Friends of *The OPP Museum*
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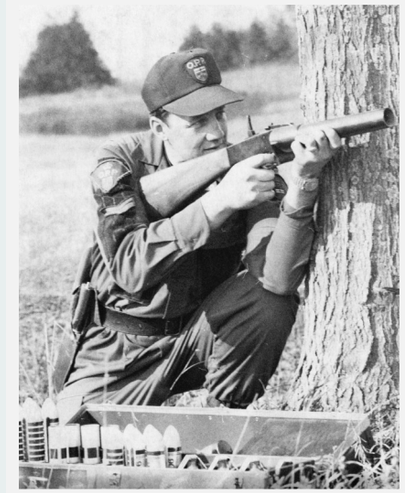
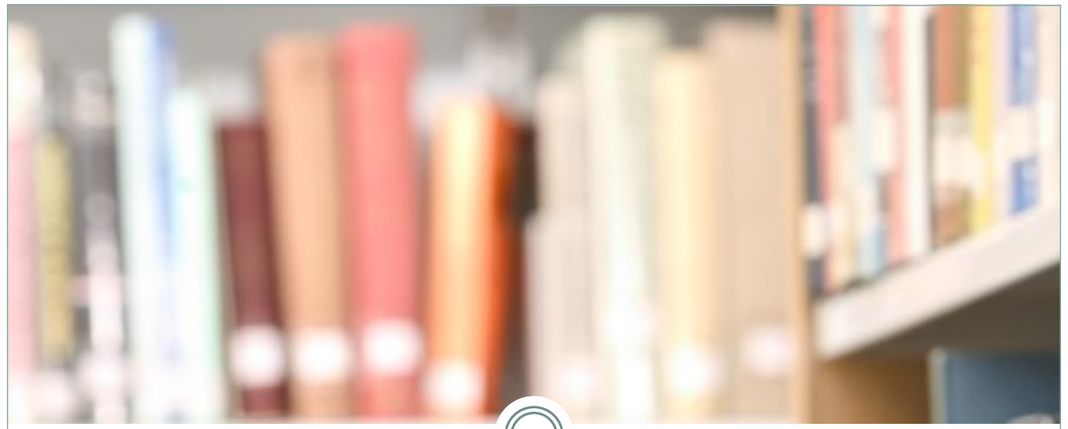
Friends of The OPP Museum

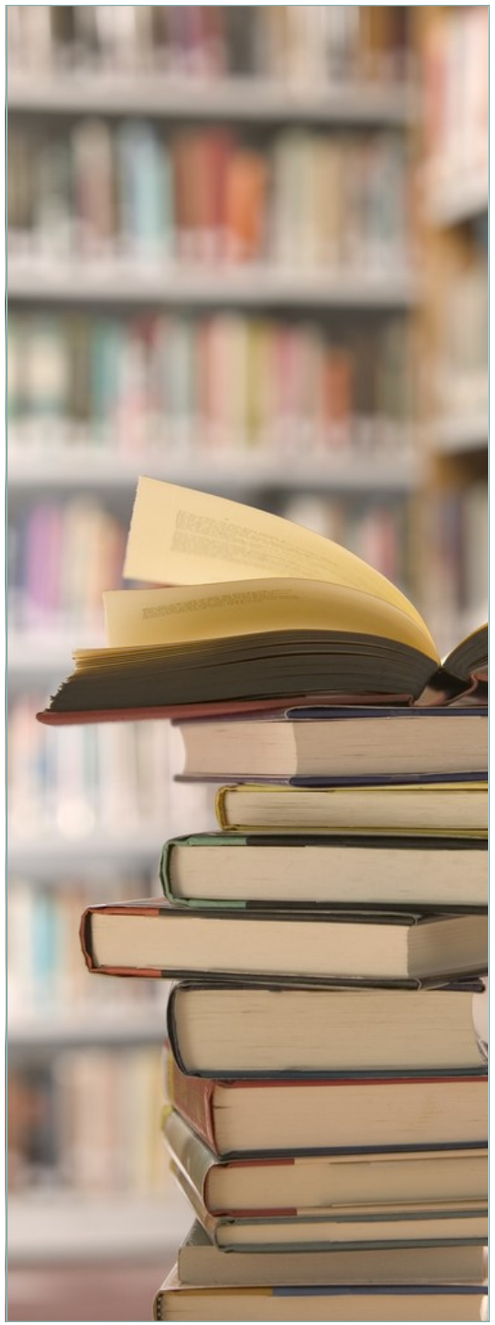


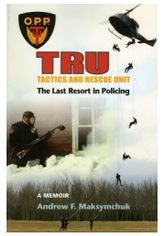
The OPP Museum
Preserving and Celebrating the history of the Ontario Provincial Police.

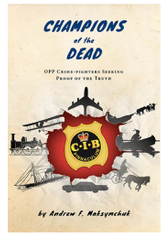


2015 Friends of *The OPP Museum* Heritage Award Winner | Andrew Maksymchuk

The Friends of *The OPP Museum* Heritage Award was established in 2014 to recognize the efforts of authors and researchers whose work builds a greater understanding of the contributions of the men and women of the OPP. Retired Inspector Andrew Maksymchuk was awarded the 2015 Heritage Award in recognition of his efforts in preserving and celebrating the written history of the Ontario Provincial Police. Maksymchuk's trilogy of memoirs represents a significant contribution to the history of the OPP, and has been recognized for its valuable chronicling of not just one officer's experiences, but of the evolution of the organization over a thirty-year period.







A Trilogy of Memoirs

"Maks," as he has come to be known to many, begins his first memoir *From Muskeg to Murder - Memories of Policing Ontario's Northwest,* by chronicling his family's struggles to immigrate to Canada from the Ukraine, and his boyhood in British Columbia. His OPP story begins at the age of 21 in 1964 when he moves to Ontario and joins the OPP, fueled by an innate desire to fight injustice, learned as a child. He takes this dream with him to Northwestern Ontario where he "learns the ropes" in the makeshift courtrooms, and isolated outposts of its mining centres, pulp and paper industry communities, Indian reservations, and boom towns. His story is one of overcoming limited training, deficient supervision, poor transportation and communication resources, and the clash of cultures, all framed with his characteristic ingenuity, dedication and humour.

TRU—THE LAST RESORT IN POLICING

His second memoir, *TRU Tactics and Rescue Unit – The Last Resort in Policing*, captures the second phase of Maks' career as the first full-time coordinator of the OPP's elite Tactics and Rescue Unit in the 1970s and 1980s. For eight years, Maks, was involved in the establishment and growth of the OPP's high-risk incident response team responsible for dealing with hostage-takings, barricaded gunmen, and providing specialized security at high-profile events like the 1976 Olympic Games. Skilled in the use of firearms, hostage negotiations, special police tactics, and survival techniques, his experiences led him to lecture to worldwide police organizations and to provide expert court testimony on police procedures.

Inset: Downsview TRU team at the 1976 Olympic Games in Kingston, Ontario; Maksymchuk.

CHAMPIONS OF THE DEAD

His third memoir follows Maks in the final phase of his policing career. His childhood motivation to fight against injustice comes full circle in his aptly named, *Champions of the Dead – OPP Crime Fighters Seeking Proof of the Truth*. In it, he documents the foundation of the OPP's Criminal Investigation Branch and recalls the six years he served as one of its investigative case managers. Throughout all of his books, Andy's willingness to share the most painful and intimate aspects of his life in a candid and unvarnished fashion serves to forge a solid bond with the reader. Family, friends, community and duty become entwined against a backdrop of a changing Canada as he shares his experiences and insights into the unique place of the OPP in Canadian police service.

As well as being the recipient of the Queen's Commission, the Canadian Police Exemplary Medal, the Canada 125th Commemorative Medal, and the Ontario Provincial Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, he has many other official career commendations. He is the author of numerous police-related magazine articles and has also penned *COPS: A Matter of Life & Death*.