

from the elements and shortage of food. Dealing with this crucial situation, Steele proclaimed that every traveller entering the Yukon must have two months worth of provisions and \$500 or six months worth and \$200 — inevitably saving thousands of people's lives.

Many of the routes to the Yukon by land or water were extremely dangerous and people perished as boats were destroyed in hazardous places like White Rapids and Five Finger Rapids. Sam Steele was known for making up laws along the way, for the welfare of the people. He decreed that only experienced operators could run vessels in dangerous waters and that women and children had to portage around dangerous sections of the river. Steele also ensured that all boats were inspected and registered.

Samuel Steele and the NWMP had a tremendous impact upon the northern frontier of the Yukon. In his autobiography, Steele wrote, "The whole demeanour of the people changed the moment they crossed the summit. The pistol was packed in the valise and not used. The desperado changed his way and no one feared him." His devotion to duty and unswerving dedication to incorruptible enforcement of the law earned him the deepest respect in the Yukon. When Steele was replaced at Dawson in September of 1899, he had earned the title "Lion of the Yukon." Canada's fifth-highest mountain in Kluane National Park is named after him.

Epilogue

Samuel Steele not only served in the NWMP with distinction, but with the outbreak of the South African War, he took leave from the Force and organized, trained and commanded Lord Strathcona's Horse regiment which performed outstanding service during the Boer War in South Africa. "The rough-riding colonel from Canada," as Steele became affectionately known, led his men into action winning distinction for the regiment and honours and awards for himself.

After the war, at the request of General Sir

Robert Baden Powell, Steele stayed in Africa to help create and command the South African constabulary, modelled on the North-West Mounted Police. His chivalry, judgment and diplomacy proved most effective in bringing peace to this beleaguered land.

Steele returned to a military career in Canada in 1907. In 1914, with the outbreak of the First World War, he was promoted Major General and soon took the Second Canadian Division over to England.

A man of superb leadership and service, Steele received the knighthood of the Order of St. Michael and St. George in 1918 and retired the following July after more than 50 years of service.

Major-General Sir Samuel Steele, KCMG, CB, MVO, died January 30, 1919, at Putney, England. Canada lost a legendary figure, a man of immense ability who never flinched from the duties he assumed to protect the safety and security of people, their communities and ultimately their way of life. At his request, he was buried in Winnipeg with full honours.

A little known fact is that Sam Steele's brothers also joined the fledgling NWMP in 1873, at Brockville. Reg. No. 18 (O.S. 7), Richard E. Steele served until 1882 and then farmed at Beaver Lake, Alberta. Richard E. Steele died in 1926 and was buried at Battleford, Saskatchewan. The other brother, Reg. No. 18A (O.S. 43), Godfrey M. Steele, served until 1878. He operated a livery stable at Fort Saskatchewan at the turn of the century and later lived in the Okanagan region, B.C. Godfrey Steele died in 1928 and was buried in the Westbank Cemetery, in Westbank, B.C. Both served in Steele's Scouts in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. Sam Steele's nephew, Reg. No. 3490, Richard Steele — son of Richard E. Steele — served with the NWMP from 1900 to 1904.

Sam Steele has come to symbolize the Mounted Policeman of myth and legend, as portrayed in the recent television "Historical