

Marg HIEBERT

NOMINEE: Marg HIEBERT

MEMBER SPOUSE: Lloyd Abraham HIEBERT, # 2187 (deceased)

DETACHMENTS: Minaki 1973 – 1976

NOMINATOR: John HIEBERT (son) and Julie HIEBERT (daughter)

SILENT PARTNER STORY

Lloyd Hiebert spent over half of his career in northern Ontario, at North Bay, Still River, Englehart and Minaki Detachments. Marg and their two kids became familiar with life in the OPP in the north, and in particular while posted to Minaki Detachment, where Marg was called upon to perform many tasks on behalf of the OPP in the 1970s.

More specifically, while living at the detachment in Minaki, a four-man detachment, Marg was often left alone with her family while Lloyd was on patrol, with limited means of communication with him. She often answered the detachment phone and wrote down the details for the officers. She always answered the phone at night and called out whoever was on call so that Lloyd could get his sleep and be able to function the next day.

Marg was expected to answer the detachment door when people knocked. She acted as nursemaid for injured people and made meals for various visitors. The two-cell lock up was often occupied and often she did matron duties. If by chance the detainees had children, Lloyd would go get them and Marg would tend to their needs in their home. This included anywhere from providing a bath, clean clothes, food and sleep. For example, one night she had eleven children sleeping on her living room floor. Marg received no compensation for her services. An OPP Silent Partner.

The following are Marg's and her two children's memories of their time in Minaki:

Marg Hiebert's Memories

Marg Hiebert assisted her husband, Corporal Lloyd Hiebert. She stated, "I have enough memories for a book. Every time I hear from or about the OPP, I get a wonderful lump in my throat... good times and he was a wonderful man.

My husband, now deceased, Corporal Lloyd Hiebert went to the Minaki Detachment in July of 1973 as the detachment commander. There were three constables also posted there.

The OPP telephone rang in our dining room when there was no one in the office. I very often answered it, dealt with the call and then wrote down what I had done and left a note in the office. I always answered it at night and called out whoever was on call as my husband had to get his sleep and be able to function the next day.

Minaki had absolutely no social services. We had a Hudson's Bay Outpost, a train station, a Post Office and most of all a liquor store.

When someone needed medical attention they came to the office, and if no one answered then they came to the house. I would do what I could to patch them up or call for a taxi to take the person into Kenora (45 miles) or call for an ambulance if needed. Whatever was needed – it was one stop shopping at the OPP. If the working staff were at the Reserve, it would take them an hour plus to get back to the office, so it made sense for me to respond.

The two-cell lock up was quite often occupied. Sometimes I did matron duty. I always had to feed the "guests" (for \$1.00 per meal). If by chance both parents were our guests, my husband would go and get their children and bring them to our house rather than leave them alone in a house with a wood stove, and probably no food. They would range from infants to eight or ten years old. They always needed a bath, clean clothes, food and sleep. One night I had eleven children sleeping on my living room floor. The Hudson's Bay manager was wonderful to open the store and bring me any supplies I might need but of course, we had to pay for them.

Lice were also a very common problem and I was always so afraid that my children would get them. The school provided me with the special shampoo to clean heads and the teacher (also an OPP wife) would help me.

My children became quite independent and were very helpful when I needed them. Sometimes my eight-year-old daughter had to look after a younger child while I made breakfast or whatever. It taught them a great deal about how some people live their lives and about the many problems our native people face. My son went on to become a staff sergeant in the RCMP and served several outposts before being posted to Saskatoon.

The only time we ever got away from it all was to go into Kenora and then I was very often recognized on the streets and my neighbours would yell across the street – “Hey, Mrs. Corporal” ... In spite of it all, they were good days. Would I do it again? Definitely!

John Hiebert: My Memories of Minaki

In 1973, I was twelve years old and I remember the move from Englehart to Minaki. I attended public school in Keewatin and then high school in Kenora. I enjoyed our time living in Minaki, although it was a long way from other family.

The night prior to going to Minaki for the first time we stayed at a hotel in Kenora. The following morning my dad had us loaded into the car and he was going to the OPP headquarters to pick something up. We got to one of the main intersections in Kenora where there was a bank and the Kenricia hotel. We were stopped at a light when someone tried to cross the street and fell in front of our car. The person was passed out and my dad got out and moved the person to the sidewalk. Then as if it was normal, we continued our trip.

Upon arriving in Minaki the first thing we saw as we approached the office was an OPP suburban backed up on what was to be our front yard. Needless to say, the detachment appeared to be quite busy for the time of day.

We settled into a very different way of living than what we were used to. The office was attached to our house. I remember the black office phone that was on a counter between the kitchen and dining room. There was a box below it with a toggle switch. If there was no one in the office or my dad was taking calls the phone would be set to ring in the house.

Being a young boy, I was very active with sports, hunting and fishing. It was a small community, so you took part in everything. Minaki was a very scenic posting and with the lodge there at the time there were services you wouldn't normally find at such a location. There was a fantastic nine-hole golf course and a ski hill.

I rode the bus to school, so I was gone from about 0630 until 1730 daily. It was quite an experience riding the bus and the kids from Minaki were viewed differently once we got to school.

Coming home at the end of the day was always quite enlightening. There were times my mother would be working in the police office as the matron, which included answering the phone and door. It seemed to me at that time that no matter what the issue or problem was people went to the detachment. My sister was younger and she would often be found playing in the house entertaining herself until someone came home.

When my dad had some down time, I remember us driving around and we would pick beer bottles. I kept finding full bottles of whiskey in various culverts around town. I recall not being overly happy about it as it was worthless to me, but not to the bootlegger who had hid it there.

I started working when I was in Minaki as all the other kids worked and as you can imagine there wasn't much of a local work force. I worked for a short time at the lodge and then for the Hudson Bay. I then worked pumping gas and whatever else was needed at the Esso which was run by Murray Madigan. I made \$2 per hour, but I got lots of hours.

I would drive police trucks to the garage for repairs and then bring them home at the end of the day. This caused an issue when we moved south and I had to curtail my driving until I was old enough. I worked at the Hudson Bay for a man named Mac Watson. His son George came home to visit once, and he had a broken leg from a police car accident in Alberta. George was in the RCMP. Years later I would

reconnect with George in Saskatchewan. George's sister who was a few years older than me (Norma) also joined the RCMP.

I read my mother's article and I recall everything she mentioned. It seemed like we always had other kids in the house. She would bath, clothe and feed them. With no hospital or nursing station people also came to the detachment for first aid, including myself as I was somewhat accident prone.

I recall a guy being locked up that had pointed a gun at my dad while doing a break in at the Hudson Bay. A kid a couple of years older than me backed up my dad with his rifle. My mom was the matron that night and after a lecture I remember her feeding him. There were many weekend mornings where our kitchen as busy making prisoner meals.

Our home was very compassionate. I recall my mother many times lending local people money. She would allow them to go to the Hudson Bay and charge on her account. This was for basic items that couldn't be manipulated for substance abuse. When people received their cheques, my mother was always paid in full.

One Christmas we had family from Toronto visiting. We were seated in the dining room when the front door from our house opened and people started coming in. My one uncle held the front door open and my dad and other uncle removed the people from our house. I ran to the office and held open the office door and the people were lodged for the night.

In the spring of 1975 while I was away at school a forest fire threatened the community. It was May 26th (my sister's birthday). My grandmother was visiting and they had to evacuate the community. My mother loaded up my sister and grandmother to evacuate. I was in the school bus on the other side of the fire. Needless to say, my grandmother went home.

Before we transferred south to Coboconk Detachment my mom and sister took the train to Toronto and went to buy us a house. My dad and I stayed in Minaki and survived. My dad could get by in the kitchen but was a true grill master, even when it was snowing.

I would think that the transfer to Minaki, what I witnessed growing up and the way my parents treated people set me on a path to becoming a police officer. In my dad I had a strong role model and mentor.

Due to my age, I wasn't old enough to be a police officer anywhere but the RCMP. I was in college taking law and crime detection. Although neither that course nor policing was the first choice by my parents, I had strong support.

My dad presented me with my badge upon my graduation in August of 1981 from Depot in Regina. He remained my role model and mentor until his passing. I credit my upbringing in the OPP and with my family for setting me up to be successful with my policing career.

Julie Hiebert: My Memories of Minaki

In 1973, I was six years old when my dad was transferred to Minaki detachment. Being young, I had no idea what that really meant except it was really far!

After travelling for three days across Ontario with mom, dad, my brother and the family dog we finally arrived at our destination.

Our indoctrination was quick, especially for my mom. Not only did she have to clean the house, make all of the meals and care for us, it seemed she had a whole community to do that for.

I often remember sitting down to dinner and the office phone would ring in our dining room. Inevitably, dad had to go and mom was left manning the fort. This included answering calls, assisting with people who came to the door and often guarding prisoners if all the constables were out in the field.

Mom would also cook meals for the prisoners and children who would stay at our place awaiting the Children Aids Society to come from Kenora. Often times she would have to do first aid and give treatments for lice on children.

Although, I think a lot of people would have run, my mom always stepped up and did whatever it took to give us a normal upbringing. She would often entertain the constables, wives and their children. That was always fun and instilled such a sense of community in me.

I have many fond memories of our time as a family in Minaki. It taught me to be grateful and humble and to always help others. Of course, my dad was a hero but my mom was truly an unsung hero.

Post Note:

Lloyd HIEBERT, #2187, was appointed Probationary Constable on June 11, 1962 and appointed to North Bay OPP Detachment. He later served in Still River Detachment and then Englehart Detachment, where he met and married Marg, a widow, and adopted her son John. They had a daughter, Julie and then when Lloyd was promoted to Corporal in 1973, the family was transferred to Minaki Detachment. After serving three years in Minaki, Lloyd had two more OPP postings before he died of a heart attack on June 21, 1986.

About Minaki

Minaki is a small, unincorporated community in northern Ontario, about a 55-kilometer drive north of Kenora. Minaki is gateway to lakes and rivers of the Ontario portion of the Winnipeg River system, including Gun, Sand, Pistol and Roughrock lakes. Fly-in service is available to the English River and lakes farther north.