

mechanics of his surrender were worked out. Archer was instructed in explicit terms on how he and his hostages were to leave the house. He readily agreed.

At short time later, Sgt. Howard Comba, Mr. Wolsch and I walked down the street from the command post to a position immediately opposite the side door of Dr. Scherz's residence. At 3:00 a.m., Stephanie Scherz emerged, followed by Archer and Dave Penny. The trio made their way from the house out onto the street where, at 3:02 a.m., Archer was taken into custody. The ninety-four hour ordeal for the hostages, the policemen and the residents of Oak Lake and surrounding districts, was over. As set out in the terms of surrender, Archer was immediately transported to Brandon General Hospital and allowed a supervised one-hour visit with his wife.

No doubt the members of the Force involved in this drama will find it difficult to forget the whole distressing event and their involvement in it. However, they will also not easily forget the esprit de corps that existed between all the members working at the scene. A close rapport existed between the numerous special units that arrived to help, including Insp. Greba and the Regina Emergency Response Team, some members from Ottawa and, of course, the members from surrounding detachments who gave their support no matter what the task. All made the successful conclusion truly a joint effort.

The suspect in question was positively identified as Herbert Bruce Archer and he was formally charged with first-degree murder in the death of Cst. Dennis Onofrey. He was also charged with 51 related charges resulting from the events at Virden and Oak Lake. His common-law wife, Dorothy Lillian Archer, alias Mallette, was also charged



**S/Sgt. G. E. Ferguson, Brandon Sub-Division NCO.**

with first-degree murder in the death of Cst. Onofrey, along with 40 related charges. After numerous remands, the preliminary hearing began in Brandon, Manitoba, on June 19, 1978. Judge Rodney Mykle of the Provincial Judges Court committed Archer on 35 of the 52 charges and his wife on 26 of the 41 charges. The trial in this case was set over to the Fall Assizes in Brandon. The lengthy legal proceedings began on November 6, 1978, and lasted until December 8, when Chief Justice John Hunt directed the jury to retire and reach a verdict. At noon the next day the jury returned and rendered a verdict of guilty of first-degree murder against both subjects. Both were sentenced to life imprisonment without eligibility for parole for at least 25 years.

The other charges which had been laid were processed through the courts, resulting in concurrent sentences which, in effect, will not increase the length of the sentences. Following the court proceedings, both defence lawyers launched appeals against the convictions of their respective clients. They appeared before the Manitoba Appeal Court in Winnipeg and, following the presentation of their case to the panel of judges, in a matter of 60 sec-