

Cst. Berry S.G.



BERRY, SCOTT GORDON - CST. Regimental No. 36152

June 29, 1986 - Clandonald, Alberta Age: 27

Scott Berry and Trish Dean met in 1979. He was studying full time at Malaspina College in Nanaimo, British Columbia; she was working for #748 Communication Troop of the Canadian Army Reserve. Scott had always wanted to be a policeman and served for a year with the Nanaimo Auxiliary Police where he won an award for outstanding service. On July 21, 1980, he engaged with the RCMP and was sent to Regina for six months training.

Once he left, he and Trish were forced to continue their romance by long distance for the next two years. After completing his training, Scott was posted to the Vauxhall Detachment near Lethbridge, Alberta for 18 months. Then he was sent to the 12-person detachment at Vermilion, on the Yellowhead Highway (#16), just inside the eastern boundary of Alberta. After he got there, he and Trish were married in 1982. She found employment in Vermilion as a secretary and the young couple settled happily into their life together in small-town Alberta. The next four years were the best years of their lives. Besides his happy home life, Scott built an enviable reputation in the community for being a helpful and considerate police officer. Always a strong athlete, he kept himself fit by playing soccer and badminton and running with his friends. His life was in very good order. It ended all too quickly.

At 4:40 am on June 29, 1986, he was notified of a serious motor vehicle accident three miles south of the village of Clandonald where hydro wires were down and there was a possible electrocution. Cst. Berry arrived at the scene at 5:00 am and found that a pick-up truck had hit a hydro pole and snapped it. A 14,400 volt power line was down on top of the truck and suspended across the highway. Cst. Berry assessed the situation and saw that a young woman had been electrocuted while she was trying to assist the three injured individuals in the pick-up truck. The young woman, Christine Yaceko, was not dead but was badly shocked and lying in a ditch beyond the crashed vehicle. In an attempt to reach her, Cst. Berry went into a low crouch to go under the hydro wire which was stretched waist high across the road. As he went under the wire, he accidentally touched it with his back. The first contact hit him so powerfully that it threw him back against the wire and set off a series of five convulsive electric shocks to his body that left him stunned and barely breathing.

He was rushed by ambulance to the Vermilion Health Centre, but was dead on arrival. His funeral service was held at the United Church in Vermilion. Among the throng of mourners were his young wife and his family from Nanaimo, including his parents, an older brother and sister and his twin brother, Paul. After the service, his body was escorted to his home town of Nanaimo and interred at Cedar Valley Memorial Gardens.