



AN UNAUTHORIZED HISTORY OF THE RCMP

From Sergeant Preston to Sergeant Pepper – and beyond.

1867 July 1 - Dominion of Canada created with proclamation of British North America Act.

1873 May 23rd- Parliament passes an act establishing "Mounted Police Force for the Northwest Territories," modeled on the Royal Irish Constabulary.

1873 June - Cypress Hills Massacre. Drunk and angry wolf hunters and whisky traders from Montana kill 20 Assiniboine First Nations. Word travels slowly to Ottawa where the infant police force awaits its first test.

1877 April - "The Mounties Always Get Their Man." Fabled phrase coined in Montana newspaper, reporting on arrests of perpetrators of Cypress Hills massacre. "Horses were sacrificed for the arrest, but the M.P.'s are worse than bloodhounds when they scent the track of a smuggler, and they fetch their men every time."

1885 - Northwest Rebellion. Metis frustration with dwindling buffalo herds flares into armed rebellion, led by Louis Riel.

Mid-1890's - RCMP officers help manage the Klondike Gold Rush in the Yukon.

1911 - The Lost Patrol. Four North-West Mounted Police freeze on failed journey to Yukon. Next time four Mounties will die together – 2005, Mayerthorpe Alberta.

1919 November 20 - Royal Canadian Mounted Police officially created.

1920s-40s - Mounties star in more than 200 Hollywood films - including 1910 Rider of the Plains, 1919 Tyrant Fear, 1930 O'Malley of the Mounties, 1936 Rose Marie, and 1942 King of the Mounties.

1931 - Mad Trapper Albert Johnson shoots Mountie, is eventually hunted down and killed after 48-day manhunt in the Yukon.

1950 - Cold War. RCMP Special Branch expands the force's security operations.

1960s - Commissioner George McClellan cuts horsemanship from RCMP curriculum – Mounties no longer need to literally earn their spurs.



1970 - October Crisis. British Trade Commissioner James Cross and Quebec Minister of Labour and Immigration Pierre Laporte kidnapped by separatist extremists in Montreal. Laporte found dead. PM Trudeau invokes War Measures. In the aftermath, Mounties will go too far in the name of national security with illegal wire-tapping and mail-openings.

1972 - Former RCMP officer Jack Ramsay writes Macleans cover story, describing use of fear and hazing rituals inside RCMP. Leads to Marin Commission.

1974 - First women recruited to the force.

1976 - Marin Commission recommends establishment of public complaints system within RCMP.

1976 - Vancouver Sun journalist John Sawatsky uncovers hundreds of illegal RCMP break-ins to investigate militant groups and other crimes.

1977 - Keable Inquiry revisits police activities in Quebec following 1970 October crisis; 17 RCMP officers charged with 44 offences.

1981 - McDonald Commission on RCMP wrongdoing finds 20 years of broken laws. Principal recommendation: strip RCMP of intelligence function and form entirely separate civilian security agency. Genesis of Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS).

1982 - Charter of Rights and Freedoms introduced in Canada.

1984 - CSIS established. Also, RCMP Commissioners made politically accountable – appointed at the pleasure of the Prime Minister.

1985 March 16 - Air India. 329 passengers die in Canada's largest mass murder.

1986 - RCMP Act amended to create Commission for Public Complaints (CPC)/External Review Committee (ERC). Disciplinary structures unchanged in 2009.

1988 - Airbus scandal. RCMP investigate suspicions that Air Canada bought Airbus passenger jets, after a German businessman paid then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to lobby for Airbus. Claiming RCMP actions hurt his reputation; Mulroney sues the federal government, and wins \$2.1million.

1990s - Expansion of international policing duties to include Haiti, Kosovo, Bosnia/Herzegovina, East Timor, Guatemala, Croatia.

1991 - Controversy boils over when RCMP member fights to wear a Sikh turban on the job, instead of traditional RCMP headgear.



1993-1998 - Massive budget cuts. RCMP loses 2200 positions and \$175 million in funding.

1995-1996 - To stop the “spread of red tunic schlock,” RCMP Commissioner Norman Inkster cuts deal with Disney Corp, for international rights to Mountie image.

November 1997 – Sergeant Pepper. At the APEC Summit in Vancouver, Canadian university students are pepper-sprayed, strip-searched and arrested while protesting presence of Indonesian dictator Suharto.

1998 - APEC Inquiry. Retired Judge Ted Hughes reviews 50 complaints about handling of protests at APEC, and finds excessive use of force.

1999 December 14 - Millennium Bomber. Driving a truck containing ingredients to make explosives, Ahmed Ressam caught by American Customs trying to enter USA at Port Angeles, Washington.

2000 September - Guiliano Zaccardelli becomes 20th Commissioner of RCMP.

2000 September 7 - Commissioner Zaccardelli concedes RCMP botched APEC security planning.

2001 September 11 – Attacks on New York and Washington dramatically change the security climate in North America.

2001 Sept 24-27 - CSIS transfers national security investigations to RCMP. Project A-O is created to track terrorists. Focus on Abdullah Almalki and Ahmad El Maati.

2001 November 11 - Ahmad El Maati detained in Syria.

2001 December 18 - Bill C-36 passes: new power of preventative arrest to prevent and thwart terrorism.

2002 September - Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian citizen, stopped at a New York airport. Based on information RCMP passed to US authorities, Arar is deported to Syria.

2003 October 6 - Maher Arar returns to Canada after 361 days in Syrian prison and tells of torture.

2003 November - Commission for Public Complaints Against RCMP concludes “excessive and unjustified force” by Mounties to disperse protesters at 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec.

2004 January 21 - Home of Ottawa Citizen journalist Juliet O’Neill raided after she writes about Maher Arar. RCMP obtain search warrant under the Security of Information Act, in



2004 January 28 – Public Inquiry called into case of Maher Arar.

2004 - National Post breaks story of RCMP Pension Fund scandal; alleges fraud and nepotism.

2004 September - During a judicial inquiry into federal sponsorship scandal, Auditor General Sheila Fraser reveals that RCMP spent almost \$18,000 in sponsorship money to buy souvenir corkscrews – paying twice for same items.

2004 December - Vanderhoof BC. A drugstore robbery suspect, Kevin St. Arnaud, shot 3 times by Constable Ryan Sheremetta. RCMP finds no fault. No charges laid.

2005 March 3 – Massacre at Mayerthorpe Alberta. Routine call to repossess a truck leaves four fallen Mounties, ambushed by convicted pedophile.

2005 October 29 - Ian Bush, 22, arrested in Houston BC for open beer at hockey game. Dies at RCMP detachment of gunshot wound to back of head. Officer involved is cleared.

2006 July - Spiritwood Saskatchewan. Two RCMP officers killed after responding to domestic disturbance call.

2006 September 18 - O'Connor Commission says RCMP passed bad information to US in Maher Arar case.

2006 September 28 - RCMP Commissioner Zaccardelli apologizes to Arar.

2006 October - Ontario judge Lynn Ratushny strikes down federal official secrets law, saying RCMP used it to try to intimidate Ottawa journalist into revealing source in Arar story.

2006 December 6 - Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli resigns over handling of Arar.

2006 December 11 - Final O'Connor Report on Arar recommends creation of independent agency to oversee RCMP national security operations.

2007 January 26 - Maher Arar awarded \$10.5 million, largest government settlement in Canadian history.

2007 May 15 - Air India inquiry reveals that no RCMP bomb-sniffing dogs were on duty to screen the doomed Air India flight, contrary to what RCMP said during 2005 file review.

2007 June 15 – A Matter of Trust released. After investigating pension fund scandal former lawyer David A. Brown concludes RCMP management is “horribly broken”.



2007 July 16 - William Elliott. First civilian ever appointed RCMP commissioner is a 53-year-old civil servant with experience in Justice and Public Safety.

2007 October 14 – Robert Dziekanski. An agitated Polish immigrant, stranded inside Vancouver airport, dies after being repeatedly tasered by RCMP.

2007 November 6 - Constable Doug Scott shot in Kimmirut Nunavut, while investigating impaired driving incident. (220 RCMP deaths on duty since 1873.)

2007 November 14 –Video of YVR Taser incident released.

2007 December 19 - RCMP approve a new backup policy for remote areas. No solo response to potentially violent calls.

2008 January - Assistant Commissioner Keith Clark appointed by Commissioner Elliott to head RCMP Change Management Team, implementing major reforms.

2008 February - In custody deaths report reveals total of 80 people died in RCMP custody from 2002-2008.

2008 October 25 - Monty Robinson, one of four RCMP officers involved in Taser death at Vancouver airport, faces charge of impaired driving causing death.

2008 December 12 - RCMP pull old Tasers out of service, after CBC investigation reveals some are delivering higher voltage than manufacturer said was possible.

2008 December 14 - No charges recommended by BC Crown against four Mounties involved in Taser death at Vancouver Airport.

2008 December 31 - Fraser Macaulay, key whistle-blower in Pension Fund scandal, officially retires. Says he no longer feels there's a place for him in RCMP.

2009 January – Braidwood Inquiry opens into Taser death of Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver Airport.

2009 February 2 - Braidwood Inquiry. Dziekanski's last words as he howls in pain at first Taser shot: "Leave me alone! Are you out of your minds? Why?" Last intelligible words: "Polizia! Polizia!" - Seems unaware it's police shocking him.

2009 February 9 - Christian Science Monitor reports on commission to determine if RCMP killed Inuit dogs in 50s and 60s. From 1950 to 1975, Inuit sled dog population plummeted from 10,000 to less than 1000, according to a UBC professor.



2009 February 13 - RCMP Commissioner William Elliott says Conducted Energy Weapons (Tasers) can cause "risk of death, particularly for acutely agitated individual." First head of any policing organization to say so.

2009 February 23 - Canadian Chiefs of Police call for more Tasers, saying no proof Tasers cause death. 73 of Canada's 600 police services now use Tasers. 20 people have died in Canada after being tasered.

2009 February 24 - Braidwood Inquiry. RCMP Const Gerry Rundel reveals Dziekanski not warned before being tasered 5 times. Rundel testifies no time for warning, as Dziekanski became combative by grabbing stapler. Video reveals Dziekanski swung stapler only after he was tasered.

2009 February 26 - Braidwood. RCMP officers deny cover up, after video shows their version of events consistently inaccurate.

2009 February 27 - SOS symbol on BC mountainside. RCMP admit mistake in not acting more quickly to rescue missing skiers.

2009 March 18 - Former Mountie from Mayerthorpe sues RCMP for more than \$3 million, claiming RCMP ignored "significant nervous shock and suffering" experienced following massacre.

2009 March 18 - RCMP Constable Laura Lehne's sexual harassment complaint thrown out because case took too long to be heard. She complained supervisor Corporal Tim Korman made constant "disparaging and disturbing" sexual comments.

2009 April 21 - RCMP paid out \$500,000+ in two years, settling lawsuits filed in Vancouver Island courts alone. Includes case of Nanaimo mother accused of choking her child, and another where Mounties allegedly used excessive force in a Chase River raid.

2009 May 11 - RCMP deputy commissioner apologizes for Dziekanski's death. "We are very sorry for Mr. Dziekanski's death," William Sweeney, senior deputy commissioner, told Senate committee studying RCMP reforms. "We are committed to learning as much as possible from the circumstances surrounding his tragic death."

2009 May 12 - Braidwood. Police psychologist Mike Webster does devastating critique of "excessive use of force" by four RCMP members involved in Taser death of Robert Dziekanski, less than a minute after meeting him.

2009 June 1 - BC Solicitor-General orders RCMP in BC to pull all 578 of their older model M-6 Tasers from service after initial testing finds 80% failure rate.



2009 June 1 - Commissioner William Elliott apologizes for Robert Dziekanski's death in opening remarks at Senate National Security Committee meeting.

2009 August 11 - Alberta RCMP report more serious complaints against its officers than every other province combined. Of 600 complaints overall, BC submitted 67, Manitoba 95, Alberta 339 complaints.

2009 September 23 - Braidwood Inquiry. Amid conflicting internal accounts, disappearing emails and disastrous publicity following death of Robert Dziekanski, a top Mountie admits RCMP shouldn't investigate itself. "While we're competent and confident in our investigation, we recognize that's not the perception," says Superintendent Wayne Rideout.

2009 December 2 - Corporal Benjamin "Monty" Robinson (involved in Taser death at YVR) dodges impaired driving charges (lack of evidence) but faces obstruction of justice charge.

2009 December 8 - RCMP watchdog slams Mounties for airport Taser death. Chair of the Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP says the Mounties had no intention of harming Robert Dziekanski, but they did almost everything wrong in dealing with the agitated Polish immigrant.

2010 late January - Braidwood Report goes to government.

2010 Spring - Braidwood Report made public.

2012 - RCMP contracts to police provinces expire.