

S/Cst. Kowalczyk G.Z.



KOWALCZYK, GORDON Z. - S/Cst. Regimental No. S/1550
January 26, 1987 - Calgary, Alberta Age: 35

Prior to joining the Force in June 1975, Gordon Kowalczyk was an apprentice auto mechanic and a Correctional Officer. He was married and had three children by his first wife, Deborah. They divorced in 1982 and Kowalczyk married his second wife, Sylvia.

On the night of January 26, 1987, he was on special duty at Calgary Airport where he had been assigned since April 1985. At 11:50 pm, he responded to a radio dispatch advising that a young male had driven away from a nearby Budget Gas Bar in a maroon Toyota pick-up truck without paying for \$20.00 worth of gasoline. Kowalczyk went looking for the truck. He didn't see a Toyota vehicle, but did radio in that he was pulling over a black Ford pick-up on Highway #2A five miles north of Calgary.

Just after midnight, Melvin Semmler and two friends, who were driving home from work at the airport, came upon Kowalczyk's body lying in the middle of the roadway. Semmler used the radio in the cruiser to call for help.

Police examination determined that Kowalczyk had been hit by 6 shotgun blasts to the head and body. The first blast to his chest had hit him from less than three feet away. They also found that his service revolver was missing. Immediately the RCMP mounted an intensive hunt to capture his killer. Although 118 pieces of evidence were collected at the crime scene, progress in the case was severely hampered by the fact that no one had witnessed the murder.

S/Cst. Kowalczyk's funeral was attended by more than 1,500 police officers who came from across Canada and the United States. At the service, RCMP Assistant David Whyte honoured him by saying that Kowalczyk ". . . always wanted to be a policeman and wore his uniform with pride." The assembled policemen then marched to the graveyard and stood smartly at attention as he was buried with full honours at Queen's Park Cemetery in Calgary.

Almost a month later, on February 22, a middle-aged woman and a young man robbed an Edmonton pizzeria of \$300.00. In the course of the robbery, the man had fired a shotgun blast into the air to warn customers not to interfere. The spent shell in the pizza parlour matched those left at the scene of Kowalczyk's murder. One of the customers also got the licence number of the Oldsmobile that the two thieves used to get away. This information led police to raid a farmhouse 25 miles north of Calgary near Crossfield, Alberta. Without incident, the RCMP arrested 43 year old Linda Marie Bowen and her son, Andrew Kay, a young man in his early twenties.

As it was later revealed, the mother and son had been involved in a string of armed robberies that were intended to solve their plight of unemployment and poverty. S/Cst. Kowalczyk's killing was the aftermath of the couple's first bungled robbery attempt. That night, as

Andrew Kay drove into the Budget Gas Bar in a truck he had stolen the previous day in Red Deer, his mother sat in her Oldsmobile across the street playing lookout. Because the Gas Bar was closing, Kay decided not to rob the place, but to speed away without paying for his gas. When S/Cst. Kowalczyk pulled Andrew over on Highway #2A, Andrew Kay shot him at point blank range and then stepped out of the truck and pumped five more shots into the policeman as he lay sprawled on the roadway dying. Later Kay's mother would claim she was upset at her son's killing of the police-man. Obviously her remorse wasn't sufficient to deter her from participating in four more armed robberies after S/Cst. Kowalczyk's murder. The only thing that ended their gun wielding rampage was arrest and incarceration.

At their trial, both mother and son were convicted. Andrew Kay was sentenced to life in prison without parole for 25 years. His mother was sentenced to the penitentiary for 13 years.