

## **Sub/Cst. Nash J.**



**NASH , JOHN - SUB/CST . Regimental No. 135**  
March 11 , 1876 - Fort MacLeod , North-West Territories Age: 27

Sub-Cst. John Nash holds the distinction of being the first member of the North-West Mounted Police to be nominated for the Honour Roll. Unfortunately his service file was lost in the fire that damaged the West Block of the Parliament Buildings in 1897. Consequently, little is known of the details of his life, or of his untimely death. A card file at RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa reveals that he was born in 1849 and was engaged at Halifax on October 1, 1873. An item in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, dated October 6, 1873, reported that a John Nash was among twenty men who were selected in Halifax for the "Manitoba Mounted Rifles" (an early pseudonym for the North-West Mounted Police). The men were to leave "that very morning for the scene of their duties". McAlpine's Halifax City Directory of 1869-70 shows a John D. Nash Jr. as an excise man (clerk) for Inland Revenue, living with his father, an auctioneer and commission merchant, at 91 Dresden Row. After this 1870 entry, John Nash Jr.'s name never appears again on the Halifax rolls.

Nash engaged for a period of five years. For his service, he would receive a salary of 75 cents a day and the promise of a 160 acre land grant upon completion of his time. While with the Force, Nash worked as a clerk in the stores at Fort MacLeod in the North-West Territories (now Alberta). While on duty he died as a result of an accident near the fort. There are no particulars regarding his fatality.

Since 1878, regimental numbers have been issued sequentially. Nash's regimental number of 135 means he was one of the original 275 Mounties that made the first arduous trek west from Fort Dufferin in 1874. Being one of the originals is a distinction he shares with only one other member of the Honour Roll - Cst. Claudius Hooley, regimental number 181.

Like many early recruits of the NWMP, Nash's name is of Irish origin. Whether he was born in Ireland or in Canada is unknown. Evidence only indicates that he lived in Halifax for a time before joining the NWMP. After his death, Nash's 160 acre land parcel was granted to his mother in Halifax.

John Nash lies buried in grave 3, row 1, in the Protestant plot of the Union Cemetery in Fort MacLeod, Alberta. He rests among 27 of his Mountie comrades, four of whom are members of the Honour Roll. Also buried there is Special Constable Jerry Potts, a legendary interpreter and guide whose name appears in several stories in this book.

Unfortunately, John Nash's birth date is unknown. All that is recorded about his character is contained on that small card at RCMP Headquarters. The Assistant Commissioner at the time, A.G. Irvine, reported that Sub-Cst. John Nash was known to be "a very good man.