

# **Cst. Varney R.W.**



**VARNEY, ROBERT W. - CST. Regimental No. 25094**  
August 17, 1967 - Raymond, Alberta Age:20

Thursday, August 17, 1967 started out an enjoyable day for young Cst. Robert Varney. At 4:30 pm, he had gone to see his girlfriend, Barbara Hill, and stayed at her place for awhile visiting with her parents. Then he and Barb went out for dinner in Lethbridge. After dinner, Robert drove Barb to a play rehearsal for 8:30 pm and agreed to pick her up when she was finished at 11:00 pm.

Then, to put in time, he went over to the Lethbridge Detachment Office in civilian clothes and asked the officer in charge if there was anything he could do. There was a summons that needed to be served to a man out in Sterling, a small village south of the city. The young constable was happy to oblige, so he took a cruiser and set out for Sterling.

En route at 9:20 pm, he was advised by radio of a motor vehicle accident that had just taken place on Highway #5, also south of Lethbridge. Since it wasn't far from him, Cst. Varney replied that he would check it out. That was the last anyone heard from him.

As the night wore on and the RCMP weren't able to raise Cst. Varney on the radio, they decided to go out looking for him. Eight police cars began a futile all-night search to find the missing constable. His cruiser had simply disappeared. But then, around 5:30 in the morning, a farmer reported the discovery of a badly damaged RCMP car in a grain field north of Raymond, Alberta. The police found Cst. Varney's body in the wreckage.

An investigation determined that there were no witnesses to the accident. It was not known whether Varney was in the process of delivering the summons or responding to the urgency of the accident call. However, it revealed that he had over-shot a T-intersection on a rural road at a very high rate of speed. His cruiser had gone out of control and went airborne off the roadway for a distance of 83 feet. Once it touched down, it bounced another 20 feet in the air before landing upside down. The roof of the cruiser was crushed and had caved in on top of the dead policeman.

Cst. Robert Varney was one of the youngest RCMP ever killed. He had celebrated his twentieth birthday only two days before his fatal accident. He died after less than a year's service with the RCMP.

His mother and father, surrounded by a phalanx of Robert's red-coated comrades, could only watch in sorrowful disbelief as their son was buried in the cemetery of his home town, Courtenay, British Columbia.