

# A Force on the Move

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Photo: Malak

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Musical Ride represents a history as colourful as the riders' scarlet tunics and as proud as their magnificent black horses. In 1874, the first contingent of the Northwest Mounted Police was dispatched to Canada's frontier west to end a flourishing whiskey trade and establish law for coming settlers.

Patrolling hundreds of miles on horseback, the force not only ensured the peaceful settlement of Canada's west but also later maintained law during the Klondike Gold Rush and helped open up Canada's Arctic frontier. Less than 50 years after its founding, the Mounted Police absorbed other existing police forces to form the nation-wide Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The RCMP Musical Ride recalls this heritage while thrilling audiences with its precision. Performed by a full troop of 32 riders — all police officers with at least two years' active duty — and their specially bred mounts, the Ride consists of intricate manoeuvres originating in traditional cavalry drill formations. Months of intensive training are required to prepare horse and rider for performance.

Most recently, the Musical Ride has completed a two-and-one-half month summer tour of Europe, performing in Ireland, England, West Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. Past tours have taken the Ride to the United States, Bermuda, Denmark and Japan.