



Nereo Brombal on the beat, circa 1938

Courtesy of Douglas Brombal.



Nereo Brombal (on right) at War Memorial in Windsor, 1930. Courtesy of Douglas Brombal.

Nereo Brombal early 1930s

Courtesy of Douglas Brombal.

Police Constable Nereo Brombal, who was dismissed from the police force in 1940 after twelve years of service. Although he had done nothing wrong, his Italian Heritage was enough to make him suspect during the Second World War.

In 1990 the Police Commission and the City of Windsor apologized to his Douglas, for this and presented him with a plaque commemorating the apology. The plaque is now in the library at the Caboto Club.





DOUGLAS BROMBAL'S father (far left in photo) was fired by police because of his Italian ancestry

Police apologize to Italian fired in 1940 war hysteria

Story and photo by Ian Timmerlake
Star Police Reporter

The only time Douglas Brombal saw his father cry was the day the Windsor Police Force fired him.

After 12 years of service, Const. Nereo Brombal was dismissed in 1940. He had done nothing wrong, but as war hysteria gripped the country his Italian ancestry was enough to make him suspect.

Tuesday night the Windsor Police Commission admitted the decision was a mistake and apologized to Brombal's son Douglas and his granddaughter, Karen Brombal.

John Whiteside, chairman of the commission, presented them with a framed black-and-white photograph of Nereo Brombal. It shows him standing in his police uniform with some colleagues in a snowstorm.

Whiteside also presented a plaque honoring Brombal to Ron Moro, the Italian vice-consul in Windsor.

Moro called the apology "a very forward step" and said

he hopes it encourages other city departments to take similar action.

"It's never too late to apologize and I'm glad somebody finally has," Douglas Brombal said.

Const. Brombal, who died in 1974, was a pseud policeman, he said.

"It was really his life." When the police fired him at age 43, his life changed forever.

While the war continued, he could not get a job, forcing young Douglas to quit school and start working at 14. His father later did a variety of jobs such as plumbing and maintenance.

Last month, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney apologized to Italian-Canadians for the "abusive, unfair and illegal" treatment the community suffered during the war. About 700 Canadians of Italian ancestry were interned without charge.

The plaque in Brombal's honor will be displayed at the Caboto Club for the next several weeks.



July 4, 1940.

To Whom It May Concern: Re: Nereo Brombal.

This is to certify that I have known the above-named for the past 12 years, he being a member of this Department, which he has served faithfully.

The reason that he is not a member of this Department now is on account of him being of Italian birth.

Anything that you can do to assist this man will be appreciated by me.

Yours truly,

C. Renaud,
Chief Constable.

CR/WM



