

ROYAL MILITARY POLICE BATUS



The BATUS Emblem 'The Medicine Man'

Location

The British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) is a unique British Army training unit located in Southern Alberta, Canada. Each year between April and November, numerous British Army units conduct live fire training on the vast prairies that are home to BATUS. The Permanent Staff (PS) strength of RMP BATUS is a WO2 RMP (SIB) and a Sgt AGC (RMP), both of whom serve 2 year tours. In addition, during the Battle Group training season, the detachment is augmented by 9 further JNCOs who carry out policing duties.

Duties

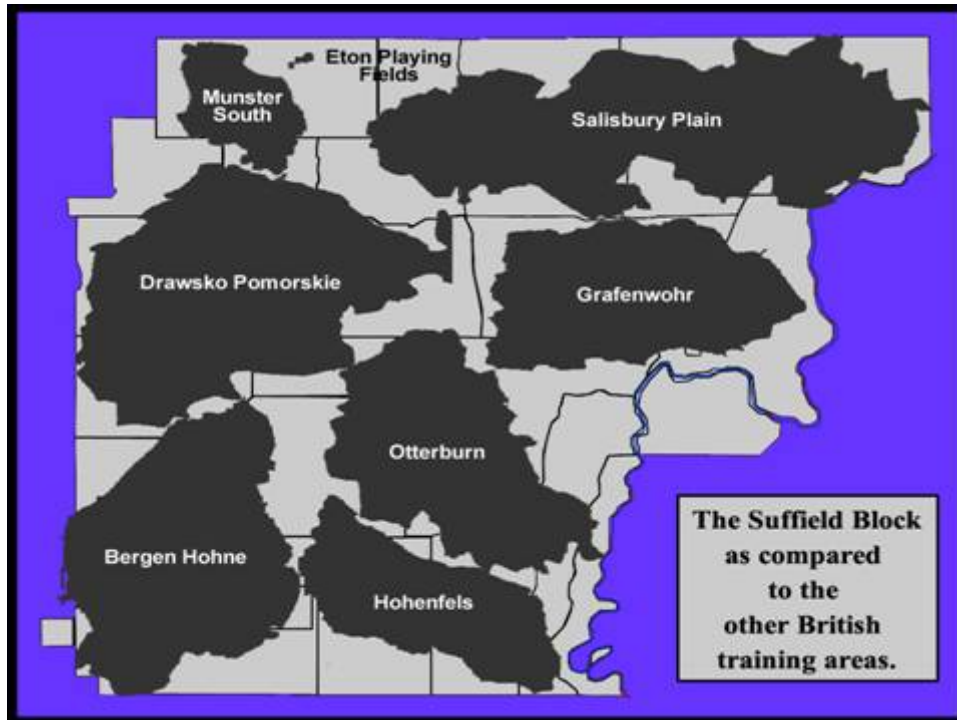
Duties covered by RMP in Canada are in many ways unique and challenging. It is essential that a very close liaison is maintained with the various police services within the province of Alberta and NCOs find themselves regularly working along side the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Medicine Hat Police, Calgary City Police as well as the Canadian Forces Military Police.

Recreation

Adventurous training and the excellent sporting facilities at BATUS allow NCOs to regularly participate in the usual Squash, Football, Rugby, Swimming and Weight training & gym work as well as ice skating and ice hockey, Power boating/water skiing, Horse riding, White water rafting and Skiing are also available for the more adventurous with the Rocky Mountains located approximately 3 hours drive north west of BATUS and boasts some of the most spectacular scenery in the world.

Conclusion

RMP Det BATUS offers a unique opportunity for NCOs to experience the North American policing and when commitments allow, offers excellent off duty activities and travel opportunities to TS who serve at the detachment during the exercise period. If correctly motivated, NCOs will enjoy their stay in Canada and gain valuable experiences that will benefit them for the remainder of their career with RMP.



ORIENTATION OF BATUS AREA

Suffield Training Area

BATUS has been utilised by the British Army for live fire training for over 30 years. It is a very high profile training establishment located on the vast prairie of Southern Alberta, Canada. To give an idea of the size of the Suffield training area, it is 2960 square km.

The Prairie

BATUS is located near the village of Suffield, a few kilometres off the main Trans Canada Highway 1 (which runs East to West across the entire country) and is approximately 55 km north-west from the city of Medicine Hat.

Joint Military Police Station

The RMP are co-located with the Canadian Forces Military Police.



History of Area

The Suffield training area is situated on the prairies of Southern Alberta some 55 km NW of the city of Medicine Hat and consists of over 2960 square km of almost treeless, undulating country. Due to the nature of the soil and low rainfall (only 12 to 14 inches a year) the area is covered by short tough grasses suitable only for raising cattle at a density of about one animal to 50 acres.

Before the arrival of Europeans the area was inhabited by native Indian Bands pursuing a nomadic way of life. They followed vast herds of buffalo from which they obtained most of the necessities of life. The main Bands in the Region were the Blackfoot Confederation comprising the Blackfoot, Bloods and Peigans whilst to the East and South were the Plains, Cree and Sioux. The Blackfoot and Cree Bands were constantly at war stealing horses from each other. Medicine Hat takes its name from the site of one such battle on the South Saskatchewan River. During this skirmish a Cree Medicine Man lost his hat. As this was considered a bad omen the Cree fled to be pursued and cut down by the Blackfoot. The 'Medicine Man', which is the symbol of the local newspaper, was adopted as the formation sign of BATUS at its formation in 1972.

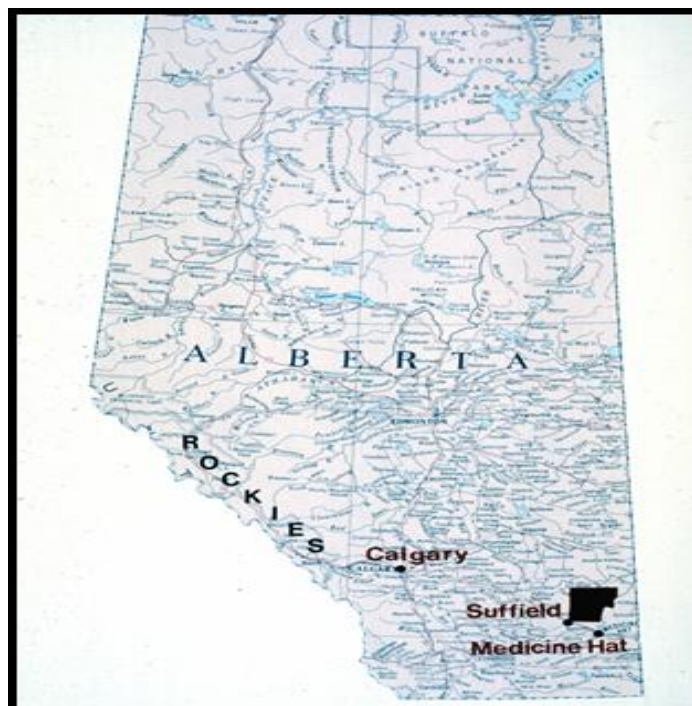
The area now occupied by the Province of Alberta was originally granted by the British Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. Although the area remained under the Company's control until 1869 when it was relinquished to the Federal Government in Ottawa, little was done to open up the hinterland, due to the hostility of the Plains Indians, and the Hudson's Bay Company only succeeded in establishing a few trading posts on the main rivers. In 1857 Capt John Palliser was sent by the British Government to carry out a survey of the prairie region. In his report he defined a large part of Southern Alberta and Saskatchewan, including the area of Suffield, as

being unfit for settlement due to its low rainfall and sparse vegetation. The depressing tone of the Palliser Report, and rebellions by the local Indians, did nothing to encourage settlement by Europeans.



At the end of the American Civil War a large number of ex-soldiers and other rough characters headed West in search of work, a quick profit or just adventure. Financed by merchants in the Eastern US, and uninhibited by conscience or moral issues, they made the base for their operations at Fort Benton near Great Falls, Montana. From there they pushed their trading posts northward into Canada. The most infamous of these became Fort Whoop-Up, near Lethbridge, where they traded rotgut whiskey to the Indians in return for furs and buffalo robes. In a short time this trade had reduced the Indians to a state of drunkenness and poverty.

In order to protect the natives, the North West Mounted Police (NWMP), (now the RCMP) were sent into the area to restore law and order and protect Canadian interests from these Montana adventurers. The NWMP reached Fort McLeod in 1874 and soon established a reputation for honesty and fairness among both the Indian Bands and early settlers.



In 1883 the Canadian Pacific Railway reached the Medicine Hat area. This line was a major factor in the opening up of the region, enabling settlers to be brought in and for their ranching and farming products to be exported. The railway company established the township as a water point and forward depot with smaller settlements every 20 miles along the track; one of these developed into Suffield.

In 1885 the last abortive attempt to resist the settling of the area occurred when Métis settlers rose under their leader Louis Riel, in an attempt to maintain their land rights. Had all the Indian Bands joined Riel in his rebellion the outcome would have been serious but Chief Crowfoot, head of the Blackfoot confederacy (after whom the Camp is named) refused to join the rising as he foresaw that victory for the white man was inevitable in the long term. However, with the virtual extinction of the buffalo, and the confinement of the Indians to reservations, ranching became the major industry of the Medicine Hat area. At the turn of the century a major farming enterprise, financed from England, was attempted at Suffield when 64,000 acres were put under the plough in an attempt to copy the successful wheatlands further east. An ambitious irrigation scheme was planned and vast sums of money invested in the project. The village of Suffield expanded rapidly in size and stature and became, for a short period, a place of some importance. Two disastrous crop failures coincided with the outbreak of the Great War which caused the source of the necessary capital to dry up. The irrigation scheme was never completed, the company went bankrupt and the prairie reverted to its original state. The township of Suffield rapidly declined to its present state. Capt Palliser's report was proved accurate; the area around Suffield was not suited to small holdings although many settlers lingered on, during the 1930s, making a meagre living under extremely arduous conditions. The Alberta Government encouraged homesteaders to leave what is now the training area and the area was largely abandoned.

In 1941 the remaining farmers were forcibly evacuated and the area became an experimental range used jointly by the British and Canadian Forces for testing chemical warfare agents. After the Second World War the British element withdrew and the range was taken over by the Canadian Defence Research Board. In 1971 an agreement was signed between the British and Canadian Governments allowing the British Army co-use of the range for Battle Group training for 10 years. In January 1972 BATUS was established and the first live round was fired on 15 June 72.

Since the founding of BATUS, two significant events have occurred. Firstly reserves of oil and natural gas have been discovered in commercial quantities, and their exploitation by the Alberta Energy Company continues. Secondly the agreement allowing the Army to train on the prairie has been extended three times. The current agreement allows a rolling agreement for the British Army to train at BATUS indefinitely. In 1995 the British Army extended their training to include Tactical Engagement Simulation, complete with an Opposing Force (OPFOR), resulting in BATUS now being considered to be the premier training facility for the British Army.