

Police Training in Ottawa

That I chose to join the police force when it was my turn to pick a career was probably due to the fact that the husbands of two of my aunts were policemen. My uncle Tom Wark, married to Dad's sister Verlie, was the Chief of Police for Renfrew, and Uncle Tom Menzies, married to Dad's sister Vivian, was a sergeant with the Peterborough City Police. Both men used to fascinate me with their yarns about policing, especially Uncle Tom, who was a gifted public speaker. He was always the master of ceremonies at family functions. A gift public speaker, Tom as a real Ottawa River Valley story teller—there was none like him.

My being accepted into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police proved to be more challenging than I had anticipated. On 10 August 1963 I drove up to the Pembroke Detachment to pick up an application form, which I completed and mailed back the following day accompanied by two letters of recommendation to the force's headquarters in Ottawa. My sponsors were Clair Seeley, the principal of Renfrew Collegiate Institute, and Adam Laird, the general contractor for whom I had worked the previous summer. In less than a week a registered letter arrived back stating that I was to make my way to the Pembroke Detachment on August 17 to write exams and be measured to ensure that I met both the chest and height requirements.

On the appointed day, dressed in my only brown suit, I took the bus to Pembroke. Here I met Al Nicholson, another applicant, at the front door leading into the office. He wore a sweatshirt and jeans. Because I was 1/16 of an inch short of 5' 8", the minimum height required for admission, I had glued cardboard to the bottoms of both feet. This made me extremely nervous when the constable began taking my height measurements. Luckily, although he made me remove my shoes, he did not ask me to remove my socks.

Just as Al and I began writing the examination, a call came in over the intercom that a boat had capsized in the Ottawa River and that help was needed at the scene. The constable rushed out leaving Nicholson and me at the detachment to write the exam without any supervision. After

writing the test, I placed everything in an envelope and left it in the mail basket for incoming correspondence. On the side of the basket were the words, "What I do here and what I say here stays here when I leave here." Instead of taking the bus, I hitchhiked home.

Word came back from the force that I had passed everything except English and that I would have to rewrite that portion of the exam. Foolishly, I had written an essay on why I wanted to become a member of the police force. The letter also stated that the officer in charge of the detachment would give me an oral examination. On the second attempt I managed to obtain a good mark in English.

On the 3rd of July 1964, Mom and Dad drove me to a courthouse in downtown Ottawa where I and three other young men, one of whom was Al, swore the oath of allegiance to Queen and Country. I've often wondered if any of us gave so much as a second's thought as to the ramifications of having taken such oaths. Shortly afterwards we were sworn in as members of Canada's Dominion Police Force. Once the paperwork was out of the way we were driven in a police cruiser to "N" Division, the force's recruit training facility at Rockcliffe. Most of the other recruits had already arrived at the barracks by bus, and upon our arrival we all marched over to the barracks and were told that we were members of Troop 3 of 1964 and that the 32 men would be occupying two 20-foot by 80-foot dormitories on the barrack's third floor. Members were numbered off in alphabetical order, and that made me number 31. Consequently I was assigned a bed in the second dormitory for letters L to Z. This dorm had two neat rows of eight beds each. On my left was Peter Von Hausen, at age 26 the "old man" of the troop; while on my right was Lorne Zimmerman. We were then escorted downstairs to the recreation room where a barber did 32 haircuts at 25 cents per head in less than an hour. By the time I took my turn in the seat the clipped hair at the base of the barber chair was easily a foot deep. We were now referred to as "skinheads." I was 19 years old. Pay was \$3760 per annum.

The troop's second night in barracks would be

an experience never to be forgotten. Dead tired, I must have been asleep in ten minutes. A short time later a senior troop raided our two dorms and upended all our beds, with us in them, against the walls. It was a rude awakening to be sandwiched upside down between bedsprings and a wall. The initiation hazing was kept up most of the night with members of the raiding party frequently warning us to be on the lookout for the Constable Major.

The next morning at six a.m. reveille Constable Major suddenly appeared at our dorms and informed members of Troop 3 that training was not scheduled to begin until the 13th of July. This member, with a three-foot-long riding crop tucked under his left armpit, barked out insults left, right, and center and went to considerable trouble to impress upon the rabble

non-commissioned officers. The senior members had disciplined a troop mate for stealing \$2.00 in loose change that had been left on top of a member's desk. He had grabbed the change to use in the communal pay phone to carry on a conversation with a pregnant girlfriend. Rather than report the petty thief the troop decided to have the offender run the gauntlet. The enforcers formed two parallel lines in their dormitory and forced the thief to sprint between the lines while they beat him with belts. This humiliation coupled with his girlfriend's pregnancy put the member over the edge, and a day or two after our arrival at the division he put his service revolver to his head and took his own life behind the horse barns. For the next several days non-commissioned officers systematically questioned recruits trying to learn more about the gauntlet run.

OATH OF ALLIEGENCE

I, Donald Ender WAITE, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her heirs and successors according to Law. So help me God.

OATH OF OFFICE

I, Donald Ender WAITE, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully, diligently and impartially execute and perform the duties required of me, as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and will well and truly obey and perform all lawful orders and instructions which I shall receive as such, without fear, favour or affection of or toward any person. So help me God.

troop that he wielded a great deal of power in and around the barracks. Everyone was totally intimidated. He inspected both dorms, and any members with unmade beds were required to drop to the floor and do several push-ups. Several recruits were given mops with instructions to wash down all the toilet stalls in a nearby washroom. After about fifteen minutes of inspection the Constable Major instructed troops from dormitory A to K to follow him to the kit room to pick up their brown fatigue or stable uniforms. It was a few days before the entire troop of raw recruits realized that this member was a regular constable and that his surname was Major. We learned that he had been pulling the same prank on new recruits for years. We had thought Constable Major was a high-ranking member.

During the very first week members of Troop 3 learned that senior troops sometimes took the law into their own hands rather than involve the

Together with several other troop mates I spent most of the first two weeks at "N" Division dressed in brown fatigue attire swinging eight-pound sledgehammers to smash up an old sidewalk. The remaining recruits placed these pieces of heavy concrete into wheelbarrows and hauled them away for use as fill at another project on the division's grounds.

A day began at 6 a.m., when the entire barracks awoke to the sound of reveille and ended with lights out at 11:00 p.m. In the first 30 minutes after awakening recruits had to make beds, shave, and dress and by 6:30 stand in line for the first inspection of the day. Some troops were marched over to the horse stables to muck out stalls, while others were sent on a one-mile run or else left to tidy up the buildings.

I was with troop mate Wayne Tremble the very first time to get into trouble at "N" Division. We had foolishly stepped out of the barracks with-

out wearing our forage caps and were caught by one of the instructors for being improperly dressed. He told us to return to our dormitory for our caps and then to run around the entire division and report back with the locations of all the fire hydrants. It was an almost impossible task as we didn't even know the names of the many buildings. We did our best and a few hours later reported back to the instructor who told us make sure that we wore our kit properly.

Cleaning the horse stables was the least desirable of the three chores. Several members would grab pitchforks and throw horse manure into the main walkway. Other teams would grab a wooden scraper that was used to haul away wet bedding and manure. These contraptions were made from two-inch-thick planks eight-foot wide and two-feet high. On both sides were ropes that would be pulled by three or four members each. Using two handholds in the top plank, about 30" apart, the team leader would place the scraper at a pile of horse manure so that six or eight members could pull on the two ropes simultaneously and haul the waste from the building. Other members would load the manure into a wagon for transportation out to a manure pile. Members swept the cement walkways clear of any fresh straw bedding while others fed and watered the horses.

Some troops were assigned to sweeping the walkways or cleaning the many buildings in the division. Brasso was used to bring back shine to all the brass on all the doors of the many buildings. RCMP soon came to mean Rag-Clean-Mop-Polish.

These tasks were synchronized so everyone arrived back at barracks at roughly 7:00 a.m., but members who did the mile long run usually got back a few minutes earlier. It was always a race to change out of fatigue attire, shower, dress in blues, and eat breakfast before the 8:00 a.m. parade. If the first class happened to be physical training, a troop had to change from blues into sweats, and it was not uncommon to make three or four dress changes in a single morning and the same in the afternoon. Recruits had three one-hour classes before noon and another three in the afternoon with fifteen-minute breaks between classes. Classes ended at 4:30. Supper, or the third meal of the day, was

between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m.

Recruits had extra duties one or two nights a week. These recruits had to fall in at parade at 7:00 p.m. and march over to the stables to do a final muck-out and feeding of the horses. If recruits misbehaved, they were put on a week's parade, which meant turning out every evening at 7:00 for stable duties. These members were perpetually in trouble, for once a member got behind with his work it was almost impossible to catch up. Some of the luckier members managed to get through the entire nine months of training without ever being paraded.

Corporal Roy was our physical training and first aid instructor. I excelled in physical training and for the first two months led Troop 3 in exercises. We did a lot of running on the spot. We also did an exercise that required three men of similar build. One member got down on his hands and knees; the second sat sideways in the middle of his back, while the third man held onto the sitter's feet. The instructor would give the command "Down," then "Up," and the sitter would begin doing sit-ups that required his head to touch the gymnasium floor. This exercise was hard on the man in the hands-and-knees position, as the rocking motion of the sitter pounded his knees into the hardwood floor. It was equally hard on the stomach muscles of the man holding onto the feet of the man doing the sit-ups, but it was absolute misery for the man doing the 30 or so sit-ups per minute, since he had to bend over backwards with his hands behind his head and touch the floor that was about 20 inches below his bottom. This exercise was rotated between the three members about every five minutes.

Troops did a lot of training with ropes and huge beanbags two-feet in diameter. After a few months I was able to go up and down a 20-foot length of rope hand over hand with my body in a V or pike position with my feet at the same level as my head. To build myself up even more I sometimes went up the ropes carrying one of the 25-pound beanbags between my knees.

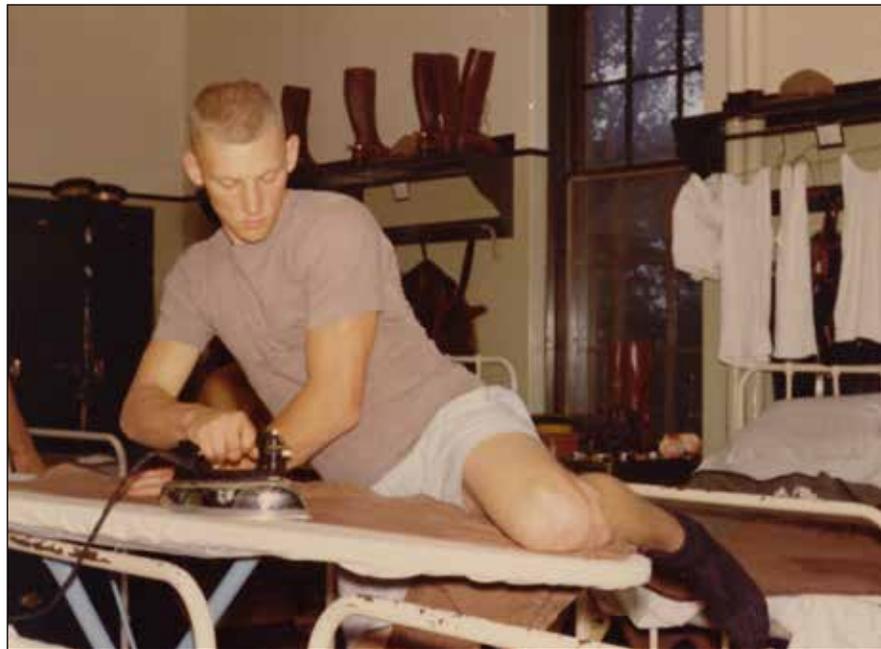
It was not uncommon for members to place both hands on the floor next a wall and do a flip. With their feet resting against the wall these members would do vertical push-ups. Al Decker and I were able to do 20 or more of

these vertical push-ups, and by training's end we could walk on our hands almost as easily as on our feet. We even tried walking up and down stairs on our hands. Al eventually replaced me in leading the troop in exercises. Near the end of training I was one of three chosen from my troop to attempt to break a record for the obstacle course. These recruits had to run the full length of the gymnasium and back. The obstacles were a bench horse and the ropes. On the way to the back wall the recruit had to climb over the horse, climb the ropes to touch the 20-foot ceiling, descend back down, run and touch the back wall, and then sprint back to the start. I managed to do the course in just 28.5 seconds. The previous best had been 31.

On July 21 Troop 3 began equitation under the instruction of Corporal Ken Strang. The members, in fatigue dress, walked beside their mounts going from the stables to the riding arena. There were no high boots, spurs, or breeches. To our dismay we were not even permitted to saddle the horses. Corporal Strang sat on his saddled horse in the middle of the arena and began talking about the merits of the four-legged beast of burden. His opening line was, "Welcome to equitation. Remember that the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man." He then informed us that we were to ride bareback. After several minutes we all somehow managed to climb up onto our horses. Almost immediately Strang barked out, "Walk your horses." Half a minute later he yelled, "Trot your horses." I discovered very quickly that riding a horse bareback at the trot was very similar to sitting astride a 2" x 4" plank on edge. Before the first lesson ended, Strang had given the order, "Canter your horses." Sitting on a horse at the canter was very similar to sitting in a rocking chair.

Corporal Strang used to delight in sending the troops riding bareback over the jumps. We had to do these jumps with our arms folded, and one in five riders would take a tumble. I hated the jumps, since I often ended up with a scissor hold around my horse's neck by the end of the second or third jump. Although the jumps were only about eighteen inches off the ground the horse's movements caused the saddle-less rider to keep moving forward toward the animal's withers and neck, and when this happened a fall was inevitable.

One of Corporal Strang's favourite exercises was called "Simple Simon." For periods sometimes as long as ten minutes he would bark out, "Simple Simon says quick as the best mount" or, "Simple Simon says quick as the best dismount." Eventually he'd yell, "Simple Simon says quick as the best mount." Everyone would be mounted but some unfortunate rider would mistakenly dismount and the instant the rider's feet hit the ground Strang would yell, "Trot." This resulted in the dismounted rider having to run alongside his horse. Riders had to be con-



Ironing & Displaying my kit.

stantly paying attention because Strang's motto was "a doze rider gets a difficut horse". I wasn't one of the brighter recruits and consequently my steed happened to be Titan and at 17 hands tall, he was the tallest horse in "N" Division. I couldn't mount him unless I extended my stirrups out full length. In order to get my left toe into the stirrup I had to hop with the right toe on the ground, all the while trying to steady

back with snaps of every part of a horse's anatomy – a member who knew something about taking photographs with flash had exposed my entire roll of colour film.

The hardest thing to earn in equitation are spurs, and a raw recruit learned early that without these jingle-jangle ornaments on the heels of his high boots horses often refused to obey leg pressure commands. It seemed that the first month of equitation consisted of riding bareback at the trot, and a recruit had to grip or squeeze with both knees to keep from bouncing up and down on the horse's backbone. The constant inward pressure by the rider's knees against a horse's rib cage left men marching back to barracks in bow-legged fashion. The coarse corduroy material in the breeches sometimes chafed the inside of the knees so badly that long johns were worn under the riding pants, and such rides were akin to sitting in a sauna.

An unwary recruit often learned too late that a few seasoned police horses automatically inhaled to become inflated the first moment a saddle touched their backs. Before riding a horse, the rider had to tighten the belly strap or cinch as much as possible. Those horses that inflated themselves before being cinched up would later exhale, with the rider discovering too late that his saddle was loose fitting, and often an inexperienced recruit would place a foot in a stirrup to swing up into the saddle only to have it "turn turtle" and go under the horse's belly. The experience was even worse when a saddle rotated to one side or the other at a full canter or during a jump. To overcome this problem we learned to drive a knee into the horse's rib cage, and when the animal exhaled, the belly cinch would be tightened. The knee to the rib cage had to be administered when Strang was not watching.

A dreaded command was "Stand to your horses," since the rider had to stand at attention in front of his horse while hanging onto the bridle in such a way that the horse's nostril almost touched the rider's nose. Horses have strong neck muscles and when a horse decided to raise or lower its head, the rider had to hold the position and stay at attention. Arm muscles ached, and during an inspection a rider sometimes



Me, Jannette Roy, Mom, Dad & Billy, July, 1964.

the horse waiting for the order to mount. Once mounted, I had to quickly readjust and shorten the stirrups for riding at the canter.

I used part of my first pay cheque to buy a 35-mm Petri camera and flash. One day I smuggled the new camera down to the horse stables with the intention of having another member take photographs of me with Titan. I left the camera in a corner of the tack room while I did some chores but when I returned the film had been rewound back into the film canister. I assumed that I had screwed up with the loading but decided to take the film to the lab for processing. I was surprised when the film came

had to “stand to” for 5 to 10 minutes. “Prepare to mount” was even worse. Upon this command the recruit had to throw the horse’s reins over the animal’s head and place his left foot in the stirrup. Since Titan was so tall, I had to tiptoe on my right foot, which always spooked him and caused him to fidget, and that made matters even worse. Often the mount command came too late and I was too exhausted to swing myself up and into the saddle. Strang loved his work. When he would eventually give the command “Mount,” it was immediately followed by the command “Trot.” Pity the poor rider that was not in the saddle when the second command came. The unfortunate recruit had to run alongside his horse until Strang gave the command to “walk your horses” and then finally “stop your horses.”

Titan had the unique ability of being able to go from a canter to lying down, and his favourite trick was to collapse all four legs simultaneously and roll over. The rider had to be alert and quick enough to jump from the saddle in order not to get pinned down. He did it to me only once, and luckily I managed to jump clear. Only my pride was hurt, but I did have to clean a dirty saddle.

Titan was the tallest horse, but Sinbad was the meanest, as about once a month he managed to bite a recruit. He once chomped into the lower back of troop mate Larry Hunter and then lifted him right off the pavement. Larry’s screams were blood curdling and could be heard for at least a mile.

One fall afternoon our troop was given the privilege of exercising the Musical Ride horses. It was a beautiful sunny day and the depot was overcrowded with tourists. They soon spotted us riding in columns of two and naturally made the assumption that we were “The Ride.” In the distance I could hear a hound dog that was on a chase. Suddenly a rabbit darted amongst the riders spooking the horses. Troop mate Hugh Hammond was thrown clear over his horse’s head and landed on the ground still hanging onto the reins. A second later I was thrown in such a manner that my horse kicked me squarely in the seat. I landed in burdocks and on getting to my feet discovered two neat mud imprints of horseshoes on the back on my breeches. I escaped injury. Larry Hunt-

er found himself on a runaway horse. Larry was thrown and upon getting to his feet was standing on the parade grounds with recruits marching right past him. Sergeant Young, the drill instructor, instantly began reprimanding the dazed and disoriented rider for cluttering up his parade square. Young screamed at Larry, “You don’t see me parading my men in your riding arena. Why do you think you can ride all over my parade square?” Hunter was in total shock and unable to grasp the meaning of the tongue-lashing but his predicament amused the drill class. In the next few moments several riders were thrown, and the rest of the afternoon was spent chasing down riderless horses. The tourists found this hilarious until they learned that the riders were raw recruits and not the Musical Ride.

One particular recruit usually skipped taking a shower after stable duties and had the audacity to come into the lunchroom or appear for classes stinking of horse manure. Strang was aware of the situation and even hinted that he needed a washing in a horse trough to smarten him up. Several troop mates naively believed that we would have Strang’s blessing for dunking the miscreant in the trough. One winter afternoon during watering Strang became invisible, which to us was our clue to carry out the dastardly deed. When the offender approached, totally unsuspecting of what was in store, four of us grabbed him and upended him into the trough. Just as we did so, Strang appeared from around the corner and caught us in the act. He paraded us on the spot. My only reward was to be in step right behind the victim for the march from stables back to barracks and to watch as in the dead of winter his fatigue pants froze like cardboard onto his frigid frame.

Strang concluded the equitation training by introducing the troop to a wooden sword and bamboo lance drill. With these toy-like weapons the recruits went through an exercise whereby they “killed” imaginary soldiers. A recruit would swing his sword over his head and stab at a foot soldier on his right and then repeat the maneuver and stab another one on his left. One time when I swung my sword, a startled Titan threw up his head, and I clubbed him on the right temple. Strang witnessed the accident and immediately rode over on his steed and

began whipping Titan on the rump with his riding crop. Titan charged away and a second later bucked several times. It was one hell of a ride but I managed to stay in the saddle. Strang roared, "You dumb animal." He was talking to me and not the horse.

Graduation exercises for equitation took place some months before the troop actually graduated, and my Mom and Grandpa McBride made the ceremonies. I was given a push-button Musical Ride horse instead of the unpredictable Titan, and the ceremony went smoothly with one exception. One troop mate forgot to properly cinch his horse's bellyband, and when Corporal Strang gave the command to mount, the saddle turned upside down. The embarrassed member had to remove the saddle and then place it back on the horse. The troop had to stand at attention nose to nose with the horses, and several animals began to fidget while the saddle was placed back on the horse's back. After the parade ended and the audience left, Strang and the officer commanding the training facility told us in very explicit language that it was the very worst pass-out in recent history.

Sergeant Young and Corporal Hart were the troop's foot drill instructors. One Monday morning our troop was having a great deal of trouble with the drill on the parade square. This upset Young and he decided to run the troop around and around the parade square on a cloudless day to teach us to pay attention. We were all wearing high boots and breeches and after about half an hour the troop was sweating profusely, and several members were on the verge of collapsing. Young finally told us to halt, but by this time the perspiration was coming through the top portion of our riding boots. After the boots dried, a white salt residue appeared on the tops of the boots, and no amount of polish could make the leather take a shine. Young had heard about the equitation fiasco and wanted to ensure that the drill pass-out at the very end of training would take place without any embarrassing footwork.

It was late November before Ottawa had its first snowfall, and as a result foot drill remained outside through late fall. Once Sergeant Young gave our troop an inspection that included a little humour. As he inspected each recruit from

head to foot, he'd make some remark to see if he could get the recruit to smile. He stood in front of Mike Spurgeon and remarked, "My God, you look like a dog humped up on a lawn."

Then he moved down the ranks and stood in front of Pete Jacques and asked, "And what would that dog be doing Jacques?" Pete's response was instantaneous, "Having a crap, Sergeant."

Young shot back, "Don't be so vulgar. Call it a bowel movement." Young then moved in front of me and remarked, "You look like Baby-Face Nelson. No, on second thought, you look like Baby-Face Nelson's son. Waite, who was Baby-Face Nelson?"

I blurted out, "An American gangster, Sergeant." Until that point I had managed not to give him the satisfaction of a smile. As I stood at perfect attention I began to visualize a picture that I carried in my wallet of Elaine and Diane Wickens dressed in Girl Guide uniforms. In my mind's eye I could even see the badges on the uniforms of the two girls and the little black dog that stood behind Elaine. Young stared me right in the eye and said,

"Waite, you look more like a Girl Guide than one of Canada's finest." Instead of smiling, I started to laugh, and that totally pleased him, and he instructed me to drop down and do 25 push-ups. I have fond memories of Young.

Corporal Roy was our physical training instructor, and he introduced the troop to the art of self-defense. Once he asked for two volunteers, and when no one answered his call, he motioned Dan McKay and me into the center of the gymnasium. We were each told to put on the gloves for three three-minute rounds of boxing. McKay, nicknamed "Red," was a featherweight and did not have much savvy when it came to boxing. I hit him a few times and in a clinch told him to back off and just get himself through the first round. Instead he planted a fist right in my eye, and I instinctively responded with a shot to the chest followed by another to the head. He went down and was not anxious to get back up. Since the fight had not lasted 30 seconds, and since I wasn't even winded, Roy motioned to Alfie MacKeil to put on McKay's gloves and square off against me.

I soon discovered that MacKeil and I were very evenly matched. About midway through the second round, Alfie managed to give me a good right square on the nose that momentarily put my lights out, and I dropped to the canvas. By the time I hit the floor I had regained consciousness with the result that I sprang back onto my feet as if bounced off a trampoline. Anger and rage had replaced all common sense. My gloved fists, propelled with every ounce of strength still remaining in my body, went hunting for Alfie's head. When the bell rang indicating the end of the second round, Alfie and I continued to do battle until being pried apart by Corporal Roy. During the one-minute rest period Roy told me that Alfie was throwing wild punches and was not protecting his solar plexus. He went on to explain that a blow to it would drop Alfie the same way he had earlier dropped me. About ten seconds into the third round, I saw my opportunity and punched Alfie in the solar plexus. As predicted by Roy, he dropped like a stone onto the canvas. Unfortunately for me, he too sprang right back onto his feet and went back into the fight as if he had never been hit. Almost immediately, Roy jumped between us blowing his whistle and yelling that the fight be stopped.

Roy then went on to explain that there were two kinds of fighters. The first takes a punch, feels pain, and loses the fight. The second takes a punch and feels rage. He qualified both MacKeil and me as the second type of fighter and the most dangerous. He explained to the entire troop that a street fighter had to be taken out fast and by whatever means possible. He said, "Listen up, men. If you get in a street fight, you have to kick the guy square between the legs or square between the eyes to make sure the first shot counts. You may not get a second chance, because the most innocent looking little runt could be a black belt in karate and be able to kick the living daylights out of you in an instant. Don't assume anything. The word assume when spelt correctly means some low life can make an ass out of you and me." Roy made one additional comment that day. He told us to never under any circumstances take our eyes off the eyes of a combatant in a fight. He concluded by saying, "If you cover up after taking a punch and lose eye contact with your opponent,

you'll lose the fight."

With that Roy told a Newfoundlander by the name of Mike Maloney to face off with him so he could demonstrate a couple of ways to take a man out of a fight in a hurry. Maloney was a most uncoordinated individual, and he was now also very frightened, as Roy was a fine specimen of a man. Roy made a grab for the unfortunate recruit and Maloney threw out both his hands in an effort to ward off his instructor. As Roy's bad luck would have it, the outstretched fingers of one of Maloney's hands caught Roy in both eyes leaving him temporarily blind. Maloney then jumped in behind some of his troop mates apologizing, while at the same time trying to become invisible. Corporal Roy took the damage with good humour and wryly commented, "See what I mean."

Over the next several months Roy taught us several police holds. One involved placing an arm lock on an opponent from behind so that your inside forearm made contact with the subject's chin. He told us that only a small amount of pressure on the man's chin would pinch a nerve and render the individual unconscious long enough to place the person in handcuffs.

While Corporal Roy was our physical training instructor, Sergeant Leach was a PT instructor to the more senior troops. A few times our troop had the misfortune of having Leach for a gymnasium period. Roy was tough but fair, but Leach was downright mean. One day when Leach had put us through a grueling half hour of exercises, he called us all together for some lessons in wrestling. We sat cross-legged in a semicircle in front of Leach listening to his words of wisdom about survival in the streets. At the end of his oration he beckoned to Benny Rae Fyfe to confront him pretending he had a knife. Benny Rae made a gesturing lunge, and Leach grabbed him by the arm and threw him hard onto the canvas. Benny Rae got up slowly only to have Leach call him a wimp. It was obvious to everyone that Benny Rae had fallen badly and was in a good deal of pain. Leach showed no mercy and told Benny Rae to come at him again but "to try and at least give the appearance of being a knife-wielding attacker." He followed up by remarking, "A woman could save herself from the likes of you." Benny Rae came

at Leach again only to be driven to the canvas even harder than the first time.

A few weeks later our troop once again had Leach for a period of physical education, and again he decided to pick on Benny Rae. This time he was going to teach Benny Rae how to box. As Benny was putting on the gloves, Leach told him to be aggressive and to fight as if his life depended on the outcome. Fyfe said he'd try. About fifteen seconds into the first round Benny Rae gave Leach a left and right combination that knocked Leach halfway across the gymnasium. Benny Rae chased after Leach, and catching up to him, unleashed a second dose of Fyfe medicine that knocked Leach to the floor. When Leach picked himself off the floor, he removed his gloves and then looked at Benny Rae and said, "You sure as hell can't wrestle, but where did you learn how to box?" Fyfe then explained that he'd won the Golden Gloves Championships for the Province of Alberta just before joining the force. On that particular day everyone loved the underdog.

Sometimes we would get into playing childish pranks on each other. One evening Mike Spurgeon, the tallest member in our troop, and I were alone studying in the lecture hall for some important exams. It was quite warm in the room, and Mike removed his jacket and hung it over the back of a chair. When I left, I took his coat, draped it over my left arm, and marched back to barracks. Later, when Mike tried to get back to the dormitory improperly dressed, he encountered an instructor, who gave him a severe reprimand. Mike arrived back in the dormitory after lights out, and I was already in bed asleep. He grabbed me right out from under the bed sheets and proceeded to place a stranglehold on me. He was mad. He began choking me with every ounce of strength in his body, and I felt myself beginning to black out. As a last resort I grabbed him by his privates. I squeezed with all my might and after several seconds Mike released the stranglehold. The next morning he was unable to get out of bed and was placed on sick parade.

Corporal Hart gave instruction in small arms as well as foot drill. For the first month or two troops practiced with .22 revolvers instead of the larger .38 calibre weapons. Corporal Hart

instructed us how to take our time and gently squeeze off each round. Using the revolver for the very first time, I truly amazed myself by not managing to once hit my target. Hart scratched his head and then asked if I was blind. I explained to him that I had hunted most of my life and considered myself a good shot with a rifle. He suggested that I ignore everything that I had just been told and to fire when ready. The next time I fired all five rounds before most members had fired their second shot. I managed to hit the target with all five rounds, moving from the worst to one of the better shots in the troop in the course of five minutes.

When we began using the .38 Smith & Wesson revolvers and high-powered rifles, the troop was bused to a shooting range in downtown Ottawa.

One day half of the troop was on the firing line while the other were horsing around in an adjacent room practicing police holds. I managed to climb up onto a chair and place my forearm on Mike Spurgeon's chin. He made a grab with both hands for my forearm. Instinctively I applied pressure on his chin, and the 6' 2" Spurgeon collapsed into the chair popping the four legs. I jumped clear. Mike regained consciousness seconds later and was furious, but by that time Corporal Hart had returned to the room and saved me from Mike's wrath.

The training division did not have a swimming pool and members were bused to an army barracks about two miles away. No difference was ever made between swimmers and non-swimmers. Everyone went into the pool, and the non-swimmers became swimmers rather than drown. One of the most difficult exercises was treading water by placing the hands on the hips and kicking the feet in a circular motion in order to keep afloat. Recruits who took their hands off their hips for any reason were rapped over the head by a length of bamboo by Sergeant Leach.

The swim training culminated in a Red Cross examination with two very difficult exercises. The first exercise involved jumping into the pool fully clothed, removing your boots, and then diving to the bottom of the pool to retrieve an iron weight. The other exercise involved using the frog kick to carry a fellow member

feigning unconsciousness the length of the pool. I got Mike Spurgeon for a victim and he got his revenge. Mike let his body go both limp and vertical so that when I did the frog kick, I couldn't propel the two of us across the pool. I just treaded water, and no matter how hard I did the frog kick I was unable to propel backwards. I finally poked him in the back with my knuckles and forced him to lay horizontal on the top of the water. I then resumed the frog kick hitting him in the back with a knee every time he tried to go vertical in the water. I eventually managed to get him to the opposite end of the pool and up onto the deck, but when climbing out I collapsed on the deck exhausted. Although I had completed all the tests, the instructor decided not to award me my First Aid certificate for swimming. Spurgeon had paid back!

On November 6, 1964, I was allowed to return to Renfrew to take part in my grade-13 graduation exercises. Several high school friends began asking me about the force, and some were especially anxious to know if I had learned anything about self-defence. Brian Wainman was one of the group. He asked me to show him how to fight, so I hit him in the solar plexus with the fingers of my right hand, and much to my surprise he collapsed to the ground.

One Saturday night I attended a dance at the Ottawa YMCA and asked a very attractive girl for a dance. She confided in me that three young Italian boys had been pestering her all evening and asked if I'd walk her to her apartment that was a short distance from the dance hall. I did but soon realized that we were being followed. Somehow the three Italians managed to get into the apartment building and came up the stairs to the girl's suite. I stood in the doorway and asked her to call a taxi. When I saw it arrive at the entrance, I decided that I had to make a dash for it and get back to barracks before curfew. But I had to deal with the three men who were waiting for me. I slammed the door on one fellow's fingers, kicked the second in the groin, and going down the stairs I tripped the third, while at the same time putting my hand behind his head and slamming it toward the floor. The taxi took me back to the barracks. I lay awake until the wee hours of the morning, expecting to be called out to give a statement of

my actions, for I was quite sure that at least one, if not all three, would have been hospitalized. But I never heard anything.

Another Saturday night several members of Troop 3 took two taxis and went to a dance in Hull on the other side of the river across from Ottawa. In hindsight it was a stupid thing to do, as we were out of our area and were clearly outnumbered by the many local men at the dance. Around 11 o'clock a fight broke out that turned into a real donnybrook, and pretty soon our group was fighting our way to the exit. As I recall, chairs were the weapons of choice used by the Quebecois locals, and as a result we skinheads resorted to using tables over our backs for protection. Troop mate Al Decker took a fist in an eye, and that resulted in questions from our superiors the following morning as everyone lined up for parade. Rumours circulated that some weeks later members of "The Ride" visited the same dance hall armed with riding crops and cleaned house.

Our troop began driver training on the 28 November 1964 with a corporal and a senior constable. Unfortunately my instructor was Constable J. S. D. Saville, a French-Canadian. He was a real stickler, and sometimes members couldn't even complete a parallel park without being thoroughly reprimanded. After a couple of months of driving through Ottawa on the Queen's Highway the two instructors decided that Troop 3 was ready for the final phase of the course, and we began doing "dog and rabbit" chase manoeuvres on a straight stretch of abandoned highway about 15 miles east of Ottawa. Constable Saville tried to teach me how to overtake a speeding motorist by pulling alongside and with a very authoritative pointing of the right hand instruct the offender to pull off to the shoulder of the highway. I was the driver of the "dog" or police chase vehicle, while Red McKay was the driver of the "rabbit" or the criminal vehicle. The rabbit vehicle took off at a high rate of speed with me in hot pursuit, and within moments both vehicles had accelerated to speeds in excess of 90 miles an hour. Saville was in the passenger seat with me, while three troop mates were in the back seat. Since it was winter and there was a lot of ice and snow on the road, I hesitated to move over to the left and into the oncoming traffic lane in



Pre-graduation portrait, February 1965.

order to pull alongside the suspect vehicle and give the authoritative point to the driver of the other car. Saville made some comment about my thinking I was out for a leisurely afternoon drive instead of being in a police pursuit. In checking the rear view mirror, I saw troopmate Alfie MacKeil grinning like a Cheshire cat, so I decided to put the pedal to the metal and overtake the other driver. I soon passed McKay and pointed for him to pull over, but instead he accelerated. I sped up and instinctively began to force him and his four passengers to the shoulder of the road. Instead of stopping the rookie driver lost control and went off the highway and into a deep snow-filled ditch, where the cruiser came to an abrupt stop. The car had superficial damage but none of its occupants received injuries. The rest of the afternoon was spent watching a wrecker extract the vehicle from the ravine and bring it back onto the highway. The accident was never reported, and once the car was back in the garage an abrasive car polish

was applied to take out any scratches before the vehicle was driven up and down the slushy streets of Ottawa to further hide evidence. It was my introduction to the police cover-up.

At the end of January, Pete Jacques and I rented a car and drove to Renfrew so I could give Dad the down payment for the purchase of a 1965 Rambler Classic 770 two-door hardtop convertible. After our visit we decided to continue on up to Foresters Falls to see some of my relatives. We were driving down the Queen's Line when all of a sudden a Jaguar passed us at a high rate of speed. Pete remarked that he was anxious to become a full-fledged member so he could give chase to speeders. No sooner had he uttered the words before the Jag's driver slammed on the brakes, forcing Pete to brake hard to prevent a rear-ender. The Jag stopped dead in front of us and the two occupants ran back to our car. I shouted, "That's my Uncle John and Cousin Reid." Instead of welcoming us, John, my Dad's kid brother, grabbed me, while Reid, Uncle Orin's only son, grabbed Pete, and they hauled us out of the car. It didn't take long before Pete and I had both men pinned to the ground. John explained that he had recognized me in the passenger seat and had yelled to Reid to stop the car. Once the dust settled, I introduced Pete to my relatives.

On February 27 the members of my troop got dressed up in boots, breeches, and red serge for a portrait session sitting on one of the "Ride" horses. As I left the barracks, I heard a radio broadcast that a young man from Renfrew had been involved in a fatal car accident. High school chum Brian Wainman had been returning home from seeing a girlfriend in Arnprior to Renfrew when his vehicle was rammed broadside by another car. It later came out that a stop sign had been removed by pranksters. Brian was killed on impact. I had a second reason for remembering the day. Uncle John and Cousin Reid had told me that my former sweetheart Elaine Wickens was getting married that afternoon.

On March 3 Mom and Dad delivered my new powder-blue-bottom and teal-top car to the barracks. Dad had loaned me the rest of the money and purchased the car on my behalf from Armitage Motors in Renfrew. Troop 3 graduated

on March 15, and I was posted to New Westminster Sub Division in British Columbia. It was not a particularly happy occasion, as the day before the troop had learned that five members had failed to make the grade and that they were to be discharged immediately from the force.

Regimental No. 23661, 3/Cst. Waite, D. E. of 'N' Division, having committed an offense in that he at Ottawa, Ontario on March 19, 1965, did violate the provisions of Commissioner's Standing Orders 1156 (17) in resorting to the use of improper language when undergoing driving training instructions, contrary to Section 26 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act."

Our troop graduated with only 27 members. I was not immediately posted to a detachment like the other members of my troop but was instead posted to orderly room at Headquarters on Alta Vista Drive in Ottawa where I did clerical duties. I was held back to take additional driver training classes with Saville. The holdback had more to do with personality issues than driving. A few days later Saville charged me with conduct unbecoming a member with the result that I had the distinction of being the only member of my troop to be court-marshalled.

The charge against me read:

The incident occurred on a slight incline not far from Parliament Hill. I was practising complete stops. I had shifted down from drive and into second gear, as I had been taught to do prior to



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Troop No. 3

"N" Division Ottawa, Ontario - From 13 July, 1964 to 15 March, 1965

Back row: 3/Csts. Norm A. Degirolamo, L. Dan Hickey, Larry R. Ball, Ernie E. Best, Mike K. Spurgeon, F. D. F. 'Pete' Von Hausen, Hans R. Burki, S. Mike Showers, Ray P. Haslam, Robert W. Mow.

Middle row: 3/Csts. Ray A. Forgeron, Al K. Decker, P. Paul Coté, Don G. Fraser, Pete A. Jacques, Dan J. H. McKay, Hugh A. Hammond, Van A. Close, B. A. Mackeil, Bernie F. Cooper

Front row: 3/Csts. Don E. Waite, Guy P. Levesque, Wayne N. Tremble, Sergeant Major H. M. Gilby, Superintendent J. R. Roy, Commanding Officer "N" Division, 3/Csts. Al E. Nicholson, Benny Rae Fyfe, Larry A. Hunter, Grant D. Gulkiewich