

Arlene ABERCROMBIE

NOMINEE: Arlene ABERCROMBIE

MEMBER SPOUSE: Robert ABERCROMBIE, #3117

DETACHMENT(S): Upsala 1975 – 1980

NOMINATOR: Spouse

SILENT PARTNER STORY

In the fall of 1975, I was transferred to Upsala from Kakabeka Falls Detachment to fill the position of Detachment Commander. Upsala is a small community on the Trans-Canada highway midway between Ignace and Thunder Bay. I was accompanied by my wife Arlene and our two small children.

Upsala was a two-man detachment at the time. The detachment was directly on the highway approximately one kilometre east of the village. It was a ranch style leased building consisting of two offices, two cells, and a two-car garage, along with the attached residence where we lived.

Radio communications was dispatched by Thunder Bay District Headquarters. Most of the time the office was unstaffed and any calls for service were telephoned to Thunder Bay using the operator assisted toll-free 'Zenith 50000' service.

My wife Arlene was home a good part of the time and because the apartment door was next to the office door at the front of the building, she became the face and voice of the OPP. She would take complaints and telephone Thunder Bay to contact the officer on duty or on-call. She did custodial duties for the office and cells and provided meals for any prisoners.

All of these tasks were completely voluntary and were 'just expected' of a spouse at that time. This went on for our five years there.

In addition to our policing role, Upsala also had a volunteer ambulance service (the nearest hospital was 155 kilometres away) and often I would drive the ambulance and Arlene would be the attendant.

About Upsala

Located approximately 88 kilometers west of Thunder Bay, Upsala was established in 1882 as a fuel and water stop for the Canadian Pacific Railway system. This small community of, located just north of Lac des Mille Lacs on the Trans Canada Highway (Highway 17), is home to many fishing and hunting resorts.