approved the establishment of an assistant Benefit Support Advocate – Elizabeth Smith, who will attend the Advocate Training Course in Edmonton in June. Benefit Support Advocate Bruce Wieslikowski will attend the fall training course.
- Your Executive has decided not to send anyone to attend the 2024 AGM in Edmonton, for this year. One can however attend virtually.
- Rob reminded the members present to advise any executive member if they become aware of any member/spouse/ who requires a visit or assistance, or if any needs with respect to benefits or post death assistance contact Advocate Bruce or Elizabeth.

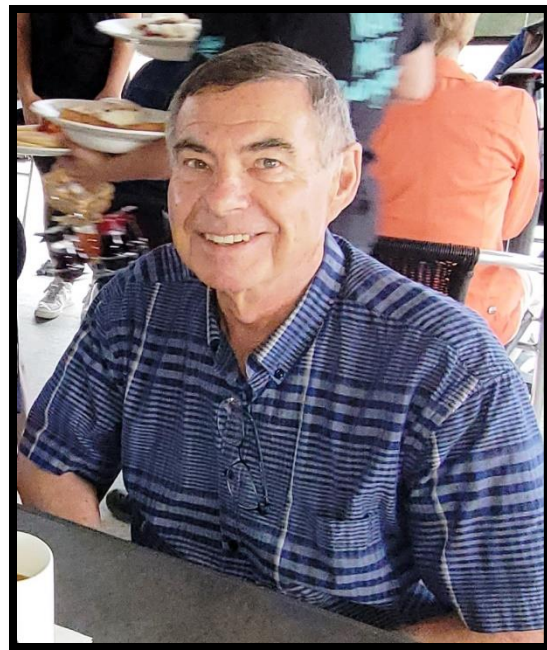


Osoyoos Director Ted closed the meeting by thanking the staff of Smitty's, followed by a rousing rendition of "The King". We always appreciate the lead voice of Bill Newhouse!!

Below are pictures of some of the attendees:







Attendees were: P. 5 – Janet and Jack Ross, Maria Phillippe; P.6 – Barry Erickson, Bill Hacock, Bill Newhouse; Sandy Foreman, Lin Springer; Judy Brydon, Dee Sellner; Kerry Bennington, Ted Cronmiller, Ernie Brydon; Kevin Harrison, Joe Holz; P. 7 – Jack McDonald, Glen Deobald, Orv Robson; Joyce Cronmiller, Susan Bennington, Phillip Fry.

CONTACTING MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH OKANAGAN EXECUTIVE CAN BE DONE BY CALLING SECRETARY KERRY BENNINGTON AT 250-826-8143. KERRY IS ALSO MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR AND QUARTERMASTER. WE CONTINUE TO NEED NEW EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR 2025!!!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM EXECUTIVE MEETINGS ON MAY 10TH HELD IN OLIVER AND JUNE 7TH HELD IN PENTICTON.

(Editor's Note: as we are combining May and June Bulletin only the highlights from the two Executive Meetings will be summarized below from details provided by Secretary Kerry Bennington and Penticton Director Bob Ogden – plus we will save space and trees!)

May 10th Meeting:

- Oliver Director Lin Springer arranged for the use of the newly appointed boardroom at Fairview Mountain Golf Course.
- Treasurer Beth reported several members have not yet paid their 2024 dues and in some cases 2023. Please check and contact Beth to ensure your membership is current. Thank you!!!
- Treasurer's Report Profit and Loss Report for Jan 1st to May 9th for social and events income of \$5488 and expenses of \$4125.52 leaving a net income of \$1,362.48. Balance Sheets confirmed Total Assets of \$13,063.
- Vacant Executive Positions: by virtue of Division Bylaw 4, Sec. 11 the Executive may appoint a member to fill a vacant position for the remainder of the year, and would qualify for renewal. Following discussion the following positions were filled – Deputy Director Penticton – Jim McMahon; Second Division Benefit Advocate – Elizabeth Smith.
- Social Media Initiative – A request from National was sent to Division Presidents to forward material about our Division for publication on the RCMP Veterans' Social Media Platforms including Facebook and LinkedIn. Due to recent fraud attempts which likely emanated from information posted of our Executive contact information, we will not allow our publication to include actual phone and email contact information.
- The discussed Division Golf Tournament for September will not be held due to the high cost of fees and cart rentals. Food prices have also increased.
- A large number of our Division members attended the Celebration of Life for Barbara Robson on May 17th, held at the Alliance Church in Summerland. Our Division Chaplain Rick Gay officiated at the service.

June 7th Meeting:

- The dates for the Summer Pot Luck is confirmed: at the residence of Glenn and Marika Hooper in Summerland on Sunday July 21st commencing at 3:00 PM. Bring your own utensils and that special dish to be shared
- The annual BBQ will be held in August this year at the residence of Past President and Summerland Director Orv Robson on Sunday, August 25th commencing at 3:00 PM. Both beef and chicken and even veggie burgers with salads and condiments will be served including a fantastic dessert. Initial cost will be in range of \$10 per person. More information and reminders will be sent out later. Please plan to attend these fun events.
- Elizabeth Smith at the time of this meeting was attending the Benefit Advocate Training Course in Edmonton. Elizabeth will support Benefit Advocate Bruce Wieslikowski in providing important updates and information to our membership and families in the sometimes complicated area of retirement and survivor benefits.
- Pres. Rob Boulet advised of the recent scam attempt to secure payment by someone using his email to request payment from our Treasurer on a supposed bona fide

Division expense. Fortunately Treasurer Beth took the correct action and checked with Rob to confirm the fraud attempt. The best advice is not to pay anything requested by phone or email.

- The Keep Connected Program includes the contact information of our single and elderly members who may require a visit, phone call, or assistance on various matters. Each regional Director is asked to review and update the status of the members in their area.
 - As a follow-up to our Strategic Planning Session the importance of developing relations with the RCMP union (National Police Federation) it was suggested we offer to hold an information meeting at detachments to provide important Force retirement and benefit information which appears to be lacking within the serving membership. As noted on the Facebook site MP Mates, Murray Macham frequently provides clarification and updated benefit/retirement/survivor information.
 - Memorabilia Sales: Secretary Kerry has advised any member planning to purchase clothing, memorabilia and any items from the RCMP Canteen in Edmonton will be required to contact him first. As the Division Membership Liaison he will advise the canteen that the member in question is a current and legitimate member of our Division. Kerry's phone is 250-826-8143.
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BENEFIT ADVOCATE'S CORNER:

OPERATION STRESS INJURIES (OSI)

An Operational Stress Injury (OSI) is any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from operational duties performed while serving as a member of the RCMP. It is used to describe a broad range of problems which include diagnosed medical conditions such as anxiety disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as other conditions that may be less severe, but still interfere with daily functioning. The symptoms and injuries themselves vary according to the individual and the nature of their experience(s). Other duties such as working in a war zone, in peacekeeping missions or following other traumatic or serious events can cause OSI. It is normal to experience some form of distress after being exposed to a traumatic event. Fortunately help is available for those struggling with OSI. The earlier help is sought, the better the rate of recovery.

What should you do if symptoms persist?

Seek help as soon as possible. OSI clinics are available to RCMP Vets and their families presenting problems with work related psychological trauma or stress. OSI clinics require a referral. If you have a Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) case manager, speak with them. If you don't have a case manager, contact VAC at 1-866-522-2122.

PLEASE CONTACT BRUCE WIESLIKOWSKI AT 778-476-1154 OR ELIZABETH SMITH AT 778-839-5316 IF YOU REQUIRE HELP OR ADVICE ON ANY RCMP BENEFIT MATTERS.

SCAM ALERT: When visiting any site including the National Office Member link make sure you SIGN OFF when finished. Also please review the February Bulletin info.