



History

During the summer of 1978, considerable interest was exhibited by several ex-members of the Force in starting a Veterans' Association in Prince Edward Island.

On October 18th, 1978, a meeting was held in Charlottetown, attended by L.G. Pantry, Earl Elliott, Jim Cox and Marshall MacKinnon. At this meeting, it was decided an Association would be formed. A total of thirty-four (34) ex-members were contacted and twenty-three (23) replied indicating their willingness to assist in the formation of an Association in PEI. The National Headquarters of the Veterans' Association was contacted and advised of our intentions. They were very cooperative and encouraged us to proceed, supplying us with a copy of the national constitution.

The Veterans' Associations in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, upon hearing of our intent, agreed to hold a joint meeting in Charlottetown on October 20th, 1978 to facilitate discussion and demonstrate how they conducted their monthly meetings. All interested veterans in PEI were invited to attend the meeting and fifteen (15) were able to attend. The Prince Edward Island members attending were: Lou Pantry, Jim Cox, Earl Elliott, Marshall MacKinnon, Bill Gairns, Hugh Rankin, Leo Lynch, Matt Hagan, John Paquet, Pat Neary, Doug Hender, John Matheson, Gene Gallant, WJR "Mac" MacDonald and Robert Barwise.

The PEI Group then held a brief meeting and the following executive was named and installed for a temporary period:

President	Lou Pantry
Vice-President	Marshall MacKinnon
Secretary / Treasurer	Jim Cox
Director for Kings County	Bill Gairns
Director for Queens County	Earl Elliott
Director for Prince County	WJR MacDonald

The executive then met with Mr. Kelly LeBrash, National President, and advised him of the action taken. Mr. LaBrash and several other members and their spouses had attended the meetings held by the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Divisions on this same date. A banquet was held that evening and Mr. LaBrash presented the Association Charter to the President, Lou Pantry. This was the official creation of the RCMP Veterans' Association in Prince Edward Island.

Our first monthly meeting was held on November 9th, 1978 at "L" Division HQ. This was considered our "Charter Night". All members were invited to attend; have their picture(s) taken; and were considered "Charter Members". Our President presided and lead discussion on the inaugural agenda:

1. Should the present executive continue for a year;
2. What the Veterans' Association is all about;
3. Membership fees;
4. Items of equipment such as blazers, etc.; and
5. General discussion regarding by-laws.

Association By-laws were drawn up in keeping with those of the National Association. The original executive received a vote of confidence and was elected to serve a one year term.

The Association members were anxious to participate in a community project and were able to furnish one room at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Charlottetown, at a cost of approximately \$1,500.00. A suitable engraved plaque was placed on the room door and bears the following inscription, "*Furnishings were donated by the PEI RCMP Veterans' Association*".



Our members are ever mindful of the plight of some of our less fortunate ex-members and in several cases, an investigation followed with a view of seeking financial assistance from the benefit trust fund. We provide fruit baskets and the like to members and wives who happened to be ill or hospitalized; we donate funds occasionally to worthwhile charities; and help out special causes. Volunteerism is our main contribution within the community of Prince Edward Island.

Almost every year since the Association was formed, we have been able to send our representative, usually the President, to the Annual General Meeting which is held in a different city in Canada each year, where other Veterans' Associations are located. This has been the heaviest drain on our financial resources, as the Association does not participate in specific fund raising endeavours. Membership fees are the primary source of funding.

Over the years, meetings have been held at different locations within the Province. Spouses join us approximately three times a year, namely a Lobster Dinner in June, a Christmas Dinner in December and another get-together randomly selected as to time and place. Usually an Officer of the Force, the Commanding Officer or his designate with spouse, attends our social functions.

We do not have a formal Ladies Auxiliary. Widows may join the Association when an application is received and upon acceptance, they are granted "associate membership".

Probably the highlight of our activities to date has been the hosting of the 1989 Annual General Meeting. It took a lot of hard work by all members, and from all reports, was an outstanding affair. It also had a number of beneficial spinoffs: it made our organization financially solvent, We do feel that one of the main benefits flowing from the AGM was the obvious recognition by local residents and officials that we were strong in Canada; a worthwhile organization, continuing their good works and in general, contributing to society.

Prior to have the Dominion Executive "awarding" PEI Veterans the honour of hosting the AGM, we had to "make our mark" and shall we say "sell" ourselves and the division, that we were capable of hosting such an event. In 1988, four members of the PEI Association travelled west to attend the AGM being held in Winnipeg, Manitoba to make our presentation to the full AGM membership and the Executive. Our purpose was to obtain the right to host the 1989 AGM in Charlottetown, PEI. The four members were: President WJR MacDonald; Host Chairman Lou Pantry; Marshall MacKinnon and Harry Kennedy, Members at large. After a long seventy-two (72) hours of continuous World Famous PEI Blue Cultured Mussels, "sudsy libation", and PEI hospitality, we were successful in our bid to host the 1989 AGM. Needless to say, the 1989 AGM was a great success, hosted by Canada's smallest province, and to this day, the event is still talked about in glowing terms by all who were fortunate enough to attend.

Our Association maintains a good ongoing relationship with the regular Force and naturally, cooperation is extended both ways. Our Association is under contract to perform grave site inspections of all cemetery locations in the province.

Many of our Veterans have contributed a great deal to the community in which they reside and indeed to the entire Province. Several of them have a high profile and a favourable public image in the various positions which they hold.

In conclusion, we would want it known; that we are most grateful for the spirit of cooperation and assistance extended by other divisions, our Dominion Headquarters, and our local RCMP personnel.