

## **Betty RONNING**

**NOMINEE:** Betty RONNING

**MEMBER SPOUSE:** Calvin FULFORD, # 2585

**DETACHMENT(S):** Ear Falls 1958

**NOMINATOR:** Jan HANZLIK (daughter)

### **SILENT PARTNER STORY**

In early 1958, our family was transferred from Dryden to Ear Falls Detachment. Our family consisted of my mother, father and three children, aged nine, six and two years. I was the middle daughter.

We moved into the detachment/residence building located in Ear Falls on Highway 105.

My father, Provincial Constable Cal Fulford, was the only OPP member at the detachment. His closest backup, if required, was in Red Lake about 50 miles north.

I was only six years old, but I do remember my mother answering the phone lots then trying to get a hold of my dad who was working and out in the police vehicle. Sometimes she would phone Red Lake and other times she would turn on the outside light which meant that there was a call and he should come home to get the information.

My mother would feed any prisoners who were placed in cells. I also remember her helping dad search women prisoners. She also kept the office clean and sometimes I would help her.

I can recall several trips in a police vehicle to either Red Lake or Kenora when mom would have to help dad as matron for women prisoners. Sometimes the whole family would go on these trips along with the prisoner.

My mother was very active in the community with her young family.

The following is an excerpt from the book "*Dedicated to Duty OPP Officers who Died Serving Ontario*" by Michael Barnes:

"On Christmas Eve December 24, 1958, Cal was called out a couple of times and in between work he came home to help wrap presents for the family. He had brought his wife an electric mixer and took great delight in preparing the gift.

The family members were all in bed when there was a knock at the door at about 1:00 am. A native man and a youth called to say there had been a shooting some five miles away.

Constable Fulford dressed in his uniform and headed out to see what had happened. Random shooting was not uncommon in the area.

Tragically the case he was going to investigate was no drunken spree.

The events that had transpired even before he arrived had been deadly and what happened next would prevent the father of three from ever spending Christmas with his family again.

Mrs. Fulford did not worry when her husband did not return. She assumed he had made an arrest and was taking a prisoner to Red Lake.

After an hour and a half a young native boy came to their combination house/OPP office knocking at the door. Mrs. Fulford went to the door as she has on many other occasions. The young native boy told her that he heard shooting and he saw her husband Constable Fulford fall.

Mrs. Fulford called the OPP Detachment in Red Lake at about 2:00 am to report what she had been told by her husband before he left on the call and what the native youth had just told her. She then waited anxiously for news.

The news that was finally delivered was not good. Her husband Provincial Constable C. Fulford had been fatally shot that early morning while responding to the shooting complaint.

Now my mother must tell her young children that their father would not be returning home and would never celebrate Christmas with us again as he had been killed.

My mother had demonstrated through her short stay in Ear Falls that she contributed immensely to the detachment operations, assisting my father in all aspects and dealing with such a tremendous tragedy.

### **About Ear Falls**

Located approximately 480 kilometers northwest of Thunder Bay on the English River, Ear Falls “was once known as Otahwaka Powitek to the Ojibwa people. This area was believed to be haunted by the spirit of a giant beaver which lived between the upper and lower falls. It was said that when the beaver was swimming, its ears could be seen rising and falling in the foaming water. It is from this myth that the name Ear Falls was adopted.” <http://www.ear-falls.com/visit/ear-falls-history>  
A lot has changed since the Hudson’s Bay Company and North West Company united to set up posts in the Ear Falls area almost 200 years ago; however, hunting and fishing continue to draw many to this town of approximately 1,000 people.