

## **The Musical Ride Today**

Members of the Musical Ride are, first and foremost, police officers who, after at least two years of active police work, volunteer for duty with the Musical Ride. Most members are non-riders prior to their equestrian training with the RCMP; however, once they complete the courses of instruction, they not only become riders but ambassadors of goodwill. Working through a unique medium, they promote the RCMP's image throughout Canada and the world. RCMP members only remain with the Musical Ride for three years which ensures an annual rotation of approximately one third (33%) of the riders.

Today, in keeping with tradition, the Musical Ride is performed by a full troop of 32 riders and horses, plus the member in charge. The Musical Ride consists of the execution of a variety of intricate figures and cavalry drill choreographed to music. Demanding utmost control, timing and coordination, these movements are formed by individual horses and riders, in two's, four's and eight's at the trot and at the canter. Months of training, practice and many kilometres/miles around the riding school make horse and rider one. The horses must not only appear in the Musical Ride, but on Parliament Hill, in parades, special events and have the ability to travel and adapt to different environments, not to mention, hours of petting and photo-taking that the horses must patiently endure.

One of the most recognizable Musical Ride formations is the "Dome," once featured on the back of the Canadian fifty-dollar bill. The highlight of the Musical Ride is, without a doubt, the CHARGE when lances, with their red and white pennons, are lowered and the riders and their mounts launch into the gallop. The conclusion of the performance is the March Past performed to the strains of the RCMP's Regimental March where the Musical Ride traditionally salutes the guest of honour.

The RCMP Musical Ride tours throughout Canada, the United States and other international venues, performing at approximately forty to fifty locations a year between the months of May and October. Thirty-six riders, thirty-six horses, a farrier, a technical production manager and three Non-Commissioned Officers travel with the Musical Ride on tour.

For more information, please visit the RCMP website at [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca) or contact National Communication Services Directorate at 613-993-2999 (Fax: 613-993-1095).