

R.C.M.P.

Here's one of my favorite Canadian categories... the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—and we all know what that means....*Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald! [who hated each other, by the way]*

The North-West Mounted Police was formed in 1873. The original members of the Force began their famous March West on July 8, 1874. Treaties with the natives, the quick disruption of the whiskey trade, and a reputation for fair treatment by a responsible police force were their legacy. There were some serious problems in short order. In 1885, the Canadian Government and the NWMP encountered a major setback in the attempt to achieve peaceful settlement in the west. Some Metis and Indians, frustrated by government inaction over their complaints, violently rejected authority in what became known as the North-West Rebellion. And, completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad opened up the west to a flood of new settlers. The NWMP established a system of patrols and outposts throughout this vast territory.

By 1896, a new challenge appeared for the Mounted Police—the Klondike Gold Rush was on. Inspector Charles Constantine, however, had been dispatched to the Yukon in 1895 to establish a Force presence and reinforce Canadian authority over the territory. The Force was in place before the hordes of enthusiastic miners came north.

As the gold rush receded, the new century brought forth different challenges for the Force. Officers served in the South African War in 1899, as the nucleus of the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, which also served in the First World War. In WW II, personnel in the RCMP's marine and air services were transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force. RCMP members continue to serve in times of need through UN Peacekeeping efforts around the world.

The NWMP, in 1904, was renamed the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. In 1920 the Force absorbed the Dominion Police and was renamed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In the 16 years that I've been collecting them, I've only come across seven RCMP covers. There must be more, of course, but they're difficult to locate, even among Canadian collectors, and one rarely hears about the category at all.

Still, with such a rich and legendary history, I'll always be looking for them.

