

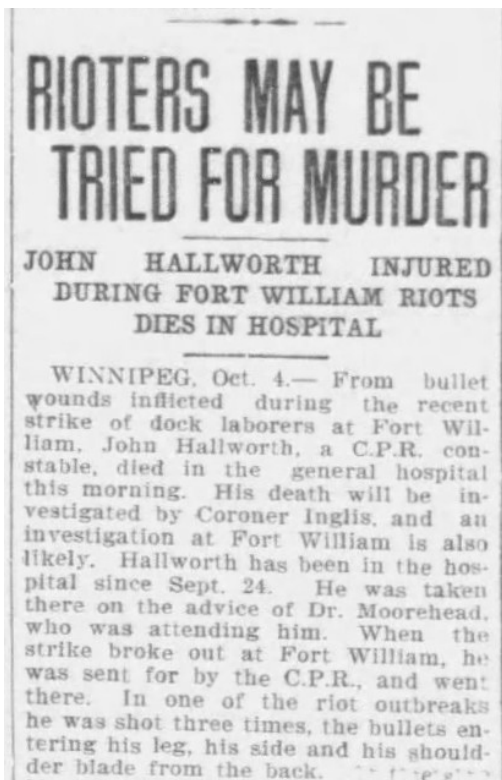
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# JOHN HALLWORTH, CPR RAILWAY CONSTABLE

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Died in the line of duty – October 4, 1909

*Written & researched by John Burchill  
Winnipeg Police Museum, October 4, 2026*



Regina Leader Post, October 4, 1909

One hundred and seventeen years ago today, John Hallworth died in the Winnipeg General Hospital as a result of gunshot wounds he received less than two months earlier in Fort William (now Thunder Bay), Ontario.<sup>1</sup>

John was one of thirty Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) constables sent from Winnipeg to Fort William on August 11, 1909, to respond to freight handlers who had walked off the job without notice two days earlier.

Expecting trouble when the strike broke out,<sup>2</sup> Sgt. Taylor and two constables from the Fort William Police began searching people around the docks. Tom (or George) Androuchos was found in possession of a .45 cal. Colt revolver and arrested. Several shots were fired at the police, but they managed to hang on to Androuchos and bring him before a justice.

Almost 500 strikers marched on City Hall, demanding his release. Perhaps to avoid an armed confrontation, Androuchos was fined \$50 and released.

Past incidents of violence and the fact that shots were fired at the police within a day of the walkout foreshadowed the violence that was to follow.

At about 8:30 am, August 12, 1909, the CPR constables arrived by train from Winnipeg. Their arrival had the effect of “an enraged bull” on strikers, and a large crowd gathered at the intersection of McTavish and McIntyre (now McNaughton) streets for the inevitable “battle” that would follow.

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<sup>1</sup> Thunder Bay was incorporated in 1970, amalgamating the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William.

<sup>2</sup> In October 1906, striking workers surrounded the CPR boarding-house in Fort William and exchanged gunfire with railway police officers. One police officer and several strikers were injured.

The constables eventually headed to docks, followed by strikers who yelled and hollard at them until they reached the boarding house where they would be staying. Not unlike 1906, while the constables were eating lunch, the strikers gathered around in considerable force and, on the emergence of the constables at about 11:00 am, an altercation occurred, which developed quickly into the active use of firearms, with the result that many persons were severely injured. According to a report prepared by the board established under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, eleven constables were wounded and taken to the hospital, and several of the strikers are believed also to have been wounded and taken away by their comrades to be treated by doctors in their homes.

The Aurora (Ontario) Banner reported the following about the shooting:

[CPR] Constable Ball was the first one to make his appearance in the doorway, and he was immediately accosted by a couple of burley strikers and told he would have to remain indoor as well as his men. According to eye witnesses, the constable drew his baton and attempted to hit the striker. Quick as a flash the latter had drawn a revolver and sent a bullet into the Chief's abdomen. Then the fierce battle was on. Rifles and revolvers were brought into play, in every direction, shooting from the corner of houses and from behind cars, the fusillade of the men directed at the police last fully fifteen minutes ... All the windows in the bunkhouse and all the CPR yard buildings were smashed by bullets.<sup>3</sup>

As the strikers were about to storm the bunk house, Fort William's Police Chief, William J. Dodds, Sgt. Taylor and the rest of the city's twelve-man force intervened. With the CPR constables literally pinned down, Chief Dodds and his men maintained an uneasy ceasefire for the afternoon, punctuated by intermittent gunshots. Among the casualties were eight known wounded (four CPR policemen, two bystanders, and two strikers) and an unidentified number of strikers who had been taken away by their comrades.

Those listed in the newspapers as injured included:

Chief Ball, CPR Police  
Sgt. Taylor, Fort William Police  
Cst. Carpenter, CPR Police  
Two other railway constables, slightly wounded (names not mentioned)  
John Lane, Butcher  
C.M. Dickenson, reporter with the Times Journal  
Geo. Androuchos, who had been arrested perious day with the .45 cal. Revolver.

John Hallworth would have been one of the unnamed railway constables injured in the affray. We would later learn he had been hit three times by bullets entering his leg, side and shoulder.

Fort William Mayor L.L. (Louis Lawrence) Peltier rushed to the scene where he read the *Riot Act*. He was accompanied by almost 200 members of the 96<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the senior military officer in the district – Colonel Samuel B. Steele, who had come to Port Arthur / Fort William

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<sup>3</sup> Aurora Banner, August 20, 1909. Similar stories ran in the Manitoba Morning Free Press on August 13, 1909, as well as the Brantford Daily Expositor on August 13, 1909.

from Winnipeg the previous day for the annual inspection of the 96<sup>th</sup> Regiment (which was part of Military District No. 10, based in Winnipeg).<sup>4</sup>



Col. Sam Steele, Manitoba  
Historical Society

Steele deemed it necessary to supplement the local force with a contingent of Royal Canadian Mounted Rifles, regular soldiers from Winnipeg, who arrived by special train the following day (August 13). The presence of soldiers, armed with bayonet-fixed rifles, took the steam out of the strikers and their supporters. The crowd dispersed, and the riot was over.

However, the grievances that led to the strike and its root causes still had to be settled, and a Board established under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act was established on August 18, 1909, chaired by Mr. S.C. Young of Fort William, and Mr. W.T. Rankin of Fort William, and Mr. W.J. Christie of Winnipeg. Within a week the Board released their recommendations.

While the Board placed the majority of the blame on the freight handlers for not seeking conciliation before striking, they did not dismiss the role of the CPR police in triggering the riot.

The Company seems to have followed the customary procedure in this matter, and it has not been seriously suggested that the powers conferred upon them under such conditions by the Provincial law were in any way exceeded; it would seem possible, however, that a less prominent display of force would have been dictated by prudence and might have helped to avert the calamity that followed, and it is at least arguable whether the public interests do not demand such an amendment to the law as would require that the consent of the public officers responsible for the peace of the community should be procured before so large a body of armed men is brought within the limits of the municipality concerned.<sup>5</sup>

The post-riot trials were quickly wrapped up as well. A total of 15 men were arrested by the police, one discharged at preliminary inquiry due to lack of identification. The rest went to trial before Judge McKay on September 2, 1909.

Charles Frank, rioting and unlawful assembly (9 month sentence)  
Tony Limber and John Delarbi, rioting and unlawful assembly (7 months)  
Tony Panapolis and E. Mazrione, unlawful assembly (7 months)

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<sup>4</sup> Samuel Benfield "Sam" Steele (1848-1919) was famed throughout the British Empire for his military exploits with Her Majesty's 17th Regiment during the Fenian Raids, with Colonel Wolseley on the Red River Expedition of 1870, the North-West Mounted Police and Yukon Gold Rush, then as commander of the Lord Strathcona Horse in the Boer War, and later as chief of the South African Constabulary in the Transvaal, and later in World War I. See [https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/steele\\_sb.shtml](https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/steele_sb.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> The Labour Gazette, September 1909, p. 340-349.

S. Bibos, 30 days hard labour.

Tony Botchenski, Wasyl Condogon, George Christie, Mike Tomchuck, Joe Stalmuck, Gus Millis, George Devacos, and James Macropolis were all acquitted.<sup>6</sup>

There was one further entry in the The Labour Gazette, which monthly tracked all workplace related fatalities in Canada – “*Railway Constable, Fort William, October 5, 1909, blood poisoning from gunshot wound.*”<sup>7</sup>



John was operated on for three gunshot wounds at the Fort William Hospital and returned to Winnipeg. However he soon became ill from his injuries and was sent to the Winnipeg General Hospital on September 24, 1909, under the care and advice of Dr. Moorehead.<sup>8</sup>

X-Rays were performed by Dr. Inglis, which confirmed bullet fragments were still lodged in John's body. He underwent surgery to remove the bullet fragments, unfortunately he died from sepsis on October 4, 1909.<sup>9</sup>

John's funeral took place at Thomson's Undertakers on October 6 and he was buried at Brookside Cemetery on October 8, 1909, plot 22-0376.

Dr. Ernest Moorhead, CPR doctor. No one would be charged for his death.  
Manitoba Historical Society

What little we know about John comes from the Winnipeg newspapers – he was 30 years old, born near Stockport, Cheshire, England. He came to Canada six years earlier and had served in the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa during the later part of the Boer War.<sup>10</sup> From this we can deduce that he was born in 1879 and came to Canada in 1903. From the Yeomanry records we find he enlisted in 1901 and was discharged in 1902. His father was Ellis Hallworth, a coal

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<sup>6</sup> The Labour Gazette, October 1909, p. 519.

<sup>7</sup> The Labour Gazette, November 1909, p. 591.

<sup>8</sup> Ernest Samuel Rutherford Moorhead (1876-1957) was a medical doctor, whose office was next to the Canadian Pacific Railway Station. As a result he became the company doctor for the CPR, a position he held for 35 years. <[https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/moorhead\\_e.shtml](https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/moorhead_e.shtml)>.

<sup>9</sup> Sepsis is your body's overwhelming response to an infection. It happens when an infection you already have triggers a serious chain reaction throughout your body. Sepsis may get worse and turn into septic shock. Septic shock is a dangerous drop in blood pressure that can damage the lungs, kidneys, liver and other organs. When the damage is severe, it can lead to death.

<sup>10</sup> The Imperial Yeomanry was a mounted infantry formation of the British Army which served in the Second Boer War. Raised on 2 January 1900, the formation was initially recruited from the British middle class, but subsequent contingents were significantly more working class in their composition. The British Army's existing yeomanry regiments contributed only a small proportion of the total Imperial Yeomanry establishment. The formation was officially disbanded in 1908, with individual Yeomanry regiments incorporated into the new Territorial Force.

miner. Census records show a 24-year old John Hallworth came to Canada in 1903, homesteaded near Humbolt, Saskatchewan, in 1906 and came to Winnipeg in 1907. This is most likely the same person.

Every year we remember the police and peace officers that died in the line of duty in Manitoba. While John was shot in Fort William, Ontario, he died of his injuries in Winnipeg. His name *is* on the National Police Memorial in Ottawa, but on a recent visit to Brookside Cemetery I found there is nothing to mark his resting place, just a bed of grass.

Although John had served in the Imperial Yeomanry, was under the watchful eye of the CPRs doctor, and died in the line of duty from injuries sustained as a CPR police constable, it is unfortunate there is nothing to mark his place.



Arrow marks the location of John Hallworth's burial, Brookside Cemetery, 22-0376-0.  
Situated immediately to the west of Mary Agnes Coburn's headstone, 22-0375-0.  
Both were buried on October 8, 1909. Picture by the author.