

Into Amalgamation

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

CHIEF NORM STEWART, 1970 - 1981

The tenth and in effect the last Chief Constable of the Winnipeg Police Force was Superintendent **Norman M. STEWART**. This chief served for eleven years and took the department through the transition of amalgamation and underwent a change of rank designation to "Chief of Police".

In 1969 Winnipeg Police joined other area police forces in paying tribute to St. Boniface Police Constable **Len Shakespeare** who was killed in the line of duty. In less than a year, June 1970, the Winnipeg Police Department lost one of their own with the murder of Detective **Ronald HOUSTON** who was stabbed to death during a stake-out for a vicious rapist. In both killings, the murderers were arrested and convicted and sentenced to death but had their sentences commuted.

January 1st, 1972 saw the amalgamation of the City of Winnipeg with one mayor and council. Not all functions within the city joined together immediately. The police departments now consisted of eight community departments each with their own radio systems, stations and distinct uniforms.

The departments that were affected in 1972 were North Kildonan which joined with East Kildonan, Old Kildonan and West St. Paul which joined with West Kildonan, Tuxedo which joined with Winnipeg, and the Charleswood/Headingly RCMP whose contract was cancelled so they could join Winnipeg. included Headingly.

The size of the Winnipeg department continued to grow with an expanding workload and in 1973 the authorized strength was 493 officers and 141 staff.



The final amalgamation of the police forces took place on **OCTOBER 21st, 1974**. At this time the remaining eight departments formed 6 districts:

- District #1 (former Winnipeg Inner City Police)
- District #2 (former St. James-Assiniboia Police)
- District #3 (former West Kildonan Police)
- District #4 (former East Kildonan Police & Transcona Police)
- District #5 (former St. Vital Police and St. Boniface Police)
- District #6 (former Fort Garry Police with parts of Winnipeg Police who were now patrolling Tuxedo, Charleswood and Headingly)



Effective January 1975 all officers were to be wearing the newly amalgamated shoulder flashes, "One With The Strength of Many".

When the final amalgamation took place the force nearly doubled with the authorized strength of 1975 at 921 officers and 171 staff for a total of 1,091. This did not include 35 Commissionaires for parking patrol.

1975 saw a noticeable increase in the number of female constables joining the department with three in the first recruit class that year and every class after that. This was also the year that the department initiated the employment of female police cadets.

The early years of amalgamation saw the establishment of several specialty units within the department besides the canine unit which began in 1972. An underwater recovery unit existed in the Fort Garry Police Department and was enlarged. A letter bomb explosion in the city brought about the creation of a bomb disposal unit. The possibilities of large disorders called for the establishment of a crowd control unit and the need for specially trained negotiators and weapons experts lead to the formation of an emergency response unit.

One of the big changes not only to the department but to the justice system occurred in 1977 when the jail facilities at the Public Safety Building were turned over to the province to become the Provincial Remand Centre. This change in responsibility also provided additional manpower back to street patrol.

In 1981 Chief Stewart handed over command of the force to Superintendent **Kenneth JOHNSTON** who was in charge of the Morality Division.