
JOSEPH (JOE) TERES

Chief of Police (Transcona) Superintendent #5

*Written by John Burchill, President
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A top 10 Transconian, a Manitoba Baseball Hall of Famer, a Kiwanis Club President, an elementary school honorarium, and a Chief of Police all have this man in common.

Joe Teres was born to Ukrainian parents in East Kildonan on January 1, 1921. His family moved from their home on Winterton Avenue to Melrose Avenue East in Transcona when he was 12. He attended the old Transcona Central School, United College, and the University of Manitoba where he took engineering.

During his youth, Joe was very active in baseball. Although nicknamed “Mr. Shortstop” during his 20 years playing baseball in Manitoba, he was also a powerful batter, a fast baserunner, and he had a great throwing arm.

However, Joe stood out for his play at shortstop, which is considered one of the most demanding defensive positions in baseball. The National League Champions, Cincinnati Reds, even offered him a contract in 1938.

After high school Joe joined the Transcona Railroaders of the Greater Winnipeg Senior Baseball League (GWSBL), playing out of Kern Park. At the time there were only four teams in the league. Including Transcona, there were the St. Boniface Native Sons, the CUAC Blues, and the Norwood Seniors. In Teres’ first year on the team, the Railroaders won the championships.

According to Don Bruce, who would start work with the Town of Transcona in 1960, and later for Teres in the police department, baseball was the only thing happening in Transcona during the summer. It was a community event and everyone went out to the ballpark to watch the Railroaders, so the players were well known.

Indeed most of the league’s games were carried in Winnipeg’s daily newspapers, if not the local community newspapers such as the Transcona News.

By 1940 the GWSBL had increased to six teams with the addition of the Selkirk Fishermen and the Morse Place Athletics. That year Joe was selected to play shortstop for the first all-star team in support of the Athletic Patriotic Association. Sponsored by the Winnipeg Free Press, his team defeated the second all-star team sponsored by the Winnipeg Tribune 9-6 at St. Boniface.

During the Second World War Joe worked as a manager for Defence Industries Limited (D.I.L.), a Crown Corporation that oversaw the Transcona Cordite Plant where acid, nitroglycerine, and guncotton (nitrocellulose) were manufactured as ingredients in cordite for the war. Working at D.I.L. was likely the reason Joe took engineering in school. The plant was built by the Canadian and British governments under the auspices of the Allied War Supplies Corporation, construction on the site began in 1940 and was opened in June 1941.

At its height, the Transcona Plant consisted of 230 buildings, including a hospital, machine shops, offices, residences, telephone exchange, laundry, and numerous production buildings. Given the sensitive nature of goods produced at the plant, the site had its own fire hall and a reciprocal agreement with the Transcona Fire Department to share resources in a time of need. ¹



Defence Industries Ltd., Transcona Cordiate Plant.
Courtesy of the Transcona Museum and Archives, TH99.46.4

The plant was a major source of employment during the war. Throughout its operational life, the facility turned out 30,000 tons of guncotton, 14,500 tons of nitroglycerin, 75,000 tons of nitric acid, and 167,000 tons of sulphuric acid, and packed a total of 65,300 tons of cordite.

Within days of Emperor Hirohito announcing the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945, production at the facility ended, after which the main plant was demolished. The rest of the site was largely demolished and decontaminated in 1946. However, for four months before its demolition, it served as a Japanese Internment camp.

By 1947, only the power plant, administration building, and machine shop remained standing. By mid-June 1948, the power plant and stacks were also knocked down. Today, all that remains

¹ Until 1974 the Transcona Fire Department was actually overseen by the Chief of Police, who wore two hats. All the police officers were cross trained as firemen, supported by a number of on-call volunteer firemen. Notwithstanding that Transcona was a small community, where most residents knew each other, it is likely Teres had direct contact with the Transcona Police (*qua* firemen) during his time at D.I.L.

is the Cordite Ditch and adjacent Cordite Road. A series of information panels along Cordite Trail, under the stewardship of the Transcona Trails Association, detail the area's history. Throughout the War, Teres continued to play baseball for the Railroaders during the summer months. He would regularly get mentions in the newspapers for his batting prowess ...

"Joe Teres came through with a pair of hits to drive in three runs".

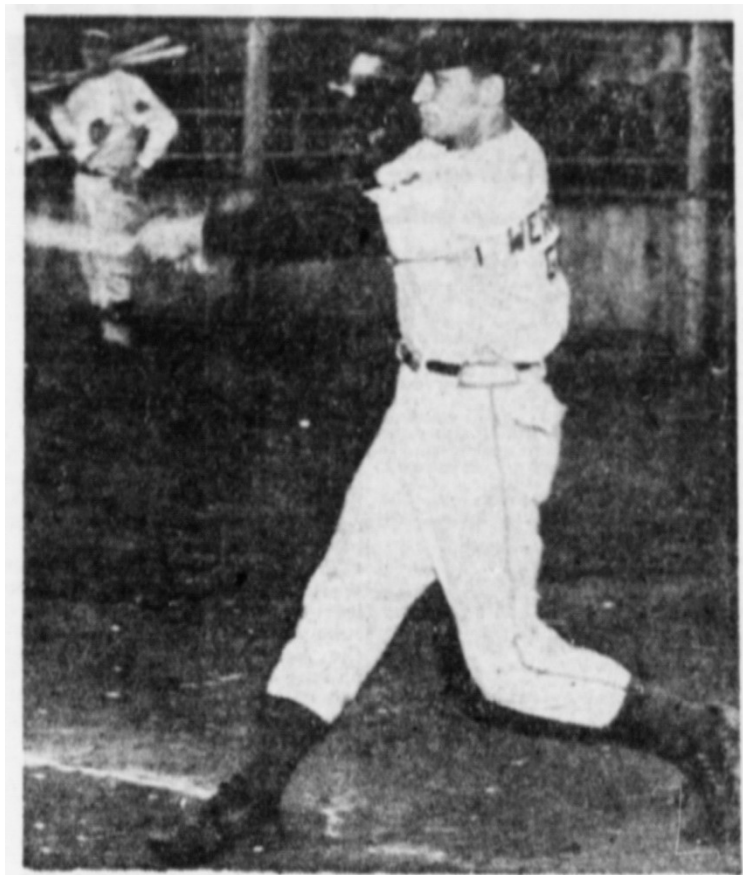
"Joe Teres was voted the trophy as the most valuable player [for the Railroaders], and also received the Royal George Cup for highest batting average".

"Joe Teres, Transcona shortstop, blasted out a series of triples".

"Captain Joe Teres, who is currently hitting at a murderous pace, showed no signs of slipping by coming through with four singles".

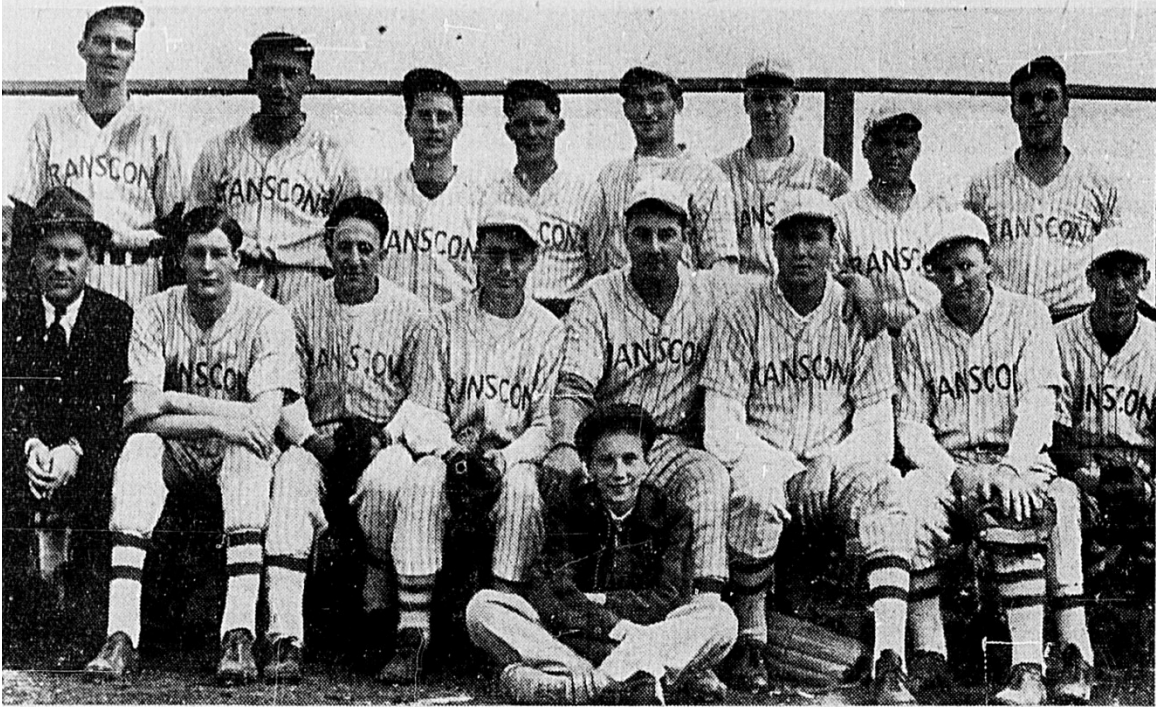
"Joe Teres, Transcona's shortstop, hit two triples".

In fact, because of his batting output the Manitoba Junior Baseball League initially named their annual batting championship trophy after Joe Teres in 1977 (now called the Vic Bozyk Memorial Trophy).



*"Joe Teres, Transcona's favorite cop, taking a lusty swing" during MSBL all-star game.
Winnipeg Tribune, August 10, 1951*

Lead Senior Ball Series



*Transcona Lead Senior Ball Series. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, September 15, 1941.
Teres is fourth from the right, back row.*

Waging Hectic Battle For Honors



*Transcona Waging Hectic Battle for Honors. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, September 20, 1943.
Teres is third from the left, back row.*



Transcona Keeps Senior Ball Title. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, September 16, 1946.
Teres is third from the right, front row.

After the closure of the Cordite Plant, Joe joined the Transcona Police Department as a constable on June 2, 1948. Rising through the ranks to Sergeant he was appointed Chief of Police in 1960. After the amalgamation of all the metro police departments resulted in the formation of the City of Winnipeg Police Force in 1974, Joe was appointed Superintendent of District 4 which included Transcona, East Kildonan, North Kildonan, and Elmwood at the time.

Joe Teres passed away suddenly on March 20, 1976, at the age of 55. He had served as a police officer for 28 years, 14 as Chief of Police. During that time, Joe was very proud of his profession and wore his uniform with pride. Joe believed that a police officer should be a friend and worked with the youth in his community. During his tenure as a police officer, he spent a great deal of time mentoring and counselling the youth and their parents and would speak at various schools and group meetings.

He was remembered as a person who cared about his community and was always there to help in any way he could so that the community would be a safe place to live. Joe was even selected as chair of children's activities for Transcona's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 1961.

Outside of policing and baseball Joe was also a member of, and past-president of the Kiwanis Club, one of the founders of the Transcona Kiwanis Senior Citizens Centre, as well as a member of the Transcona Curling Association, the Transcona Golf and Country Club, the Sandy Hook Golf Club, the Rod and Gun Club, and the Transcona Memorial United Church.

In 1988 the Transcona-Springfield School Division paid tribute to Joe by naming the new elementary school at 131 Sanford Fleming Road after him. Prior to the unveiling School Trustee

Mary Andree told the Winnipeg Free Press on November 1, 1987, that “*he (Teres) was not only a law enforcement officer, he was like a father to some of the children who needed guidance and help. If there was a problem in the school, he was right there willing to help out.*” Paul Martin, former Transcona Mayor and teammate of Joe’s added “*Joe, a local boy, knew everybody [in Transcona]. He operated with a little compassion in those days, so he fit in well. He cared for the community*”.



Joseph Teres School, 131 Sanford Fleming Road. Photograph by Kelly O’Donnell, 2021

Joe’s popularity wasn’t something new, or simply because he was the Chief of Police. In fact, as far back as July 16, 1949, when the Winnipeg Tribune profiled all the managers and coaches behind junior baseball in Manitoba, they said (in an article on “Buggy” Maslanko of Transcona), that he (Maslanko) “*isn’t far behind Mayor Paulley and Joe Teres in Trancona’s popularity*”.

In wondering what made Joe so popular, I spoke with John Urchenko, former Chief of Police for Old Kildonan, which shared a border with Transcona, and retired Staff Sergeant Don Bruce, who worked under Teres for 14 years in Transcona. Both made the same comments. Joe grew up in the community he policed. He knew everybody. He was friendly, engaging, and got out from behind his desk to talk to the people in the community. To borrow a phrase from retired Police Chief Devon Clunis, Joe Teres was “*a difference maker*”.

In 1999 Joe Teres was inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame for the position of shortstop. He was also recognized by the citizens of Transcona as one of the ten “*Greatest Transconians*” in a 2005 contest held by the Transcona Museum. Like Joe, two of the other candidates on the list had schools named after them (Bernie Wolfe and Murdoch MacKay). However, in the end, the winner of the contest was a war veteran, politician, school trustee, founder of the Transcona Historical Society ... and Joe’s former teammate ... Paul Martin.



Sergeant Joe Teres, far right. Members of the Transcona Police Department, 1959.



Joe Teres, Chief of Police (Transcona), 1960-1974