



Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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October Extra # 2 2020

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

**CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2020 A.G.M. (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING)
Held by Society's Executive
On October 21st.**

Details Page 2 & 3



**MAINTIEN LE DROIT
OR
MAINTIENS LE DROIT**

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**2020 Annual General Meeting of the Calgary Military Historical Society,
held 21 October, 2020, virtually.**

MOTION: Moved by Dave Love, seconded by Floyd Stinson, that the membership of the Calgary Military Historical Society authorize the current Executive to conduct an Annual General Meeting on behalf of the membership at large. This authorization includes giving the Executive authority to vote on any matters, other than indicated motions that come to the meeting and to determine the results of the election of a new Executive. MOTION CARRIED

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order 21 October 2020 through email contact with the current executive asking for their consensus with the following. The membership of the CMHS was notified by email several days prior to this meeting with an invitation to vote on various motions (voting procedure outlined in the notification) and given an invitation to give input or comment by email to the President on any items of interest or concern prior to the meeting. No input or communication was received by the President prior to calling the meeting to order.

2. Declaration that a quorum exists for the meeting

It was assumed that all members, having been given notification along with the agenda, names of nominees standing for positions on the Executive, and other motions, are deemed to be ‘present’ at this meeting hence, it is declared that a quorum exists.

3. Appointment of a Secretary for the AGM

Rob Wellings, as current Secretary and by prior agreement acted as meeting Secretary.

4. Nomination for the Maurice Harvey Award

It is declared that this year’s recipient of the Maurice Harvey Award is David Gale, in recognition of his dedication and work above and beyond expectations in keeping the membership connected through this on-going difficult Covid-19 period.

5. Reports

A) Financial Report – Floyd Stinson, Treasurer

Operating Account

Starting Balance, as of May 1.....	\$ 1264.39
Expenses May-Oct	
Food Bank.....	\$ 105.50
PO Box Rental.....	\$ 252.00
Postage.....	\$ 3.05
Total expenses.....	\$ 360.55
Income...Bank Interest.....	\$.05

Closing Balance..... \$ 903.89¹

Reserve Account

Current Balance\$ 10, 289.97

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MOTION: Moved by Floyd Stinson, seconded by Dave Love, that sufficient funds from the Reserve Account be transferred to the Operating Account to cover 2019-2020 expenses. MOTION CARRIED

The rationale for this motion is that in the absence of revenue during much of the 2019-2020 year, our Operating Account balance is lower than normal and should be maintained.

B) Membership Report – Floyd Stinson, Treasurer

34 regular members in good standing, 5 life members, 2 honorary members

C) President’s Report – as included in the notification to the membership of the Annual General Meeting

6. Election of Officers to the Executive

As no further nominations were received, it is declared that the current Executive continue in their current positions for the 2020-2021 year. Likewise, existing Directors, as appointed by the 2019-2020 Executive, continue in their current positions for the 2020-2021 year.

A) President – David Love

B) Vice President – Mike Clare

C) Past President – Allan Ross

D) Secretary – Rob Wellings

E) Treasurer – Floyd Stinson

F) Historian – Dave Love

G) Director (Archivist/Librarian) – Susan Elve

H) Director (Editor) – David Gale

7. Annual Dues for 2020-2021 Year

MOTION: Moved by Floyd Stinson, seconded by Dave Love, that the 2019-2020 annual dues for Members who were in good standing in October 2019, be applied to the 2020-2021 year. MOTION CARRIED

It is pointed out that if you are still in arrears for your 2019-2020 dues. Payment will result in your Membership continuing through the 2020-2021 year.

8. Consideration of other Motions and Issues Received on or before 15 October, 2020

None received

9. Other Business

None received

10. Adjournment

Maintien(s) Le Droit? By S.W. Horrall

It is almost 35 years since *The Quarterly* published the influential article by the late J. T. Hann, former R C M P Departmental secretary, on the origin of the Force's motto and badge. Although his well researched study spread much needed light upon the history of the early insignia of the Force, it did at the same time raise some still unanswered questions.

What surprised Mr. Hann — and what is still hard to believe — is that knowledge of the circumstances under which the motto of the Force was selected was so quickly lost. Even though he personally interviewed several of the oldest veterans including the late Commissioner A. Bowen Perry, appointed an Inspector in 1882, Asst. Commr. J. A. McGibbon, engaged in 1880 and ex-Sgt. Major F. A. Bagley who had been a trumpeter on the March West in 1874, none could provide him with an answer.

A search for written records of the origin of the motto proved equally unfruitful. In all probability any files that might have existed were lost in the 1897 fire which destroyed the records of the Comptroller's office in the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. In any event it now appears unlikely that we will ever know precisely by whom, or when, the motto was chosen. All that can be said with certainty from our knowledge of the history of the badges and uniforms is that it was in use by 1876 and had probably been selected while Commissioner French was still in command.

There is one aspect of the motto's origin however, which does require looking at afresh. This is the question of its spelling. On the badges of the North-West Mounted Police and Royal North-West Mounted Police there are two versions of the motto: **Maintien Le Droit** and **Maintiens Le Droit**

Earlier researchers assumed the first version was incorrect as it did not conform to current French grammatical practice which required a letter "s" in the second person singular, imperative tense, of the verb *maintenir*. This they explained was "a slip in spelling" that resulted from an imperfect knowledge of the French language on the part of the English-speaking officers who chose the motto, or the military outfitters in England who manufactured the badges.

The dual method of spelling the motto was not resolved until World War 1. The change was prompted by the action of a young French-Canadian officer, Insp. C.A. Rheault. Realizing that *Maintien Le Droit* did not conform to current French usage, Inspector Rheault — with some in trepidation — decided to bring the matter to the Commissioner's attention.

As a result Commissioner Perry sought the aid of some language authorities who confirmed that the correct spelling of the verb *maintenir* in the imperative tense, second person singular, was *maintiens*. Subsequently, the Commissioner issued a General Order informing all members that the correct motto of the Force was, **Maintiens Le Droit**. His action brought an end to the appearance of the two forms.

In 1953 the Force's badge was submitted for the first time to the College of Arms in England for redesigning according to the heraldic procedures. The newly designed badge with the motto **Maintiens Le Droit** was given official sanction by order-in-council a year later.

What has not been generally realized before is that the motto did not originate with the NWMP. *Maintien Le Droit* appears on the coats of arms of English baronial families as early as the 14th century. Two of these families, Brydges and Chandos, have used the motto down to modern times, the most notable among the latter being the Dukes of Chandos.



At the time of its appearance in the middle ages the grammatical structure of the French language was somewhat different from what it is today. To philologists, the language at that time was going through a stage of development referred to as Old French. One area in which the grammatical construction differed from the present was in the conjugation of the verb *maintenir*.

The second person singular in the imperative mood was *maintien*, formed without the letter "s". The addition of this letter in the imperative tense did not begin to appear until much later. It was sometime after the 16th century that the conjugation of this verb developed as we know it today. The "slip in spelling" interpretation is of course based upon the assumption that whoever chose the Force's motto intended that it should correspond to modern French Grammar. While this is possible, it seems highly unlikely. The English families which have used the motto since medieval times have not changed the spelling. In its association with Canada—which we shall see presently—it was also displayed without the letter "S"

Although other languages are used, mottoes are traditionally of Old French or Latin origin. Generally speaking, they are not altered with the passage of time to conform to changes in grammatical structure. Language is a living form, subject to development and modification.

Mottoes are immutable. A part of their intrinsic value is their unchanging link with the past. At the same time tradition played an important part in 19th century military life, it would have been uncharacteristic for the period for military men to have taken a traditional motto and altered it to suit themselves.

Perhaps the most well-known example of the changeless nature of mottoes is that of the Order of the Garter, *Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense*. ("shame on anyone who thinks evil of it") It of course doesn't make sense by modern standards.

As evidence, the "slip in spelling" interpretation relies upon the fact that both versions of the motto appear on the early accoutrements of the Force. Upon re-examination however, this evidence is very slight. Of the 16 different badges of the NWMP in the Force's Museum in Regina, only one, the officers' binocular case badge, displays the motto with the letter "s".

Maintiens Le Droit does appear on some of the officers' swords, but the traditional spelling is to be found in a more authoritative location. *Maintien Le Droit* is specifically stated as the force's motto in the order-in-council of 1890 setting out the officers' dress regulations. It also appears on the official letterhead of 1900 as well as on several of the illustrated greeting cards which members produced at the time.

The only new documentary evidence is a copy of a letter -written by Commissioner Macleod to a firm of military outfitters in London in 1879. In what is the earliest written record of the motto, the Commissioner is describing in detail the uniform and badges of the Force that they may be accurately manufactured. He twice quotes the motto of the Force. On each occasion it is unmistakably written *Maintien Le Droit*.

Any discussion of a possible source for the Force's motto is mere speculation, but look at Canada in the 1870s will show —interestingly enough — that *Maintien Le Droit* was known and used. One likely source was the third Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

From March 1867 to December 1868, His Grace held the post of Colonial Secretary in the British Government. During this time he came into close contact with several Canadian government officials in negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company for the transfer of Rupert's Land to the new dominion. The motto of the Dukes of Chandos was *Maintien Le Droit*.



Commissioner J.F. Macleod in "undress" uniform, March 1879, displaying a large sabretache badge. In a recently discovered memo written by him that year, the motto is quoted as *Maintien de Droit*

A more obvious source however, might have been the Grand Trunk Railway Regiment. This Canadian militia unit was organized in 1866 by Charles John Brydgcs, the managing director of the Grand Trunk Railway. A personal friend of Sir John A. Macdonald, Brydgcs' ancestral motto, like the Dukes of Chandos, was *Maintien Le Droit*.

It was not surprising therefore , as *he* was the Lieutenant - Colonel commanding the formation , that this was also chosen as the motto of the Grand Trunk Railway Regiment .



Fred White, Department of Justice chief clerk.

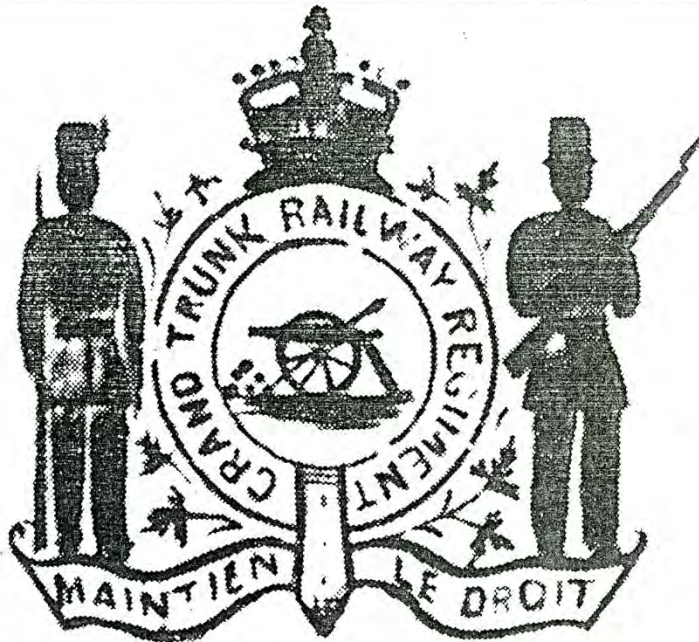
What is more interesting to the case at hand is that from 1862-1869 a young English emigrant by the name of Fred White was employed as a clerk under Brydgcs at the Railway's head office in Montreal. In 1869 White changed employment, becoming a clerk in the Department of Justice under its minister Sir John A. Macdonald.

He was still there when the Force was being organized in 1873-74. By 1876 he had become the Department's chief clerk. In 1878 he was appointed comptroller of the NWMP , a position he held until his retirement in 1913.

On the other hand, it is possible that whoever was responsible for the selection simply looked in a standard reference work like *The General Armory* by Sir Bernard Burke for a suitable motto for a police force.

Interestingly enough, the one part of a heraldic device over which the College of Arms has no regulatory authority is the motto. These may be adopted by organizations or individuals and used at will without seeking permission.

There can be no doubt that whoever did make the choice made a wise one. However it is spelled, the Force's motto will never lose its meaning or significance to the thousands of members who have served under it for over a century.



This article by S.W Horrall appeared in the RCMP QUARTERLY April 1974
I have added and updated some pictures and graphics

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The SOCIETY

is a non-profit registered society which fosters the study of the military and the police, and the heritage of Canada, the British Empire, and the world as well as the preservation of military artifacts and records. The CMHS meets once every calendar month at:

Petty Officers' Mess HMCS Tecumseh

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