

Alan Thomas Belcher

(1903-1966)

Alan Thomas Belcher, former Deputy Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and past Executive Director of the Arctic Institute of North America (1957-1960), died in Ottawa on 14 October 1966 at the age of 64.

Alan Belcher was 'born into the service' on 8 March 1903 at the Calgary Division H.Q. of the R.C.M.P. where his father, later Deputy Commissioner T. S. Belcher, was stationed as a Sergeant Major. Alan joined the R.C.M.P. at the age of sixteen as a trumpeter, and as soon as his age permitted he followed an interest which was to be lifelong by obtaining a post in the Arctic. He maintained his interest in and close association with that region even after advancing rank precluded further service in the Far North.

A close and intimate knowledge of the R.C.M.P. service in a difficult and demanding environment and outstanding personal qualities combined to produce an officer and individual of exceptional calibre. He was known throughout the Force as a strict disciplinarian, yet he held the respect of all and the affection of most who knew him because he had the gift of understanding the viewpoints of others even though he might not be in agreement. The Arctic is not an easy judge of a man; but Alan Belcher was held in high esteem by Eskimo and Indian and the trappers, traders and others of the white community of the North.

The arduous dog team patrols he carried out while in the Far North were not newsworthy events because they were made routine by his knowledge, care, and thoroughness; he made no mistakes. An incident in his northern service contributed a place-name in Dease Strait when the motor vessel Ptarmigan under his command suffered an engine failure during a storm. As the boat went ashore an Eskimo woman passenger gave birth to a child, and although the vessel

could not be salvaged, the mother and child were. The point of land where this incident occurred is now known as Ptarmigan Point.

The appointment of Alan Belcher as Executive Director of the Arctic Institute in 1957 offered him scope for application of his experience in and knowledge of the region. His gracious manner and even temperament were equally valuable in the development of the Institute as a truly international organization, and his resignation three years later was cause of regret to the membership.

He is survived by his wife, Marjorie, and his son, George, both of whom reside in Ottawa.

Scott Alexander

Anna Magnella Thomas

(1903-1966)

Anna Magnella Thomas, wife of Rear Admiral Charles W. Thomas, USCG (*Ret.*), a Fellow of the Arctic Institute of North America, died at Tripler Army Hospital, Honolulu, Hawaii, 20 October 1966.

Mrs. Thomas was born in Denmark in 1903 and in 1930 became a registered nurse. She served in the Danish Military Nursing Corps until 1938 when she was appointed to the Crown Colony hospital at Ivigtut, Greenland. In addition to Ivigtut patients she also gratuitously attended Greenlanders from the village of Arsuk and U.S. Coast Guard and Naval personnel at the Naval Operating Facility at Grondal. During her eight years in Greenland she became proficient in the Greenlandic language. In 1946 she married Captain Charles W. Thomas, then Commander Greenland Patrol, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. She was commended by the U.S. Navy for services to U.S. Naval and Coast Guard personnel during World War II.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by a daughter, Trina Anne (14) and a sister, Mrs. J. M. Leroy, wife of Commander Leroy, U.S.N. and three sisters and a brother in Denmark.

Published for the Arctic Institute of North America by McGill University Press, Montreal
Copyright Canada 1967 by The Arctic Institute of North America

Indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Printed in Canada