

## **Margaret BIGNUCOLO**

**NOMINEE:** Margaret BIGNUCOLO

**MEMBER SPOUSE:** Ed BIGNUCOLO, # 1828

**DETACHMENT(S):** Gogama, 1971 – 1977

**NOMINATOR:** Sgt. Chrystal JONES

### **SILENT PARTNER STORY**

Margaret Bignucolo and her husband Ed were stationed at Gogama Detachment (old #13 District) from September 1971 until January 1977. Ed was the Detachment Commander at the time and he and Margaret along with their children lived in the housing provided which was attached to the detachment. The family adapted to the small-town and remote living conditions and Margaret soon learned that her duties would stretch further than just being a mother and a wife.

In the years before a part-time custodian was hired, Margaret was in charge of cleaning the detachment. This included the washrooms and the sometimes unpleasantly dirty cells and garage areas.

Margaret often answered the detachment phone because it rang directly into their personal residence. She also answered the door for the detachment (at all hours of the night) when the officers were not there. It was not uncommon for Margaret to open the door to find an intoxicated and sometimes belligerent individual looking for a place to sleep for the evening.

Many amenities (including groceries, banks, and hospitals) were an hour drive away in Timmins. When she made the trip to Timmins, Margaret made sure to buy extra food and supplies so she would be prepared to feed not only themselves but also the prisoners as well as the many OPP guests who would visit or pass through the detachment area. When District Headquarters staff or In-Service Training members were in town, they had proper snacks and home-cooked meals prepared for the duration of their stays.

In the time before cell phones, if a call for service came in she would often turn on the outside light at the detachment to notify the officers that there was a call waiting, rather than telephone the dispatcher in South Porcupine. When a radio was finally brought to the detachment, Margaret would often act as the local dispatcher.

Margaret volunteered to do these things because her husband and the officers needed her help. She enjoyed the work (even the unpleasant parts) and took pride in providing a presentable detachment for the public and visitors and in offering a welcoming home for her guests.

### **About Gogama**

Situated on the shores of Lake Minisinakwa on Highway 144 between Sudbury and Timmins, Gogama is currently home to approximately 450 people. The name Gogama is an Ojibway word meaning “jumping fish”, which is believed to be in reference to the many fish that can be found in Lake Minisinakwa.