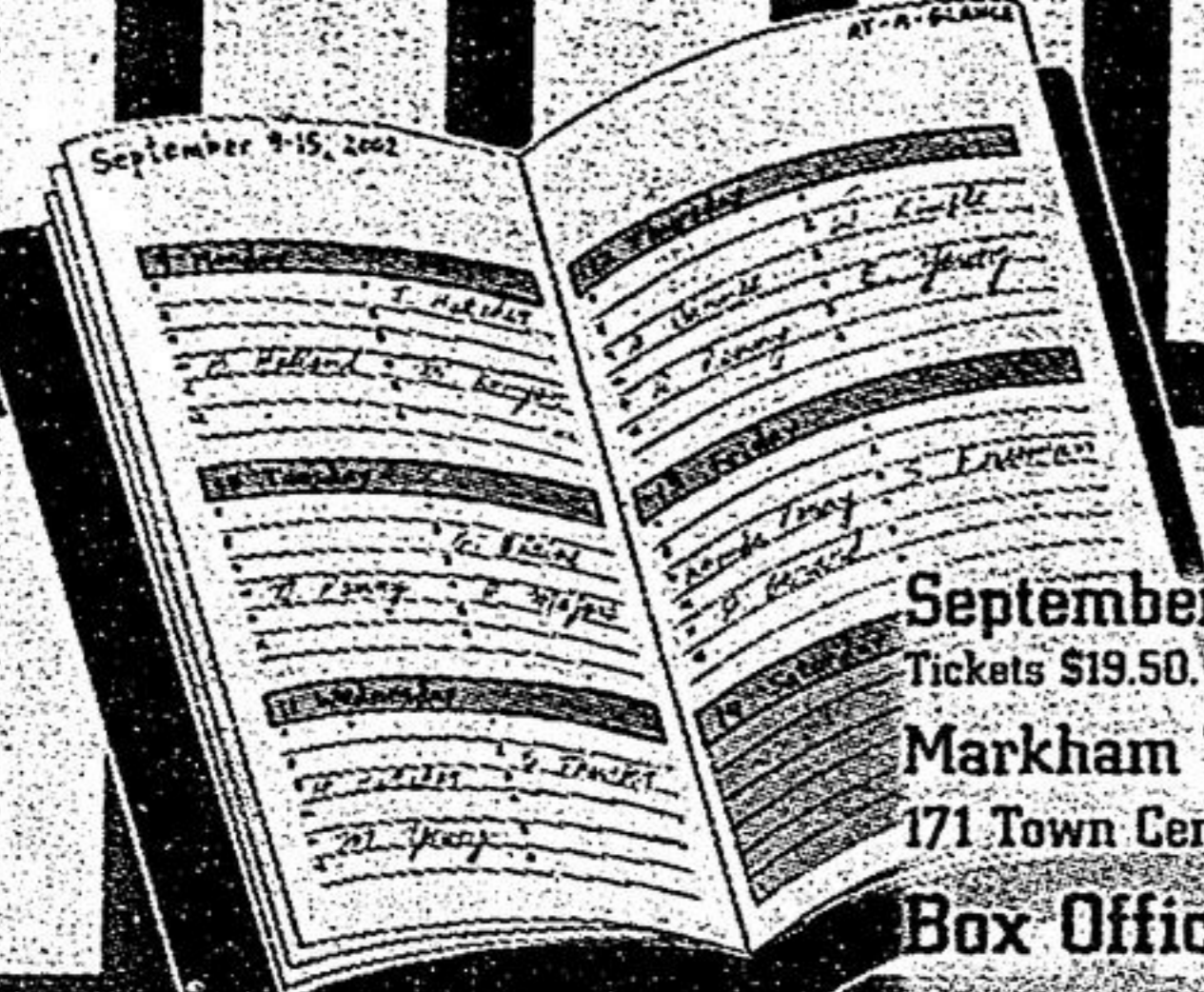


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York cop from high-profile case facing weapons charges

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

A York Regional Police officer was charged with assault and weapons offences last Tuesday after a couple reported being confronted by a man with a shotgun near Fenelon Falls.

It's the second time Const. Michael Hoskin, who was off-duty at the time of the latest incident, has been charged with weapons offences.

He was acquitted of weapons charges two years ago stemming from a high-profile police take-down in 1998 that ended with the death of a Sunderland man.

York Regional Police Deputy Chief Armand La Barge said Friday the veteran officer has been reassigned to administrative duties from his role as a front-line uniformed officer.

Const. Hoskin, 43 of Sutton, was charged by City of Kawartha Lakes OPP following an investigation that began June 29.

OPP Const. Ted Schendera said a man and a woman reported they were confronted by an armed man while they were riding an all-terrain vehi-

cle along an abandoned rail line north of Fenelon Falls. An argument over access to the trail ensued, OPP said.

It is alleged that a man, armed with a shotgun, blocked the trail during a verbal confrontation.

No one was hurt during the incident, Const. Schendera said.

It is alleged that a man, armed with a shotgun, blocked the trail during a verbal confrontation.

Last Tuesday, the OPP laid a weapons charge and two counts of assault against Const. Hoskin who works out to 1 District headquarters in Newmarket. He is to appear in court in Lindsay Sept. 19.

Const. Hoskin was a key figure in the fatal police shooting of a Sunderland man and the wounding of his son in late December of 1998 and the sensational trial that followed.

York Region Const. Randy Martin was charged with second degree murder in the death of Tony Romagnuolo, while Durham Region Const. Al Robins was charged with aggravated assault and a weapons charge in the wounding of 17-year-old Rocco Romagnuolo.

Const. Hoskin faced charges of assault with a weapon and careless use of a firearm.

All three officers were acquitted after a tense, closely watched trial that unfolded over five weeks in an Oshawa courthouse.

The trial heard the York officers, accompanied by two Durham officers, went to the Romagnuolo home to arrest Enzo, another son, who had allegedly threatened Const. Hoskin after a traffic stop in York Region.

The deadly melee that followed was characterized as an excessive use of force by prosecutors, while defence lawyers argued the officers acted appropriately when faced with a threat to their personal safety.

All of the officers returned to duty after their exoneration at the trial.

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Help needed against bikers, cops tell region

Illegal biker gangs are thriving in York Region and police need legislation to prevent them from turning clubhouses into heavily fortified bunkers, politicians have been told.

Duncan MacIntyre, a York Region Police officer seconded to the provincial Biker Enforcement Unit, said seven motorcycle gangs, including the Hells Angels, the Outlaws and the Loners, are operating here, with as many as 700 foot soldiers carrying out illegal activity.

"We have the highest number of motorcycle gangs per capita in the region (compared to) anywhere else in Canada," Const. MacIntyre told members of the finance and administration

committee Thursday.

There are an estimated 70 patch-wearing gang members residing in the region, each of whom would typically have as many as 10 associates, he said. Biker gangs have clubhouses in Woodbridge, Richmond Hill, Keswick, King Township and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"We actually have 700 people in the region daily conducting criminal activity," Const. MacIntyre said.

He urged quick endorsement of a bylaw that is being considered by municipalities throughout the province, aimed at preventing the construction of heavily-fortified bunkers that serve as bases for bikers' crimi-

nal activity.

The bunkers are buildings that are fortified with steel doors, Plexiglas and iron mesh in windows and surveillance cameras, Const. MacIntyre said.

In the past, police have had to use battering rams and acetylene torches to get past metal doors on clubhouses in Richmond Hill and Woodbridge during raids.

Richmond Hill Councillor Dave Barrow, chair of the police services board, urged committee members to move quickly on the law.

The committee passed a motion instructing staff to work with York's nine member municipalities on passage of the legislation.

— Jeff Mitchell

WHAT'S SHOWING?

See page 12 this paper

39th ANNUAL
MARKHAM ANTIQUE SHOW
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SEPTEMBER 13, 14, 15, 2002

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