



Margaret Shorter --Staff Sergeant, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

After 36 years of service to Canadians, I became one of the first female veterans of my national police force. As the saying goes, however, one does not have experience until they have it! Growing up as the daughter of a career “Mountie”, I relocated with my family each time my father was transferred to yet another posting in Western Canada and the Yukon Territory. After high school I left home to attend the University of British Columbia in Vancouver where I earned my degree in Marine Biology. Eventually accepting the probability that I would never work with my hero, famed undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau, I discovered that toiling in research was not a passion either and was not going to finance my independence! Instead, I took a position as an RCMP summer student and it was here that the skills and abilities that would serve me as a future investigator and leader began to flourish.

I joined the RCMP Force in 1976 shortly after it had begun accepting female applicants. Determined not to subject my own family to the transient life I associated with my father’s career, I initially refused mainstream service as a uniformed officer electing instead to devote my talents (and the natural advantage at that time of being a *female* officer) to plainclothes work. After 19 years service, promotion options were available only in the uniformed ranks so, with the blessings of my husband and two children, I dusted off my red serge tunic for General Duty policing and never looked back.

I participated in my first IAWP training conference in Vancouver in 1983. Excited and challenged by that experience, I committed myself to the friends and the learning opportunities offered by the association. Over the years, I have shared what I learned as an RCMP officer with the women in my IAWP networks; in turn I have applied the lessons learned in IAWP to improving my performance as a police officer and better serving my community.

At the conclusion of my active policing career I used education to bridge into my retirement and in 2013 completed my Master’s degree in Intercultural and International Communication. This year, as we celebrate our IAWP Centenary, I mark the beginning of my first term as president of the IAWP and in service to our emerging global community of women police.