

# **Cst. Shwaykowski D.**



**SHWAYKOWSKI DENNIS M. N. - CST. Regimental No. 25308**

**April 6, 1977 - Red Deer, Alberta Age: 31**

**Cst. Dennis Shwaykowski was killed after being thrown from a moving vehicle while trying to apprehend a suspect armed with a rifle.**

**At 9:50 pm. On Wednesday, April 6, 1977, the RCMP detachment in Red Deer, Alberta received a call that a man with a rifle was about to enter Trapper Dave's dining lounge in Red Deer's Parkland Mall. The manager of Trapper Dave's reported, "There's a guy out here who's loony with a shotgun." Cst. Shwaykowski and Cst. Dave Guy, who were both in plain clothes, responded to the call.**

**When the police got to Trapper Dave's, they were told that the man had left the lounge and was driving around the Mall in his half-ton pick-up truck. The two officers went outside and, when they spotted the truck in the service area, Cst. Shwaykowski waved to the driver to stop. As the constable approached the vehicle with a flashlight, he realized that he knew the driver - a 28 year old named Stanley Ralph Hicks. Cst. Shwaykowski told him to get out of the truck, but the driver refused to comply and an argument followed. As Hicks began to pull away, Shwaykowski jumped up on the running board and grabbed the driver by the shirt. As the truck picked up speed, the policeman struck the driver over the eye with his flashlight. This was followed by more yelling and another blow from the police officer. By now Hicks had increased his speed dramatically and was heading for a landscaped area of trees and boulders in the centre of the Mall parking lot. His speed reached 50 miles per hour. Just as Hicks reached the landscaped area, Cst. Swaykowski was thrown off the truck. The constable flew through the air and struck his head against one of the boulders. Cst. Guy, who had chased after Hick's truck on foot, called for an ambulance, but Cst. Shwaykowski had died instantaneously from the impact.**

**Road blocks were immediately set up around Red Deer to apprehend Stanley Hicks. They didn't prove to be necessary because Hicks had gone into the Summit Esso station a half mile north of the Mall and told someone to call the police. Then he went out and waited in his truck. When the police arrived, they found him sitting there, upset and crying. They also found a 12 gauge shot gun and a .308 calibre rifle on the front seat beside him. Both guns had live rounds in the breach.**

**As the events of the evening were unravelled, it turned out that Hick's girlfriend, Jean von Hollen, had left him three months previously and Hicks had recently threatened to kill her. That night, when Hicks spotted her inside Trapper Dave's with three men, he went home and got his guns. When he came back brandishing a rifle outside the lounge, the manager called the RCMP.**

Hicks was originally charged with first degree murder, but that charge was stayed and he pleaded guilty to criminal negligence causing death. He was found guilty by a jury and received a sentence of three years in the penitentiary.

Cst. Dennis Shwaykowski's funeral was attended by a huge throng of policemen and civilian mourners at Red Deer's Sacred Heart Church. Among them were his wife, Linda and their three children. He lies buried at Birchwood Cemetery in Swan River, Manitoba, some 95 miles north of Dauphin, Manitoba where he had joined the RCMP just ten years before.

Cst. Shwaykowski was the first police officer ever to die in the line of duty in the City of Red Deer. A plaque in his honour adorns the wall of City Hall. Another plaque was raised in his memory at the RCMP Training Academy in Regina