

## Official Dedication of the RCMP Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood Cemetery



On October 17th, the RCMP Veterans' Association, Ottawa Division, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation hosted the official dedication of the RCMP Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa.

The ceremony consisted of a parade involving RCMP members in Red Serge, RCMP veterans and the RCMP Police Community Pipes and Drums band. Following the benediction service and speeches from RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli, the Honorable Mauril Belanger Member of Parliament, the President of The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, Grete Hale and President Al Haggerty of the RCMP Veterans' Association, Ottawa Division, the flags were raised and the ceremonial ribbon was cut to mark this historic occasion. The RCMP Memorial Cemetery began as a concept several years ago and with the leadership of Supt. Bill Becker (Rtd) the idea finally took root in December 2002. A committee, chaired by D/Commr. Roy Berlinquette (Rtd), was formed and several volunteers from the Veterans' Association and from the RCMP have worked closely with Mr. James Patterson of The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation and his colleagues to plan the event.

Beechwood Cemetery began in 1873 co-incidental with the forming of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP). Today, this beautiful National Historic Site is a quiet place of reverence where visitors to Ottawa can pay their respects to those who have dedicated their lives to peace and order on behalf of all Canadians. An exclusive memorial monument is erected at the site to honor Constable Marmaduke Graburn, the first member of the NWMP to be killed on duty in 1879. Former RCMP Commissioner, James MacBrien, appointed in 1931 and knighted in 1935 is also interred at Beechwood Cemetery.

The National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces is located directly across from the RCMP Memorial Cemetery. The close proximity of the two cemeteries creates a historical setting for these national organizations.

The granite monument which is the focal point of the RCMP Memorial Cemetery is significant to the RCMP in shape, colour, and design. The colour black reflects the horses that have carried members through most of history. The archway on the front of the stone simulates the doors of the chapel on the grounds of the regimental cemetery at Depot, the RCMP Training academy in Regina, Saskatchewan. The bugler and bowed rifleman are taken from the stained glass windows above the alter of the chapel. Throughout the area, the colours of the RCMP are on display through the red maple trees and the white lilac trees that line the pathways.

The memorial is flanked by two granite walls containing 96 niches for the interment of urns of deceased members and their families.

The fact that this cemetery is exclusively for RCMP members and their families is unique and reflects the sense of family that is a distinguishing factor in the lives of members of the RCMP. Thus far, over 150 retired and serving members have committed to their interment at the RCMP Memorial Cemetery and many other members and their loved ones are already laid to rest there.

The RCMP Memorial Cemetery is intended to show the RCMP's appreciation, respect and unwavering commitment to its members, its veterans and their families and it is a

lasting reminder of the proud history of the organization and the service its members have given to Canada.