

HISTORY

The Slain Peace Officer Fund (SPOF) was established in 1986 after the death of S/Cst. Rob Thomas, at Powerview Manitoba. Cst. Thomas was shot and killed while doing a routine traffic stop. As well as the death of Rob, his partner Cst. Gulliford also suffered very serious injuries.

At the time of death there was no formal policy (or money) within the Force for looking after the many small details of assisting family members and other police officers who attended the funeral. Assistance to the family was specifically for looking after their needs such as funeral expenses, however, not the full costs of receptions for people attending the funeral from out of town. There was no formal process to look after the costs of a reception for police officers, where they could talk and express their grief away from the general public. In fact, at the time of Rob's death, the Winnipeg Police Service Union put on reception for the police officers attending the funeral.

As a result of Rob's death, a group of members, under the leadership of the Division Staff Relations Representatives in "D" Division, formed a committee to look into what could be done. The assistance to the families and the members of the RCMP was the driving force behind this committee. A constitution was drawn up with the emphasis on looking after extra costs not covered by the Force. Another significant part of the process was to ensure that all serving members in Manitoba had the opportunity to attend funerals of peace officers who died in the Line of Duty in Canada. It was felt that "D" Division had to not only represent the members within Manitoba but the families of our slain comrades as well.

From this small group of members, the RCMP "D" Division Slain Peace Officer Fund was established. All the funding for the program to date has been spearheaded by either active or retired members. Since Rob's death, a member from Manitoba has attended virtually every death of peace officers throughout Canada. The Fund has also been very active part in assisting at all Manitoba funerals of members who have died in the Line of Duty. We have assisted in placing plaques in all the locations where members have died since 1972. As well, the statue erected in front "D" Division HQ, costing in excess of \$97,000.00 was paid for by the SPO Fund. All monies were raised by the members of "D" Division.

The Fund continues to fund raise on a regular basis within the Force, and also receives donations from such things as socials, tournaments, as well as personal donations from the general public. The SPO Fund is not a registered charity because we are restricted to helping only members and the families of members who have died on duty.

Although "D" Division (Manitoba) was the first Division to establish such a fund, other Divisions are now following suit, with "K" (Alberta) Division and "E" (British Columbia) Division being the most active.

The RCMP "D" Division Slain Peace Officer Fund has gained a great deal of support from the members and the general public at large. The Fund has partnered with various communities to place plaques at the various locations where members have died, the most recent being the Lac Du Bonnet Heritage Committee in the placing of the plaque in remembrance of Sgt. Nickolson who died in the Line of Duty in 1932.

The Fund will continue to assist the families of members not only in Manitoba, but throughout Canada, by ensuring that we have a member present and a wreath laid at all funerals of fallen peace officers. It is also the duty of every attending member to express our heartfelt condolences to the family of their loved one.

Regards,

Paul Joyal, Chair