

Dorothy BLACK

NOMINEE: Dorothy BLACK (deceased)

MEMBER SPOUSE: Harold Carberry BLACK, # 510 (deceased)

DETACHMENTS: Flesherton 1939 – 1954

NOMINATOR: OPP Senior Constable (retired) Craig BLACK (son)

SILENT PARTNER STORY

H.C. (Harold) Black was hired by the Ontario Government on August 28, 1929, and served as a chauffeur to the Ontario Provincial Police. On July 1, 1936 he was hired as a Provincial Constable. During his OPP career he served at Port Arthur DHQ, Geraldton Detachment, Kitchener DHQ and Flesherton Detachment. In 1952 he was promoted to Corporal and served at Stratford Detachment, Mount Forest, Alliston Detachment, Bracebridge Detachment and Barrie DHQ. He retired in 1964.

Dorothy Louise Craig, was born on January 13, 1913. She graduated as a Registered Nurse from Saint Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing on July 13th, 1934. She nursed in New York City and Chicago prior to returning to Ontario to continue her profession in Hamilton and Kitchener.

It was in Kitchener where she met Provincial Constable Harold Black in 1938. He was a surgical patient following complications from internal injuries he had sustained during an all-out "brawl" with an errant hard rock miner while stationed in Geraldton the year prior.

On September 1st, 1939, Provincial Constable Black was transferred from Kitchener to the Flesherton Detachment, a one-man unit centered in the Incorporated Village of Flesherton, at the junction of Provincial Highways 10 and 4.

Provincial Constable Black was responsible for public safety and law enforcement in the townships, hamlets and villages in southern Grey County – aka: "The Grey Highlands."

Throughout World War II, Harold was also responsible for supervising and supporting the members of the Veteran Guard, stationed and tasked with providing security at the Ontario Hydro Generating Plant located at Lake Eugenia.

On December 17th, 1941, Harold Black and Dorothy Louise Craig wed at St. Luke's Anglican Church in Burlington Ontario. The newlywed couple took up residence at the detachment at what is now known as 41 Collingwood Road, Flesherton.

The small brick home prominently featured an "Ontario Provincial Police Detachment" sign on the front wall facing Collingwood Road. A black and white Chevrolet coach (two-door, five-passenger vehicle) was prominent alongside the residence – unless Provincial Constable Black was out on his police duties.

As the provincial radio system was incomplete until 1947, the sole means of communication was through a locally operated telephone company line in the home / detachment and by responding to door knocks at all hours. Being a one-man detachment, if Provincial Constable Black was away from the detachment, the only person left to answer the phone or door was Dorothy Black.

In addition to that, Mrs. Black, a Registered Nurse, often provided private nursing services in the area, and first aid to those who required it at the Detachment. The closest hospital was a private one located up Highway 10 in Markdale. The Black's next-door neighbour was Mr. Bob Avis, the local pharmacist. Mrs. Black and Mr. Avis worked closely within the community.

Provincial Constable Harold Black served at Flesherton from September 1, 1939 until his promotion to Corporal on February 1, 1952, and his subsequent transfer to Stratford Detachment (Sebringville) on May 1, 1952. In Sebringville, the family also resided in an apartment above that detachment office, at a location which is now legally described as 165 Station Road, Sebringville.

When Harold was promoted to Corporal in 1952, he and his family were transferred to Stratford Detachment, having served over twelve years at Stratford Detachment. Dot and her family would continue to follow Harold as he served at five more locations before retiring from the OPP in 1964.

SUMMARY

In summary, Harold Black spent over twelve years at Flesherton Detachment, a one-man detachment, and his wife, Dot, a registered nurse, was at his side, raising their family in Flesherton, for over a decade. Dot answered the detachment / residence door when people knocked. She routinely answered the phone, wrote down the details and dispatched Harold, the only officer in the area, by leaving phone messages along his patrol route that day. When necessary, Dot would tend to the people who arrived at their doorstep, providing nursing and other assistance as needed, as the closest hospital was some distance away. She also provided nursing services within the community. Dot received no compensation for her services. An OPP Silent Partner.

About Flesherton

The village of Flesherton (population 584 in 2016), is situated at the junctions of Highway 10 and Grey County Road 4, formerly Highway 4. It is known to some as the “Gateway to Beaver Valley, the hub for arts, culture and food in southern Grey County. It recently lost its autonomy when it was amalgamated with the surrounding Township of Artemisia. Flesherton never met its founder’s expectations as an important economic centre because an essential rail link bypassed it. During the 1940s, the closest hospital was a private one located in Markdale. The Flesherton OPP during that decade was a one-man detachment. The posted Provincial Constable was responsible for public safety and law enforcement in the townships, hamlets and villages in southern Grey County – aka: “The Grey Highlands.”



Dorothy Black, Flesherton detachment



Dorothy Black besides unit 641



PC Harold Black with son Craig 1947