

Glenbow Museum

October 17, 2008

For Immediate Release

Sir Sam Steele Welcomed Home to Calgary

-The Artifacts of Canada's 'First' Mountie on Display for the First Time-

CALGARY, ALBERTA – Glenbow Museum invites you to share in the excitement as it welcomes a huge part of Alberta's history home on **Friday, October 17 at 10 am**. Join Glenbow's President and CEO Jeff Spalding, Mayor Dave Bronconnier, Alberta Minister of Culture and Community Spirit Lindsay Blackett, along with representatives from the R.C.M.P, Steele's Scouts Commemorative Militia Cavalry and Lord Strathcona's Horse (R.C.) for a colourful ceremony, celebrating the arrival and first-ever showing of Sir Samuel Steele's personal belongings in Calgary.

Sir Sam Steele (1848-1919) was a Canadian hero. Fearless, tenacious, fair-minded –Steele was a man of action, a military man with an unshakeable belief in law and order. He forged his career in Canada's western frontier, quickly making his mark with the newly founded North-West Mounted Police. Fearless in enforcing the law, Steele demanded high standards of himself and his subordinates. His superiors valued his ability to handle difficult situations and repeatedly rewarded him with tough challenges. By the 1880s western newspapers were reporting his successes. By 1885, Major Steele made the national news as the Steele Scouts resolutely tracked Big Bear, the elusive Cree leader, during the 1885 North-West (Riel) Rebellion.

The military was his career, but Steele's personal sense of fairness and justice tempered his actions. He calmed volatile legal disputes with First Nations, and maintained control during the chaotic 1898 Klondike gold rush. By 1900, Colonel Steele made international news, commanding the formidable Lord Strathcona's Horse during the South African (Boer) War. Still eager to lead troops in 1914, Major General Steele's skills (and age) were no match for twentieth century warfare. In 1918, Steele was knighted for his outstanding military career.

"The artifact collections now at Glenbow Museum represent his incredible life," said Glenbow's Cultural History Curator Lorain Lounsbury. "Those physical objects, ranging from uniforms and military equipment to a dazzling grouping of medals - can bridge the gap between the viewer and Sam Steele. In examining the bulls-eye flashlight from the South African War, you can 'see' Sam Steele using the flashlight to signal to his Strathcona Horse troops, perhaps warning of danger, or signalling an 'all's clear'. The medals, with the names of the battles, conjure images of Steele in the thick of the action. The objects will capture the eye and focus the mind on Sam Steele and his times. They may bring memories of ancestors, relatives, or friends who've been part of Canada's military or policing efforts. They may also encourage viewers to think about current military actions, Canada's role in them, and the individuals who, like Steele, have devoted their lives to upholding Canadian values."

Thanks to the efforts of Glenbow Museum, the University of Alberta, the Government of Canada's Department of Canadian Heritage, O'Connor's Men's and Women's Clothing and Footwear and many other generous donors and supporters, Sam Steele's life can now be enjoyed by visitors right here where he made history. Until January 12, 2009, a selection of this collection will be on display in the exhibit, *Jewels of the Jacket: The Medals of Sir Samuel Steele*.

WHAT: Welcome Sam Steele Home Event

WHEN: Friday, October 17, 2008 at 10 am

WHERE: Glenbow Museum, Level 3
130 – 9th Avenue SE
Calgary, Alberta

WHO: Glenbow Museum President and CEO Jeff Spalding
Glenbow Museum Cultural History Curator Lorain Lounsberry
Mayor Dave Bronconnier
Alberta Minister of Culture and Community Spirit Lindsay Blackett
R.C.M.P representatives
Steele's Scouts Commemorative Militia Cavalry representatives
Lord Strathcona's Horse (R.C.) representatives

The display of this collection is made possible by the following local supporter:



ABOUT GLENBOW MUSEUM

Glenbow is a museum, art gallery, library and archives all under one roof. One of Canada's largest museums, Glenbow boasts more than 1 million artifacts, over 31 thousand works of art, approximately 100 thousand books and 2 million photographs in its vast collections. Created in 1966 through the generosity of founder Eric L. Harvie, Glenbow Museum is where intriguing stories from western Canada connect with extraordinary art and artifacts from around the world.

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For more information, interviews and images, please contact:

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