

**Different kneeler patterns.**

designed and the estimated quantities of canvas and wool required for each of the 64 kneelers. The blue wool, selected to match the RCMP uniform blue, had to be ordered from England and Woolcraft agreed to make up custom “kits” for each of the kneelers with all the necessary materials required, taking into consideration the varying sizes.

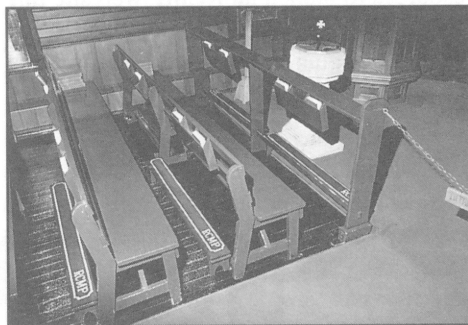
Before the project could proceed, funding had to be assured and Mr. K. Barker of the Regina Division of the RCMP Veterans’ Association agreed to provide the initial funding for the project. The wool could now be ordered, patterns drafted for each kneeler and the kits assembled by Woolcraft. The Bells received the kits just as they were preparing to leave Regina, in June 1989. Miraculously, the kits were packed and distributed quickly among the coordinators to a virtual army of volunteers — and all without a hitch.

People from all across the country had offered to work on the project. Mrs. Bell and Mrs. Reta Barker found volunteers in the Regina area, C/M Julie Graham recruited a number in “E” Division (British Columbia) and throughout the Forensic Laboratory Services Directorate, and ex-S/Sgt. Garth Hampson, formerly of the RCMP Band, found volunteers in the Ottawa area. Most of the volunteers had some connection to the Force — either as members, through marriage, family or friendships.

Men and women worked on the project during noon hours, evenings, weekends and holidays. It has been estimated that each kneeler took a minimum of 195 hours to complete. One Saskatoon man offered to make a kneeler cover in memory of his late son. One kit was inadvertently left on a British Rail train and, fortunately, it was later recovered and returned. Each kneeler represents a fond memory — a story or anecdote woven into it.

All the kneeler covers were to be ready and properly installed by July 8, 1990, for the Veterans’ 40th Anniversary Ecumenical Church Parade, in Regina. Mr. and Mrs. Barker inspected every completed kneeler and ensured that all were in place for the dedication. Since that time, the Barkers have maintained them and even had them “Scotch guarded” to make them waterproof and stain resistant. There is even a campaign to discourage people from standing on the kneelers during graduation services.

The many volunteers who worked on the kneeler project for the Chapel have just cause to feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments, for they have produced handsome pieces of art that will endure for many years, if given proper care. Their efforts have contributed greatly to the beauty and heritage of the Chapel and “Depot”.



**New kneelers in place.**

*Photos by S/Sgt. R. Stair, Regional Forensic Identification Support Section*