

Ramblings of a Shooting Bum – Royal New Brunswick Rifle Association

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As the weather cools and I make preparations for the upcoming winter I've had a little time to reflect on the history of our Association.

The 150th anniversary of the founding of our Association will happen in December 2016 and with a year to plan I hope we can put together a plan to celebrate and honour those who have contributed to organized shooting sports in NB.

A quick check with Lorraine Chapman our current RNBRA Historian and Recording Secretary has revealed the below information researched by Ellen MacGillivray who worked passionately & diligently for the RNBRA for many years, until her passing a few years ago.

She wrote of a general order, No. 70 dated 3 December 1866 for a meeting to be held in the Mechanics Institute in Saint John regarding the formation of a Provincial Rifle Association. The meeting was called by His Excellency the Commander-in-chief who wanted to see this happen. Of course, that was Sir Charles Hastings Doyle, lieutenant-governor and chief of the armed forces.

Sir Charles Hastings Doyle had a very distinguished military career and is an important figure in Canadian history.



Sir Charles Hastings Doyle

The New Brunswick Rifle Association was originally formed from NB Militia units to promote marksmanship in order to assist with the defence of the Realm. For many years the association was supported heavily by our armed forces and we still enjoy close ties with the Canadian Armed Forces today.

I recently came across a picture (thanks Ron) of the winning Inter maritime Match team and it is dated 1913. To the best of my knowledge it is the oldest team competition trophy in Canada and it is still an important match held yearly between NB, NS and PEI. I'm currently looking for the RNBRA copy of the match history which should contain a wealth of historic information. If I don't find it I'll ask to borrow a copy from Al Mutch in N.S. and get some copies made. Al is a Maritime Shooting historian and hearing his reminiscences add great richness to my sport.



1913 Inter Maritime Match team

Another of our historic trophies is the Prince of Wales Trophy (presented by the Prince himself on a visit to New Brunswick) which predates our Association by a few years and was entrusted to our Association for annual marksmanship competition. We have lived up to our commitment and continue to record yearly winners. Our trophy book (available online at RNBRA.ca) lists our trophies and information about the donors as well as the winners of many of the shooting competitions held in our past.



Prince of Wales Trophy

This history and continuous commitment has helped our Association to evolve into the Provincial Sport Governing Body for shooting sports. We are no longer primarily involved in Military type shooting and now in cooperation with affiliated clubs we promote several organized competitive programs representing different shooting disciplines.

Throughout our history we have been fortunate that many strong willed people have participated in our administration. The commitment and passion of these people is what has led to our Association's survival and prosperity.

I remembers attending meetings in the late 70s and early 80s when members would come together to discuss and decide issues and set direction for our Association. These meetings were always passionate and at times somewhat heated but they always followed democratic processes and even those who lost a vote understood that the decision was made by the majority without personal prejudice.

Often these meetings were after a long day of competitive shooting and the next day everyone would be shooting and working together. I would marvel at their commitment and cooperation after such apparent disagreement the evening before.

As I've grown older I've come to learn it takes people with strong personalities and respect for other points of view to ensure the success of organizations such as ours.

The strength of our Association has always been it's members and we must continue to attract strong self confident shooters for leadership roles in the RNBRA. The future of the RNBRA depends on it's members. Please make plans to attend the 2016 AGM on Oct 18 in Sussex.

Michael Lutes
President, Royal New Brunswick Rifle Association