

Cpl. Johanson B.M.



JOHANSON, BUDD MAURICE - CPL. Regimental No. 21066
April 4, 1986 - Lethbridge, Alberta Age: 50



ABEL, FREDERICK ALLAN - AUX/CST. Regimental No. A/3512
April 4, 1986 - Lethbridge, Alberta Age: 23

These two Honour Roll members, who died together, came from opposite ends of the spectrum. One was a young man still waiting for his chance to serve; the other was a solid veteran policeman with years of experience.

Frederick Abel's mother says that her son wanted to be a policeman for "a long time ...since he was a little fellow." His determination to attain that goal was relentless. After finishing high school at Lethbridge Collegiate, he completed the two year program in Law Enforcement at Lethbridge Community College. He served as an RCMP summer student and a police officer for one year with the Pigeon Lake, Alberta police force. While waiting to be called, Fred volunteered as an RCMP Auxiliary Constable. While he served in this capacity, he also studied Criminology at the University of Lethbridge. At the time of his death, Fred was posted to the Picture Butte Detachment in Alberta.

Budd Johanson was in his twenty-seventh year of service with the Force. Born in Wishart, Saskatchewan, he moved to British Columbia as a child and was raised in several communities in that province. He engaged with the RCMP at Vancouver on August 24, 1959. All his service with the RCMP was in Alberta. He worked at detachments in Jasper, Evansburg, Edson, Stony Plain, Bonneyville, Faust and Lethbridge. He and his wife, Iris, were married for 22 years and had a family of three teenaged children.

At 7:30 pm, April 4, 1986, Aux/Cst. Abel and Cpl. Johanson were driving in a marked RCMP cruiser on Highway #3, about six miles east of Lethbridge, Alberta. They were heading west on the divided highway. On that same highway in the same vicinity, Mark David Karl was driving a half-ton pick-up truck and heading east. The only problem was that he and his passenger, Gerry Dean Uilly, were heading east, with no lights on and Uilly was asleep. They had been driving the wrong direction on the divided highway for the last ten miles. All along their menacing way, on coming drivers blew their horns and flashed their lights at them, swerving desperately out of their way. Someone finally stopped and phoned in a complaint to the RCMP detachment office in Lethbridge.

Cst. R. D. Muskovich took the call and immediately radioed Cpl. Johanson's car, but was unable to get a reply. That was because the police cruiser had already hit the pick-up truck

head on. The combined speeds of the two cars was estimated to be 135 miles per hour and the impact was so devastating that the pick-up came to rest on the roof of the police cruiser. The four occupants of the two vehicles were rushed to St. Michael's Hospital in Lethbridge, but all of them were dead on arrival. When one of the dead civilians was wheeled into the emergency ward of the hospital, a Budweiser bottle cap fell from the stretcher to the floor.

There was a funeral service for Cpl. Johanson in Lethbridge followed by a burial service at St. Josephat's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Edmonton. His remains were interred at St. Michael's Cemetery in Edmonton.

Aux/Cst. Abel was unmarried. His funeral service was held at Assumption Catholic Church in Lethbridge, after which his body was cremated.

Two policemen - one a veteran, the other a neophyte - gone forever because of the mindless conduct of a drunken driver.