

Remembering Det.-Const. Rob Plunkett

Condolences still rolling in 1 year after cop's death

BY JOE FANTAUZZI
Staff Writer

It almost seems like it was yesterday, his boss said.

It has been a year since York Regional Police Det.-Const. Robert Plunkett was killed in Markham while investigating the theft of airbags from cars.

On Saturday, the fallen officer's colleagues observed a moment of silence in his memory, Chief Armand La Barge said.

"It has been a real roller-coaster for his family and

his friends and colleagues at York Regional Police," Chief La Barge said.

"They are re-living the experience all over again in many respects."

Det.-Const. Plunkett's death was the first line of duty death for York police in more than 20 years.

"It's not easy losing a police officer," Chief La Barge said, adding many officers serving with York police have been hired within the past decade and had never experienced the death of a colleague before last August.

"When it is one of your own, it is different," he said. "It does have a lasting impact and effect."

Much has taken place in the aftermath of Det.-Const. Plunkett's death.

Within days, his funeral was the largest police memorial service in Canadian history with more than 7,000 officers attending.

In October, Mohammed Yousafzai pleaded guilty to one count of theft over \$5,000, two counts of theft under \$5,000, one count of possession of stolen property

under \$5,000 and two counts of breach of recognizance.

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Chief Armand La Barge
York Regional Police

He was sentenced to eight months in jail and two years probation.

In April, Nadeem Jiwa,

who is accused of first-degree murder in Det.-Const. Plunkett's death, was denied bail by a Newmarket court.

That same month, the fallen officer was honoured posthumously for bravery at the force's annual police appreciation night.

Softball and golf tournaments have been organized in Det.-Const. Plunkett's name, which have benefited Special Olympics — one of the officer's favourite causes.

He has also been remembered at the provincial and national level for his service.

Online memorial sites have also sprung up. Among them is a Facebook page titled, "In memory of..." that boasted more than 570 members at press time.

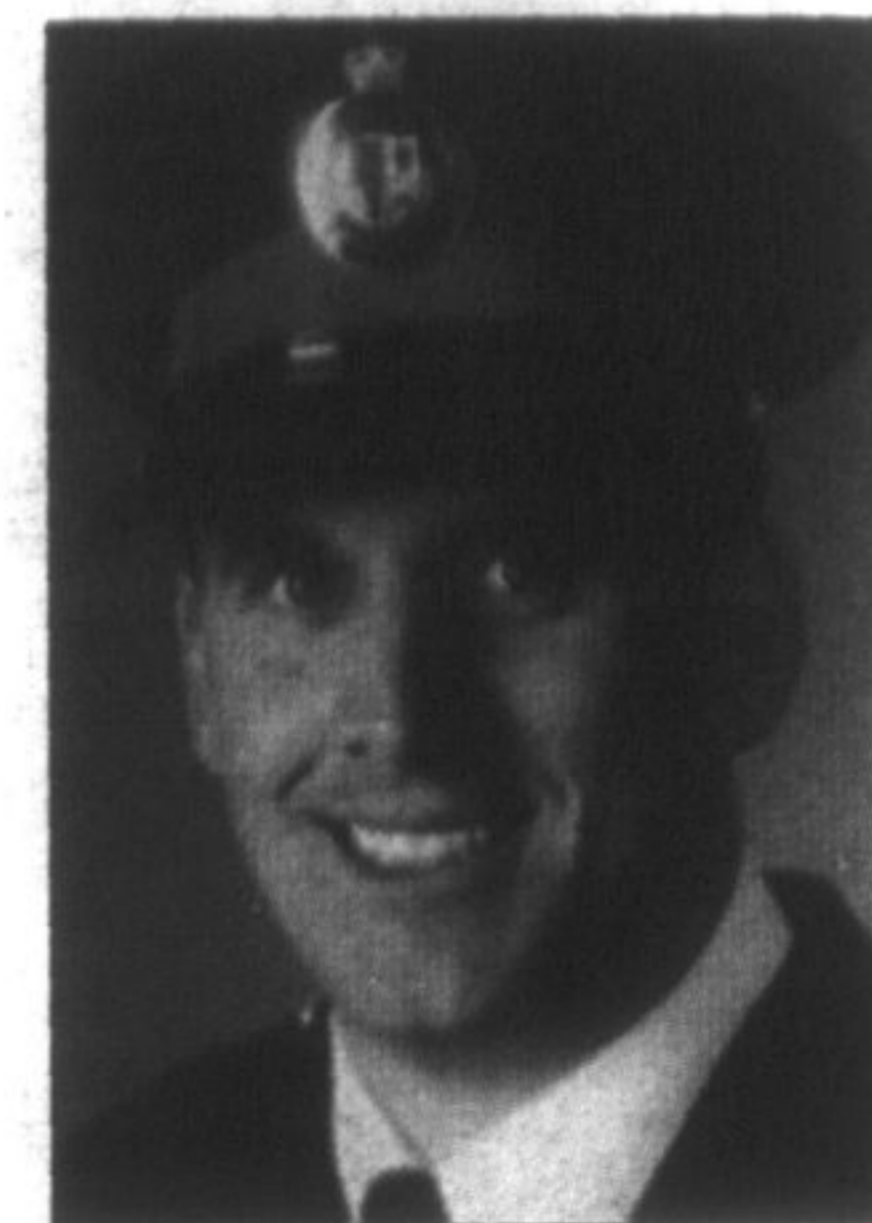
Mourners have expressed their condolences on the page continuously since the day Det.-Const. Plunkett died.

Saturday, a mourner stopped by the page to add a brief statement of remembrance:

"I can't believe (it's) already been a year," the mourner wrote. "Missing you always."

Before dawn Aug. 2, 2007, York officers followed two Hondas, one gold — believed to be stolen — the other white, to Ascot Crescent, in the Birchmount Road and Steeles Avenue area of Markham.

At about 5 a.m., the driver of the gold Honda opened



ROB PLUNKETT: Det.-Const. died after being dragged by vehicle in Markham last summer.

the driver's side door and was seen removing the car's airbag, police said.

Investigators moved in to arrest the suspects.

When Det.-Const. Plunkett approached the open driver's door of the gold Honda to make an arrest, the driver put the car into reverse, running it up over a curb, across a lawn and shrubs and pinning the officer between the open door and a tree, police said.

Det.-Const. Plunkett was thrown from the vehicle as it continued to reverse across the lawn before other officers rammed the vehicle.

Det.-Const. Plunkett was rushed to Scarborough Grace Hospital, where he died.

Nadeem Jiwa and Baseer Yousafzai, both of Toronto, were arrested at the scene.

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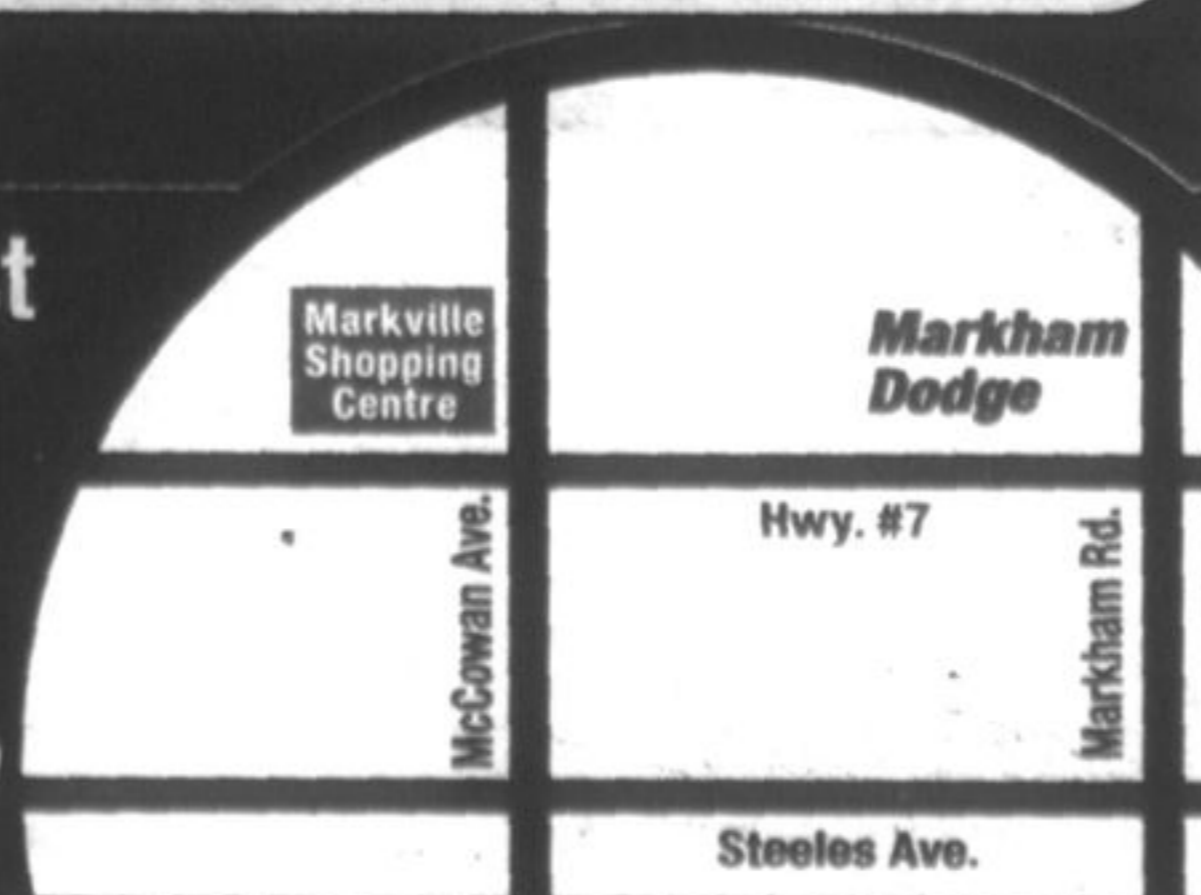


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