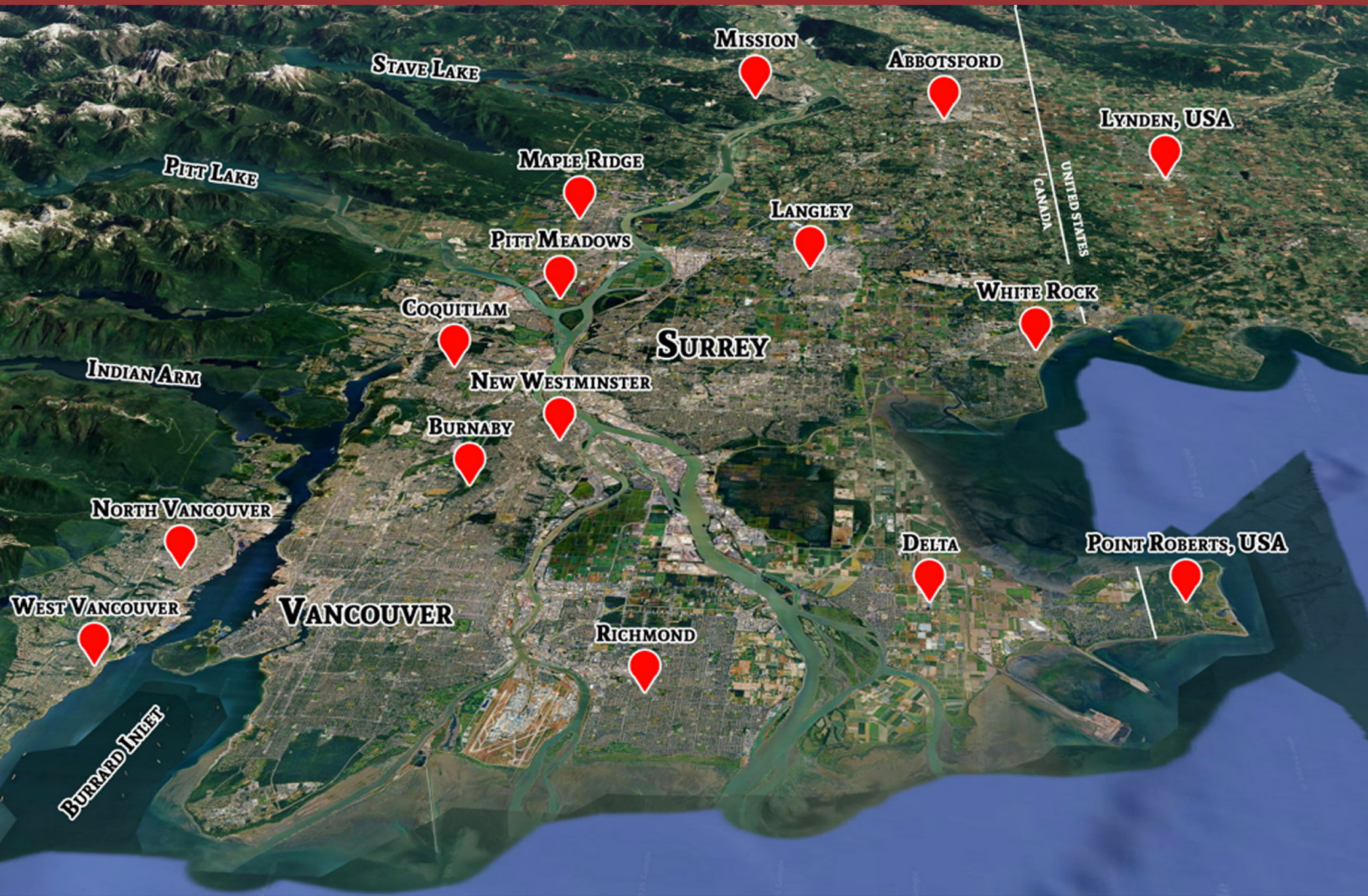


RURAL POLICING

Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows



Looking east, up the Fraser Valley, showing the relative locations of the cities that make up 'Metro Vancouver' and the Lower Mainland. Burnaby is closer to the urban core of the region than Maple Ridge's Haney community.

A MEMOIR

RURAL POLICING

Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows

DONALD E. WAITE

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1 • Arrival at Haney

Canada Day at Haney Detachment

Canada Day, July 1, 1967, was the hundredth birthday of the Dominion of Canada. It was also the day I first reported to Staff Sergeant Roland Harding at the Haney (later Maple Ridge) detachment. As I was leaving the office that day, a member hollered, asking if I knew how to take pictures. I walked over to the patrol car, and the member introduced himself as Tony Beecroft. He told me he was on his way to a suicide and asked if I cared to tag along as the "official photographer." Because of my youthful appearance, Tony had assumed I had arrived straight out of training. On the way back to the office, I explained that I already had more than three years of service and asked if he could provide me with a list of the 25 most troublesome individuals in Haney.

New Colleagues and Early Patrols

Later that day, I met rookie Constable Ralph Mohr and learned that he was boarding with a family named Heibein on Powell Avenue for \$125 a month. I spoke with Verle Heibein and discovered that he had a son on the force. I paid him my first month's rent and began hauling my few possessions from the Royal City out to the "farm."

Mason Dodds later remembered Mohr:

"He was a wild and crazy guy. I wondered if this was how a policeman was supposed to behave. He was a practical joker, always pulling pranks and farting around, and generally being a supervisor's nightmare. I remember standing next to the telephone room at Harding's office, and the son of a bitch came up behind me with a strip of Scotch tape and laid it on the back of my neck, then started to pull it off. It was more of an annoyance than anything else. I just started to push him, and his backside went right through the gyproc next to Harding's office. It left quite a hole in the wall. Ralph was no slouch of a guy. He was a big fellow, and he left his impression quite well on the wall. I phoned Frank Scotti and told him we'd made a hole in the wall. Frank thought it was a little tiny one, like someone had shot a hole in the wall. Instead, it was about three or four feet in circumference. We got the janitor, and it cost us a bottle apiece to get it fixed. In the larger scheme of things, it was just skylarking around, but we thought we'd be quartered and hung out to dry."

When I came to work my first afternoon shift a few days later, Tony's list was in my workbasket. I studied the names and then went out on patrol alone. Around 9:00 p.m., I stopped two youths, and both names were on the list—a streetwise youth from the historic part of town and a young man from the Katzie Indian Reserve. While I was questioning the Indigenous youth, I noticed the other was finger-writing obscenities on the side of the patrol car. I shouted at him to stop, and as he straightened up, I hit him in the pit of the stomach with the butt of my flashlight. He let out a grunt, and just then two elderly ladies came upon the scene. I remarked loudly, "Wipe that off." The ladies looked at me and both nodded their approval.

Chief Joachim Pierre and Pitt Lake

It was probably my curiosity that led me to patrol the Katzie Indian Reserve in Pitt Meadows within my first couple of weeks. I had been told to keep clear of Chief Joachim Pierre because, a week or two earlier, he had taken an axe to a television reporter's car. As I made my patrol, I asked one of the fishermen to point out the axe man. He pointed to a huge Indigenous man walking along the road with 2 large salmon hooked through the gills and suspended from both middle fingers. I drove up to Joe and asked if he knew where I could borrow an axe. He grinned and told me to follow him to his house.

For the first twenty minutes, Joe and his wife, Agnes, talked about the drinking problems on the reserve. The conversation then shifted to ancient rock paintings, hot springs, and a lost gold mine, all of which were located on or above Pitt Lake. Joe promised to take me partway up the lake in his fishing boat to see the rock paintings. He also explained that they were part of the Katzie people's mythology and would reveal themselves to me only if I were a good person.

At dawn on my next day off, Joe took me in his fishing boat to see the ancient paintings. Just before reaching the south end of Pitt Lake, I spotted a snag in the water. Before I could caution him about the danger, Joe struck the log head-on and was thrown forward, smashing his nose on the bow. He took a tremendous hit. We continued on, and I saw the red ochre paintings on the west side of the lake, just above Goose Island. A week later, both of Joe's eyes were black as coal, and he told everyone he had had a run-in with Constable Waite.

The Police Boat on Alouette Lake



Al Burnett & ‘Jock’ Hume, 1968
Skylarking at *the Narrows* on Alouette Lake

I discovered that police work at a small rural detachment was considerably more relaxed than at larger postings such as Burnaby. Al Burnett worked with me for several months, and I often wondered if I had a positive or negative influence on his police career. Al had been transferred straight out of training to Haney a few weeks before my arrival. In hindsight, I suspect that Al had a negative effect on my policing, because I soon learned that although Tony was in charge of the detachment boat, it was Al who made all the patrols on Alouette and Pitt Lakes. This was a sweetheart of a job. Al’s brunette hair was bleached blonde, and his body looked like that of a Hawaiian surfer. He called the boat his “chick magnet.”

One morning, Al Burnett picked up Al Ellard, John Hume, and me for an outing to the upper end of Alouette Lake, a secluded area known as the Narrows. It was a beautiful spot, surrounded by steep, forested slopes and rocky cliffs rising out of the cold mountain water.

When we arrived, Al had difficulty finding a suitable place to land. After looking around, he decided the best option was to pull alongside a rocky outcropping and have me jump onto the rocks with a rope so I could secure the boat to a nearby tree. It seemed like a simple solution, and once we were safely tied up, we settled in to enjoy the day.

We quickly stripped down and began taking turns diving from the cliffs into the icy water below. The twenty-five-foot jumps were exhilarating, and before long we were laughing and enjoying the freedom of being far removed from the routine of police work.

We were having such a good time that none of us noticed the lake conditions changing. A sudden chop came up, and the waves began pushing the boat against the rocky shoreline. With each surge, the hull was lifted and dropped, scraping and pounding against the rock face. By the time we realized what was happening, the boat had already taken quite a beating.

Tony Beecroft remembers:

"I always wondered about Don Waite because he would volunteer to run the boat. I always knew he had an exploring mind, so I figured his enforcement abilities would overcome his desire to fool around, and he'd balance the boat's objectives of enforcing the law with acquiring some pleasurable time. I came in on a Monday and was downstairs when Harding was having a conniption and asked if I had seen the boat. It was backed in under cover where it belonged, but this time it was turned around the other way. Usually it was stored bow out, but this time it was parked bow in, hiding the left front. Harding was doing a chicken dance. He was so upset. He was practically frothing while asking, 'Do you know what happened?'

"I said, 'No, I don't know what happened.' I hadn't had the boat out. I said the boat must have been out, but it was in someone else's care. He was screaming, so I went out and looked. There were these four-foot gouge marks underneath. It looked as if it had been scraped several times with a huge claw. I could tell what had happened. It had bounced up and down on the rocks, and the damage went right through to the gel coat. There wasn't much gel coat on this cheap boat anyway. It looked more like tissue paper.

"Harding told me to move it. He said, 'I don't want Officer Peter Wright to come and see it or we'll be in big trouble. We're going to have to come up with a story. Find out what happened to the boat. Phone Waite—he'll know.'

"Waite was very chipper. He was always busy, and he was usually strung out from lack of sleep from trying to cram twenty-eight hours into a twenty-four-hour day. He gave me a pretty short story. He said he'd been up at Alouette Lake, was tired, and didn't have time to talk about the damn boat. Then he hung up. Harding had been listening from the background near the radio room. He saw me standing there holding the phone after the conversation suddenly ended. He asked what had happened, and I said, 'He hung up.'

""Get him down here,' Harding barked.



‘Jock’ Hume teaching mountain rescue
in Evans Creek Valley.

"I was about to phone again when Harding rushed off to the office by the file room. He was absolutely boiling. I don't know what happened, but the next thing I saw was Waite walking in, looking angry as hell and wearing red serge. I wondered if he was going to court.

"Up until that moment I still didn't know what had happened to the boat. It was years later, after Don had been out of the force for many years, that I finally learned the real story as we shared many laughs together. I guess he and some companions had gone on a semi-police expedition into the wild reaches of northern Alouette Lake and had been jumping the boat off rocks.

"I heard many stories about Al

Burnett water-skiing. He used to take the boat out on patrol, but he was more interested in taking a female companion along as his patrol partner. We had an RCMP crest put on the boat, but Al would cover it up. The boat was always a pain in the butt and the source of endless problems. I was glad when it finally disappeared."

Meeting Carol

A few months after my transfer, Dr. Donald Gallagher called the detachment from Maple Ridge Hospital and explained that several nurses had told him they were planning to hand in their resignations because there were no eligible men to date in Haney. The telephone orderly passed the message on to me, and I immediately called the hospital to request the nurses' names.

Later that evening, Bill Smythe and I dropped in on three nurses for coffee at a unit in the Valnor Apartments on the northwest corner of Lougheed Highway and Laity Street. As we were leaving, I saw a young woman being dropped off by her date. To me, she resembled the Italian actress Sophia Loren. I asked around and learned that her name was Carol.

I fell head over heels in love with Carol and invited her to be my date at the Policemen's Regimental Ball in Vancouver on September 10 at the Hyatt Regency. It was a red-serge event. Before we left her apartment that evening, I proposed marriage, and she nervously accepted. We had been dating for only six weeks.

Abe Stediko and his wife were seated at our table. Abe was in charge of a drug section in Vancouver and knew that I had applied for a position there a few months earlier.

One Saturday night just after Christmas, Carol and I decided to throw a party for members and nurses at her apartment. I posted the event on the detachment bulletin board with the notation "BYOB" (bring your own booze).

I convinced rookie constable Dave Scott to attend because I had invited an attractive blonde woman I had known from my days in New Westminster and wanted him to meet her. The blonde never showed up, but after having too much to drink, Dave mistakenly decided that Carol's sister-in-law was the woman I had been talking about.

Dave Scott and Dave Day were boarding with Joan and Gordon Byrnell on Dunbar Street, just north of Dewdney Trunk Road, almost directly behind the A-frame United Church. Like my own landlord, the Byrnels had a son on the Force.

I ended up driving Dave home that night. I helped him unlock the basement door and then began backing out of the driveway. As I did, every light in the house suddenly came on.

I later learned that, while climbing the basement stairs, Dave had stumbled and fallen beneath the kitchen table. When he tried to stand up in the dark, he ended up carrying the table on his back like a turtle carrying its shell. When the table finally slipped off and crashed to the floor, everyone in the house turned on the lights to see what on earth had happened.

Community Ties and Search and Rescue

I soon learned that getting married to a woman of the Anglican faith required we both attend the church for several consecutive Sundays before our wedding. The church Carol attended, St. John the Divine, happened to be the oldest church on the mainland of the province—a fact I found more interesting than all other facets of church attendance. A short time later, Staff Sergeant Harding wrote an article for The RCMP Quarterly on Slumach and the lost mine of Pitt Lake, and I became inspired to write a story about St. John the Divine, titled “B.C.’s Oldest Church.” It was published in the October 1969 issue.

It was while attending St. John’s that I met Stella and Gary Cleave. Stella’s father was the Fire Chief, while her brother-in-law was a member of the force in charge of the dog kennels in Innisville, Alberta. It was through her husband Gary that I met John Hume. Gary had been a gold medalist runner during his high school years, and John Hume had been his coach.

I immediately took a liking to John, or Jock as he was called, who was a guard at the Haney Correctional Centre. Jock was an avid mountaineer and, before my arrival, had supervised the search for fellow guard Les Evans and his son, who had gone missing in Golden Ears Provincial Park. The general consensus was that the two had been caught in an avalanche, and the search had gone on for several weeks without success.

John Hume and I searched the detachment for search-and-rescue equipment, hoping to find at least the basics. Instead, we found a few coils of old rope and several canvas stretchers that appeared to date from before the Second World War, tucked away in a basement storage room. The equipment was badly outdated and wholly unsuitable for modern operations. John Hume concluded the equipment needed upgrading.

Later, when Don Graham, who had been responsible for the equipment, stepped down, John took over the program. He recruited and trained a small group of enthusiastic young men in emergency rescue techniques and worked tirelessly to build the unit from the ground up. Through fundraising and community support, he gradually acquired proper clothing, climbing ropes, and other essential equipment, transforming the group into a much more capable and effective team.

During this time, John Hume and I did several local hikes together. I learned that he had come to British Columbia from Scotland. He was from the industrial town of Clydebank and had been just a youngster when the Germans carpet-bombed the city in an effort to destroy the shipyards. He vividly recalled one particular night when 600 German planes attacked the town in wave after wave, dropping massive shells in the hope of taking out the battleship, tank, and munitions plants on the outskirts of the city. John's family hid underground in an Anderson shelter. The bombs missed the munitions factories but took out most of the homes. When he came to BC, John first worked in the post office, then did electrical work on the grain elevators in Vancouver before joining the corrections service in Haney. It was during this time that I met Andrew Hetherington, the supervisor of Golden Ears Provincial Park.

Marriage and the Stag Night

Carol and I were married the following April 20th by Reverend Denis F. Harris at the Anglican Church of St. John the Divine at the corner of River Road and Laity Street. My family was unable to attend the wedding due to farm responsibilities and school commitments. They agreed to come out the following summer. A few of Carol's relatives arrived a few days before the wedding, and I took them up to Golden Ears Provincial Park. I arranged everyone for a group photo just above Gold Creek, set the camera on a 10-second delay, and ran to get into the picture. I tripped and knocked myself out, with the result that the photo was taken with me lying on the ground while everyone else stood around in shock.

Bob Crookshank volunteered to host a stag party for me at his home the night before the wedding. Everyone was sitting around playing cards and drinking beer when I happened to look up and saw Bob and Glen Johnson approaching with a cup of shaving lather and a straight razor. It occurred to me that they might be planning to shave my privates. Trying not to panic, I excused myself from the table on the pretext that I needed to use the washroom.

I was pretty inebriated—as was everyone else—as I bolted out of the house and down the street. I ran about two blocks and knocked on the front door of the woman who was making our wedding cake. It was about 11:00 p.m., and she and her husband were watching television. Her husband answered the door, and I quickly explained my predicament. They let me in and turned off all the lights. A few minutes later, police cruisers began driving up and down the street, sweeping the area with their spotlights. Fortunately, they didn't find me.

I called Carol around 4:00 a.m., and someone came to pick me up.

Mason Dodds remembers the night:

"As far as you're concerned, you got the shit scared out of you when you saw the razor coming at you. We were playing cards and drinking, then playing cards and drinking some more.

I think it was Ernie Best who pulled out the razor, and you shot out of there like a rocket on wheels. And you ran! We didn't know where you went, but we suspected you had probably run over to Carol's place. I think we were hot on your heels, and we got there just as you shut the door."

2 • Policing the Back Country

The Pit-Lamping Complaint

At some point, a call came in regarding someone who had been pit-lamping deer at the upper end of Pitt Lake near the small community of Alvin. Pit-lamping involved using vehicle headlights to freeze and mesmerize deer, making them easier to shoot—a practice that was both illegal and dangerous.

I welcomed the opportunity to patrol the area. I was eager to explore the lake, learn the terrain, and become familiar with the remote surroundings in case we were ever called upon for an emergency there.

Upper Pitt Lake Reconnaissance

My partner at the time was Dick Brock, and we decided to take the police boat up the lake on one of our days off to investigate and conduct a reconnaissance of the area.

We arranged to be met at Alvin by Muriel and Bill Keillor, who operated the government fish hatchery there. Their knowledge of the area and the people who lived nearby would be invaluable as we began to familiarize ourselves with this remote part of the district.

Dick and I reached the upper lake without incident and were met at the wharf by Bill. As we drove back to his cabin, he asked about the purpose of our visit. I told him we had received complaints about people shooting deer at night with the aid of a flashlight.

Bill grinned and admitted that he was the offender and that was how he obtained his meat. He added that he would happily shoot deer in daylight if that satisfied the law. The return trip down the lake was difficult, as the wind had risen and the water had become rough. We made it back in the dark and nearly ran out of fuel.

Wildlife, Hot Springs, and Remote Terrain

A month or two later, I made a second patrol with Carol and a member stationed in Vancouver who wanted to go fishing. We had not gone far when I spotted a gaggle of Trumpeter Swans flying north ahead of us. I increased speed and, near full throttle, struck a sandbar on the left side of the channel. The impact badly bent the propeller and lodged the boat in the mud. We continued on regardless.

Bill did not meet us at the wharf as planned. After waiting for some time, we eventually set out on foot. By the time he arrived—two hours late—we had already walked several miles along the rough road.

There were signs of black bears everywhere, which was not surprising since the salmon were running and spawning in the streams. The abundance of fish had drawn the bears down from the mountains, and we could see evidence of their presence throughout the area.

When Bill finally arrived to pick us up, he gave us a tour of the surrounding area. His knowledge of the remote country was impressive, and he pointed out many of the features that made the Upper Pitt Lake region unique.

On our return from Seven Mile Canyon, we spotted a wolf running in front of the truck and clocked it at 40 miles per hour—a remarkable sight that gave us a glimpse of the wildlife that inhabited this rugged wilderness. We also encountered several black bears along the way.

As we continued toward Upper Pitt River, Bill stopped at Second Canyon and pointed out the hot springs located just below the bridge. It was an unforgettable introduction to a remote corner of the district and one that would prove valuable as I became more familiar with the area and its challenges.

I later mentioned the hot springs to John Hume and Andy Hetherington, supervisor of Golden Ears Provincial Park. Andy wanted to see them for himself, with a view to possible park designation. We travelled by boat to the head of the lake, then roped down to the river and found the springs were so hot that we had to move downstream before entering the water.

3 • Learning Rural Patrol

Mentoring Junior Members

Senior constables often took junior members fresh out of training on patrol to teach them the ropes. A senior mentor could have either a positive or negative influence on a recruit—one that might shape an entire career. I had worked with both good and bad role models in Burnaby, but things were different in Haney. I initially worked with some of the senior members there, but when Harding learned that I had served in both general duty and plainclothes in Burnaby, he assigned me my own shift.

Some of the junior members who worked with me included Mason Dodds, Al Ellard, Al Burnett, Dave Day, Ron Hurt, Grant Jason, and Ken Schneider. Ellard had worked with me in New Westminster, but our only real policing together had consisted of escorting prisoners from the penitentiary to court.

Night Patrols with Tony Beecroft

I worked with Tony Beecroft for several months. On graveyard shifts, we sometimes patrolled alone in separate cars, while at other times we teamed up in a single cruiser. I found Tony to be rather predictable. He made the same patrols night after night, calling in the same spot checks.

One night, when working with Tony, I became frustrated by his routine call-ins, such as “Hammond’s secure,” followed a few minutes later by “Harris and Lougheed secure.” I often tried to explain to him that criminals had scanners and could monitor his location checks. They would know, for example, that they could be burglarizing East Haney while we were checking West Haney.

I suggested that he consider criss-crossing the locations by using numbers instead of names and calling in the numbers rather than the actual locations, but my suggestions fell on deaf ears.

For a while, I made patrols and called in, “Number 7 is secure,” and so on. The telephone orderly would type the notation into the desk report. Sometimes I called in my locations, but in reality, I was in the office playing cards with the telephone orderly.

Tony would eventually call and say that he was returning to the office, and that would be my cue to hit the road.

It was during this period that I clandestinely entered Harding’s office and read the personal files on the members. It was interesting reading—especially some of the correspondence relating to me while I was stationed at New Westminster.

The Farmers’ Co-operative Safecracking

One graveyard shift, Tony and I received a call about suspicious activity at the Farmers’ Co-operative Store near the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks at Harris Road in Pitt Meadows.

Tony drove to the scene with me as a passenger. While he shone a spotlight, I conducted a walk-around of the premises, checking for anything unusual. We should have spoken with the

person who reported the suspicious activity, but instead, we drove away, and Tony called in, “Co-op checked and all is secure.”

All hell broke loose the following morning when a Co-op employee called the detachment to report that the safe had been blown open overnight and the money was gone. Tony and I were required to give statements, and we both ended up with egg on our faces.

We later learned that the safecrackers had gained entry to the Co-op through the roof. They carefully coated the safe hinges with nitroglycerine and then waited for a train to approach the nearby crossing. At the exact moment the train whistle sounded, they detonated the charge, using the noise to mask the explosion.

Tony and I concluded that the robbers must have been inside the store while we were conducting our check. Safecracking was a rare and highly specialized crime, requiring both skill and nerve.

While I was stationed in Burnaby, I had seen firsthand how dangerous it could be. A pair of safecrackers there had used far too much nitroglycerine and ended up blowing apart part of a building—and themselves. The first responders found the two men unconscious beside the wreckage, and they became the laughingstock of the criminal underworld.

I contacted the Burnaby Detachment about our latest safecrackers, hoping the information might help identify them. In the end, however, the Pitt Meadows investigation remained unsolved.

4 • Liquor, Repeat Offenders, and Night Calls

The Lumber Yard Fire

One midnight shift I was working alone and had a car stealer suspect in the back of the patrol car and was interrogating him when I got a call of a bad fire at a lumber yard. I told the suspect to get out of the car, and I sped off to the fire. Moments later I saw my suspect trying to drive off in a truck that was parked right beside the burning building. It was obvious to me that the truck, if not moved, would become a casualty of the flames. Seconds later I saw the same youth bound out of the truck and run down one of the side streets. A short time later I saw him drive the truck away from the burning building. He'd returned with a good battery stolen from a nearby truck, switched batteries, and driven the truck from harm's way, saving it from being consumed by the fire.

Liquor Offences on the Graveyard Shift

I learned early on that members working the graveyard or midnight-to-8:00 a.m. shift in Haney spent about half their time dealing with infractions under the Government Liquor Act. Usually the first half of a shift on a Friday or Saturday night would be spent seizing booze from minors, while the second half would be tied up typing up charges. Judge Donald Nicholson dealt with most offences involving juveniles, and more than half the cases involved liquor offences. His fines usually consisted of a suspended sentence or a \$10 fine, and his leniency was probably the cause for the high number of infractions.

When I worked with Al Ellard, there was a period when cars were being stolen every night. I had a pretty good idea who was stealing the vehicles, but we just couldn't catch the culprit.

Seizing a Repeat Offender's Cars

One afternoon, I was working with Dave Day when we stopped an under-age youth who was on the "list" for being in possession of alcohol while under age. This young offender already had more than 25 convictions.

I walked up to the car and asked the driver if he had any booze in the vehicle. He gave me a big smile. I told him he was obviously in possession because I could smell beer on his breath. I then searched under the front seat and found an open bottle.

I told the driver I was going to confiscate the beer but that I was not going to waste my time laying charges. It was his lucky night. I then warned him that if I ever stopped him again while he was still under age and he had liquor in his possession, he would be the sorriest guy in Haney. I made him repeat back what I had just said.

He tried to imitate me and replied, "If I ever get stopped by you and I'm in possession of liquor, I'm going to be the sorriest guy in rainy Haney."

He drove away.

By this time, I had become extremely frustrated with the revolving-door attitude of the legal system and its failure to deal effectively with repeat offenders. We saw the same offenders night

after night, and the only way to get rid of some of them seemed to be to make life so uncomfortable that they eventually left town and became someone else's problem.

About a week later, Dave and I happened to stop this same youth while he was driving on Lougheed Highway, just west of town. We pulled him over. Walking up to the driver's window, I said, "I sure hope you haven't got any liquor in the car."

Almost immediately, I followed with, "I know you have beer in the car because I can smell it from here." That was his second time to hear me talk about his booze.

I had him step out so I could search under the front seat. I found a half bottle of beer, which I seized. I walked back to the cruiser, leaving the youth standing on the curb, and called Joe Wowk, the tow-truck driver, asking him to attend and tow the car to the police compound.

The youth, within earshot, interrupted and asked why I needed a wrecker. I told him I had seized his car under a seldom-used section of the Liquor Act, that Her Majesty the Queen now owned it, and that he might start thinking about how he was going to get home.

The wrecker arrived, hauled the car away, and I returned to the office to complete the paperwork. I had just sat down at the typewriter when the youth appeared at the counter and began shouting. I walked over, and he took a swing at me. I grabbed him, placed him under arrest for assaulting a peace officer, and put him in a cell, allowing him to call his father.

About half an hour later, his father arrived at the office demanding that I release his son into his custody. I told him to go home and that his son would be appearing in court the following morning.

Just before going off shift, I went into the cell block and told the youth that I had written a letter to the Attorney General explaining why I had seized the vehicle. I suggested that he write a rebuttal explaining why he believed he should get it back. I told him to hurry with his letter because I wanted to send both letters in the same envelope.

A few weeks later, I received a copy of a letter from the Attorney General addressed to the underage drinker, advising him that his car would be impounded for six months to give him an opportunity to change his ways. The Attorney General also chastised him for taking a swing at a peace officer.

A few weeks after that, Dave and I were again working together when we spotted the same youth, this time driving his father's new car. We pulled him over, and as soon as he stopped, he jumped out and ran back toward us, begging us not to seize his father's car.

Both vehicles were later sold at public auction. The story spread quickly, and it effectively ended liquor possession by minors in Haney.

The Tire-Iron Solution

Tony liked my approach to dealing with repeat offenders. He later recalled:

"Don had the tire-iron solution: 'What's in your trunk?'

"Well, officer, I don't know—nothing much because the lock is broken.'

Then Don would produce a tire iron from the police car, and a key would magically appear, and the trunk would be opened. Usually, it was beer that shouldn't have been there, and sometimes narcotics.”

A Violent Domestic Dispute

I was working with Dave one graveyard shift when a call came in about a domestic dispute at a greenhouse farm not far from 14th Avenue (240th Street) and Dewdney Trunk Road. We responded, and a block from the scene we could hear the common-law wife screaming.

I ran up and kicked the front door, but it must have been solid oak—it didn't budge. Dave turned the knob, walked in, and I followed right behind him.

A man was sitting astride a woman, striking her in the face with both fists. I hit him on the side of the head with my flashlight, but the flashlight broke and the batteries scattered across the floor and against the wall. It was as if I hadn't hit him at all. He reacted immediately, coming off the woman like a springboard and preparing to fight. He was over six feet tall and weighed about 250 pounds.

Before I could react, Dave had him on the floor and handcuffed within seconds.

A Visit from Homicide Detectives

I was working the afternoon shift with Dave when two members of the Vancouver City Police homicide squad arrived at the detachment with exhibits belonging to people living in Maple Ridge. I took receipt of the exhibits and suggested we have coffee at the Haney Café with the two detectives.

They were wrapping up a bizarre homicide investigation in Vancouver. Two gay lovers had quarrelled, and one had killed the other but didn't know how to dispose of the body. He placed it in a bathtub and, over the next couple of days, obtained a driver's licence and bought a truck. He wrapped the body in a rug, dragged it outside, loaded it into the truck, and drove to Chilliwack, where he dumped it into the Vedder Canal just off the highway.

Unfortunately for him, he got the truck stuck in a ditch and walked to a nearby garage to call for a tow. The tow-truck driver obliged, and the man paid with VISA. A week later, fishermen found the body and contacted the Chilliwack RCMP, who traced the owner through the VISA record and brought in the Vancouver detectives.

The four of us sat around sharing war stories, and one detective began:

“I was working drugs about three years ago in North Burnaby, and this rookie cop literally kicked the living crap out of me. It took me months to recover.”

I started to laugh, and he said, “It's all true.”

I replied, “I know—I was the one doing the kicking!”

Car Thieves and Escaped Prisoners

Members eventually caught a car thief who admitted to stealing several vehicles in a single evening. He would hot-wire one in Haney to drive to Surrey, steal another to take his girlfriend to a drive-in, and then steal a third to get back home.

He was sentenced to Haney Correctional Centre but escaped with another inmate. One afternoon, Al Burnett and I learned they were hiding in a house on River Road, just east of Haney Boulevard.

Al found the car thief wedged between the bedsprings and mattress upstairs. It wasn't a very good hiding place—the bulge gave him away. The second youth tried to run downstairs. I jumped over the banister, and he ran straight into me. The momentum carried us to the bottom of the stairs, where his head struck the wall and knocked him unconscious.

We considered it a good night's work and booked both escapees.

5 • Danger on Patrol

The Quick-Draw Accident

It was Al who used up one of my nine lives.

We had come into the office around 4:00 a.m. to eat, check on the prisoners, and complete our reports. John McNaughton was the telephone orderly, and he was the one who suggested that Al and I practise our quick draws.

We each emptied our .38 Smith & Wesson revolvers. John would shout, “Get ready, get set, draw,” and we would both slap leather and draw. One time he would say, “Don won that one,” and the next, “Al easily won that match.” This went on for about half an hour.

When I left to check the prisoners, Al reloaded before going to the bathroom. When we returned, John wanted to continue the “game,” and Al and I both reached for our guns. This time, Al discharged a live round that passed between my hip and left elbow and struck the wall. It left a large, gaping hole, with plaster scattered across the office.

All three of us were in shock, but eventually I suggested that we call the manager of Cloverdale Paint and ask him to meet us at his store.

I called him at home, and his first thought was that his premises had been burglarized. I explained that he would be doing me a big favour if he met me at the store and provided some plaster and paint. He agreed, and by 7:00 a.m., we had repaired the hole and cleaned up the mess.

Ken Schneider’s First Patrol

Ken Schneider’s very first patrol as a policeman was with me, and he ended up as the driver in a high-speed chase. We were parked in the Valley Fair Mall parking lot around 9:00 p.m. in midsummer, watching cars exiting the A&W drive-through. I spotted a vehicle reported stolen speed away on Loughheed Highway heading east, so I instructed Ken to give chase.

At Kanaka Flats, I told Ken to speed up because the suspect vehicle was pulling away. By this point, I had undone the flap on his holster, removed his revolver, and placed it on the seat beside him. I had my own gun drawn.

Almost immediately, I told Ken to slow down because we were entering a fog bank and approaching a sharp bend in the road. Ken began braking hard, and when we reached 14th Avenue (240th Street), we saw the vehicle stalled in the intersection with its engine on fire. Both occupants were still inside.

Ken and I jumped out and ran toward the smouldering car. I ordered both occupants to come out with their hands up. We both had our revolvers drawn.

The pair complied, but the driver hesitated. I ran over, punched him in the ribs, and told him to stand on his tiptoes with his hands raised as high as possible. His passenger was visibly terrified, with both arms extended upward.

The driver still refused to fully raise his arms, so I kicked him on the ankle. He fell to the ground. I ordered him to place his hands behind his back so I could handcuff him, then instructed the passenger to do the same.

By this point, Ken and I had control of the situation, so I holstered my revolver. I moved carefully so I would not stand between Ken and the suspects, as he still had his revolver drawn and was visibly shaking.

I then took Ken’s handcuffs from his belt and used them to secure the passenger. It turned out the driver was a friend of the car’s owner and had tried to outrun us because he was driving while under suspension. I charged him with driving while under suspension and dangerous driving.

The Show-Home Break-In

The following night, Ken and I were again working together when we received a call about a possible break-in at a brand-new home just off 5th Avenue (216th Street), north of Dewdney Trunk Road.

We attended and found that the house appeared secure. I surprised Ken by using my flashlight to break a glass door pane and unlock the door from the inside. I turned on the main-floor lights and began a search.

I told Ken to search upstairs, but he was reluctant. He eventually went up, and moments later I heard him shout, “Don, Don, up here.”

The first “Don” was faint, but the second was loud.

He had opened a closet in the master bedroom and discovered a naked young couple, frightened out of their wits.

I told the two teenagers to get dressed. We transported them to the detachment for questioning. The young man admitted that he had used a plastic card to enter the show home with the intention of going upstairs to be with his girlfriend in the master bedroom.

They had panicked when they heard the glass break and voices downstairs. They quickly made the bed, grabbed their clothes, and hid in the closet. They were actually relieved to be found by police, as they had expected burglars.

6 • Haney’s First Drug Officer

Bill Smythe and the Cellblock Fight

Bill Smythe and I knew each other from Burnaby and worked together for several months. One afternoon, Bill arranged a meeting in a parking lot near a bus stop. We were both working alone in separate patrol cars.

There was a 250-pound man harassing a woman, and Bill asked me to assist in arresting him for being drunk in a public place. We drove over and arrested the man without incident, then transported him to the cells.

I met Bill in the cellblock but was soon called away on another matter, leaving him to complete the booking. When I returned, Bill looked as if he had been pulled through a knot-hole backwards.

Bill explained that everything had gone smoothly until he asked the prisoner to remove his bootlaces, at which point he resisted and a fight ensued.

The First Narcotics Seizure

One night, I was working with Ron Hurt when I stopped a car in front of the Haney Theatre. The two male occupants appeared extremely nervous, so I conducted a search and discovered a hookah under a pillow on the driver’s seat.

I called their bluff and arrested both men for investigation of possession of a narcotic. This was likely the first drug bust during my time in Haney, and possibly the first drug seizure in the community. It became a significant event, and members of the drug squad from Vancouver drove out to Haney to process the charge.

By this time, a few pushers had moved into Haney and were beginning to actively traffic their wares.

Marihuana Enforcement

Tony Beecroft recalls:

“The marihuana problem was just beginning to surface in rural areas, and Maple Ridge was one of the first places across the Pitt River where the new drug laws were not being actively enforced. Up to that point, people had only heard about it or read about it in the newspapers. Not much attention was being paid to it, and Don Waite decided he was going to break ground and make an impact on the enforcement of the marihuana laws.

“He learned that Section 10(1) of the Narcotic Control Act dealt with search and seizure, and with that understanding, he proceeded to enforce possession of marihuana, no matter how small the quantity—most often involving young people.

“At the time, it was not unusual to see the phone booth beside the Capital Café on Lougheed Highway surrounded by young people standing shoulder to shoulder, coats flared out for privacy, while someone inside crouched down so Mr. Waite could inspect for any marihuana concealed on their person.

“He was very effective, and when the kids saw him coming, they would either run, swallow, or throw it away.”

Pressure on a Local Pusher

One afternoon, I spotted a local drug pusher sitting in the Haney Café. He was in a booth facing Lougheed Highway, positioned so he could watch the comings and goings of marihuana users across the street.

I went in with another member, and we sat in the same booth, engaging him in casual conversation. He became visibly agitated and eventually asked if we were trying to get him killed.

When I asked what he meant, he explained that he was sitting there with us like a friend while the others across the street were watching him. He said we were making him look like a police informant.

I told him that if he didn’t leave town, I would spread the word that he was my number one informant. I also told him, “You have a real problem with being made up of spare parts.”

When he asked what I meant, I said, “You’re the only person I know with one blue eye and one green eye—and that’s how I’ll describe you on the street.”

We left the café, and I never saw him again. He moved on to become someone else’s problem.

An Undercover Officer in Haney

That approach worked well enough that a few nights later, while conducting a skin search on a group of junkies, I casually mentioned that an undercover narcotics officer was rumoured to be working in the Haney area. The intent was to create uncertainty among users who were not closely connected within their group.

Shortly after leaving, I was called back to the detachment. Sergeant Jack White, now the head of General Investigations for the New Westminster Subdivision, wanted to know why I had jeopardized the safety of one of his undercover officers.

I explained that my comment was intended only to create general paranoia and had no specific basis. He then introduced me to Dick Brock, and I was surprised to realize that he was the same man I had skin-frisked only minutes earlier.

Search Warrants and the First Drug Section

Brock shook my hand and said it had been the worst scare of his life. Brock was later transferred to Maple Ridge, and we worked together on efforts to target drug pushers and users. During one particularly busy week, we executed search warrants on several homes.

One flophouse on Haney Boulevard (224th Street), just south of Lougheed Highway, housed seven or eight drug users. We used a quiet entry method, waking the occupants in one room, placing them under arrest, and escorting them outside before returning for the others. We made four trips in this manner and cleared the house without alerting the remaining occupants.

A subsequent search revealed drugs, stolen property, and even a complete RCMP uniform.

On other occasions, our approach was the opposite. I would force entry by kicking doors off their hinges and surprise the occupants, often finding them in direct possession of marihuana. The tactics were effective, and drug activity in Haney declined noticeably.

Staff Sergeant Harding was satisfied with the results and asked me to work plainclothes and establish the detachment’s first drug section. He had reviewed my file and noted my earlier application to the narcotics squad in Burnaby. At that time, Bob O’Connor, known as “Buck,” was also working plainclothes, although not in drug enforcement.

LSD and Political Influence

Grant Jason was a junior member posted to Haney directly from training. While working with him one afternoon, we received a call about two female students who had collapsed on Haney Boulevard, north of Dewdney Trunk Road.

We attended and found that both had taken lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). The effects of the drug were severe and unpredictable. Both young women, each weighing less than 100 pounds, were hallucinating and screaming about worms and insects crawling on their faces while striking out at anyone nearby.

It took both of us, along with two ambulance attendants, to restrain them and place them on stretchers. I later heard that they continued to be violent at the hospital.

Grant and I eventually traced the LSD back to the son of a local municipal politician. We attended the residence to investigate, and Grant conducted a search of the young man’s bedroom. Hidden beneath the bed, he located a jar containing white pills, which we seized as evidence. The youth was arrested and taken into custody.

The following day, I encountered him walking down the street. I soon learned that contact had been made between his father and the detachment, and the young man had been released. His father’s influence had clearly reached my superior, and the charge was set aside.

Judge Matheson was not pleased when he learned what had happened. He instructed me to rearrest the young man, and I followed his direction and carried out the arrest.

The incident had consequences for me. I was returned to uniform duty and removed from my detective position. Despite this setback, Judge Matheson continued to respect my work. A former member of the British Columbia Provincial Police, he later sponsored me for membership in the Masonic Lodge.

The Chicago Drug Connection

One afternoon, Sergeant Wayne McCarthy called me into his office regarding a complex drug trafficking investigation. An officer at Vancouver International Airport had intercepted a female courier carrying a large quantity of LSD. She had attempted to pass through customs dressed in maternity clothing but was found to be concealing drugs rather than a baby.

Under pressure from Vancouver Drug Section investigators, she agreed to cooperate in exchange for leniency. She reported making multiple trips to Chicago and described being picked

up at the airport by men who blindfolded her and drove her to a remote location in the Fraser Valley.

She recalled passing a gas station with the name Mussallem, then travelling along a winding road to a farm property with several abandoned vehicles in the yard.

Based on this description, I believed I knew the location. I drove along Lougheed Highway, turned onto Spilsbury Road, and continued to the T-intersection at 98 Avenue. The first farm on the right matched her description. I reported my findings to Wayne.

At 3:00 a.m. the following morning, all available members assembled at the detachment for a briefing. An hour later, ten of us entered the property and arrested everyone inside.

We found scales on the kitchen table and several bricks of hashish. Buck located a book containing Chicago telephone numbers, which were forwarded to the FBI. I searched a chicken coop and found \$2,000 in cash hidden beneath a nesting hen. Police dogs later uncovered large garbage bags filled with marihuana plants.

Buck also discovered the name of a Simon Fraser University professor, which was forwarded to General Investigations in Burnaby. A fingerprint from a plastic bag was later linked to him, and he was eventually arrested following a confrontation at his residence.

A Contract on My Life

Drug enforcement also carried risks. One afternoon, an informant named Moodie called me at the Swan Court Apartments and asked to come by with additional information about drug activity in Haney. This was only days after the detachment had received a warning that a \$5,000 contract had been placed on my life.

I was home alone on a day off, as Carol was working at the hospital. About fifteen minutes before my informant was due to arrive, I went down the hall to the apartment of Gary Cleave, who lived in the same building. I told him that a stool pigeon was coming over and that there was a remote possibility he might be a hit man.

I asked Gary to wait in the bathroom with my loaded 16-gauge shotgun, just in case there was trouble. Gary agreed and got into position just as the doorbell rang.

I let the man in and put water on to boil for coffee. Moodie’s message was that word on the street was that there was a contract on my life. I told him I was already aware of it.

7 • The Final Years at Haney

The Lost Badge and Inspector Wright

By this time, I was working plainclothes and always carried my badge and a shoulder holster with my revolver. One day, I realized I could not find my badge. I had kept it in a tobacco tin with police buttons, and Carol told me she had given the tin to her young nephew, Norman.

We lived on the third floor of an apartment building, and I concluded that he must have thrown it over the balcony. I searched the area below, but the lawn had recently been cut. The badge was gone.

In July or August 1968, Inspector Peter W. Wright conducted an interview with me. Carol and I had recently returned from a second trip to Hawaii, and I had not yet had her sew the five service stars onto my tunic.

The interview did not go well. He began by referring to my disciplinary record from training and Burnaby, then moved on to the loss of my badge, and eventually drifted into broader discussions of policy and politics.

Wright was not well liked by many rank-and-file members.

Tony Beecroft recalls:

“Pete Wright was an individual born in Heaven... He was considered a capable investigator, but his main avocation was spreading fear, whether among members or criminals...”

Mason Dodds remembered Wright as someone who made you feel as though you were being interrogated rather than interviewed.

Major Calls Across the District

I knew many people in the community, both good and bad. That knowledge proved useful one morning when I was called to a boat fire on the Fraser River near the Haney wharf. I went to Henry Dyck’s home and woke him, and he quickly responded and rescued a number of people from the water.

Mason Dodds often worked double shifts with me while learning the ropes. On one shift, we attended a shooting on the Katzie Indian Reserve and found a deceased man inside a residence. We later arrested a suspect who was intoxicated and charged him with manslaughter after he was turned over to Investigations.

On weekends, I often worked with auxiliary constable Leo Partanen. One afternoon, we responded to a shooting at a small restaurant on Lougheed Highway at Harris Road. A bullet had been fired through the window, narrowly missing a waitress.

A short time later, the suspect turned himself in and admitted to firing the shot during a dispute involving a love triangle. I charged him with attempted murder, and he served time in prison.

I was working with Ron Hurt when we received a report of a possibly impaired driver on Dewdney Trunk Road. We located the vehicle, and the driver fled into a driveway. A struggle followed when I attempted the arrest, and both occupants resisted.

After a brief fight, I gained control and arrested both men for assaulting a peace officer. They were convicted and served time. Years later, I learned that the driver had been imprisoned for murder and had escaped custody.

I later worked with Bob Kaupp, known as “Bobby Cop,” on a domestic stabbing call. We attended a residence where a husband had been sleeping on his back and his wife stabbed him with a steak knife right at his belly-button. Its blade reached his back-bone. The wife had cut the telephone line, so I went outside to call the dispatcher for help. The car was locked and Bob lost the key. Able to see lights in the distance, I started running toward them but stumbled. The neighbour had staked down a wire fence in readiness for finishing the task in the morning. I tripped and lost my flashlight as the wire recoiled around me. It was pitch dark. I yelled for help and the neighbours came to investigate. I told them to call the police and an ambulance. It was dangerous as Bobby was left alone with a deranged handcuffed wife. After searching the area and returning to the house, I eventually located them lying on the ground outside. The wife was charged with attempted murder.

A Fatal Collision in Whonnock

Around this time, Carol’s brother Gordon, Gord’s neighbour Rick Stallnecht and I purchased a pig for slaughter. Rick and his wife Brenda lived a few blocks away. Gord and Rick attended the British Columbia institute of Technology in Burnaby and were taking a course in electricians.3q

A few days afterward, Al Burnet and I attended a serious motor vehicle collision on 272nd Street near Ferguson Avenue in Whonnock involving Rick, his wife Brenda, and their infant daughter Tammy. Gord was already at the scene when we arrived. We worked together and managed to force open the driver’s door. I then ran around to the passenger side and untangled Rick’s feet from the floorboard.

An ambulance arrived shortly afterward, and I saw neighbours carrying Brenda away on a mattress. She had been taken to a nearby home. The ambulance transported Brenda and Rick, while an auxiliary policeman who was also a paramedic assisted me with Tammy. He cradled the two-year-old in his arms as we rushed to the hospital.

While en route, Mason called to advise that Rick had died. Despite the efforts of medical staff, both Brenda and Tammy later passed away. I attended the autopsy and coroner’s inquest afterward because I did not want the family to have to endure any further distress.

Halloween 1968

Halloween 1968 turned out to be a busy night. I was off duty when, around 8:00 p.m., Corporal Scotti called and said things were getting a little out of hand and that I should report for duty. When I arrived at the detachment, Frank tossed me a set of car keys and directed me to attend a rear-end collision in front of the bus stop.

When I arrived, I discovered that a car had struck a parked taxi. The driver turned out to be a local troublemaker. I asked him to sit in the back of the patrol car and explain what had happened. He admitted that he and his brother had been travelling westbound on Loughheed Highway, throwing rotten eggs at eastbound vehicles in hopes of hitting someone with an open window.

Unfortunately for him, the occupants of a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction had been playing the same prank—and they had hit him instead. He then pointed to a piece of egg still stuck to his left ear.

That same night, Ralph Mohr decided to play a prank on telephone orderly John McNaughton by lighting a string of large firecrackers and placing them under John's chair. John responded by pretending to have a heart attack, scaring the daylights out of Ralph.

Transfer to Identification

Skip Wheatley was the person who made a significant impact on my career. He encouraged me to apply for a transfer to the Identification Section at RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa. He explained that, with only five years of service, I would likely face a ten-year wait between submitting my application and being accepted for training.

Because of that lengthy delay, I submitted the transfer request without telling Carol. I was surprised—and Carol was shocked and angry—when the transfer came through the following summer. It meant she would have to give up her career so I could pursue mine.

It took us several days to pack our furniture and prepare it for shipment by rail back to Ontario. At the end of May 1970, Carol and I left in the Rambler and began the next chapter of our lives.

Looking back after 60 years, it's unconscionable that members wasted their time and arrested kids for possession of marihuana. We were lied to about grass being a gateway to the harder drugs such as heroin. To think some of the brightest and most intelligent youth were denied university or jobs for getting caught with a joint.

Now drugs are being sold in regulated shops on every streetcorner.

So many are hooked on fentanyl and are not getting help.

Shame, shame on Canada.