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them. Primarily a ceremonial cover, the shabrack is used only on important occasions. Regulations governing it say, in part: "The Regimental Cypher or Designating Insigne will appear on the rear portion on both sides of the Shabrack and, apart from other Regimental Badges will constitute a designating mark of the Regiment. . . ."

The familiar MP (connected) appearing on the RCMP shabrack, is the registered horse brand of the Force. First allotted to the NWMP on June 7, 1887, the brand was allowed to expire on Dec. 13, 1917 and three months later was cancelled. The brand remained unregistered for the next 26 years, but was renewed by the RCMP on July 5, 1944 and has remained in good standing since then. In modern times, all Mounted Police horses are properly branded. The fused MP is also used as an identification mark on certain articles of clothing and kit and in addition forms part of the registered markings on RCMP aircraft and "Marine" Division vessels.

The RCMP was not always entitled to use the ceremonial shabrack, but with its use today, the Force also enjoys a distinction unique among mounted units—the Mounted Police is the only body in the British Commonwealth which uses a brand instead of a cypher as a designating mark of the unit.

With the appearance of a "Ride" once more, undoubtedly there will be those who will question the usefulness of equitation in a modern law-enforcement agency such as the Mounted Police. But the functions of the horse go beyond his extremely limited value in the work of the RCMP, or mere show. Riding, along with foot drill and physical training, is part of the physical fitness program of the Force; it is an excellent method of detecting courage, or lack of it, in a recruit; in short, it is a means of "separating the men from the boys". In addition, equitation more than any other factor develops that *esprit de corps* which is so indelibly a part of the rich tradition of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The views expressed in any material published in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.