



**Officer Donald Hoover** — first Santa Cruz County CHP officer killed in the line of duty — 1934.

## **HIGHWAY TO COMMEMORATE CHP OFFICER**

By Noel Smith

**S**eventy-eight years after CHP Officer Donald Albert Hoover was killed at the age of 31 while on duty riding his motorcycle, a portion of Highway One will be dedicated

in his honor. The actual commemoration will probably take place in September, but an informal ceremony was held in the Rio del Mar home of his 84-year-old son, Richard, who was only 6 years old when his father died.

In an interview last August,

Richard said he remembered being told of his father's untimely death. He is quoted in the Santa Cruz Sentinel as saying, "I remember the news, when they told me he had died in a crash. And I remember the big, beautiful, wonderful funeral that they

gave him. There were several officers there in uniforms with their motorcycles. They said there was a procession out at the grave site that was three-quarters of a mile long, the most ever done at the time."

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CHP Captain Matt Olson said, "When the CHP first started in 1929, all officers rode motorcycles; there were no patrol cars. Until 1944, all CHP officers were required to be trained motorcycle riders. It really is an honor to be able to reach back into the past to honor one of our own."

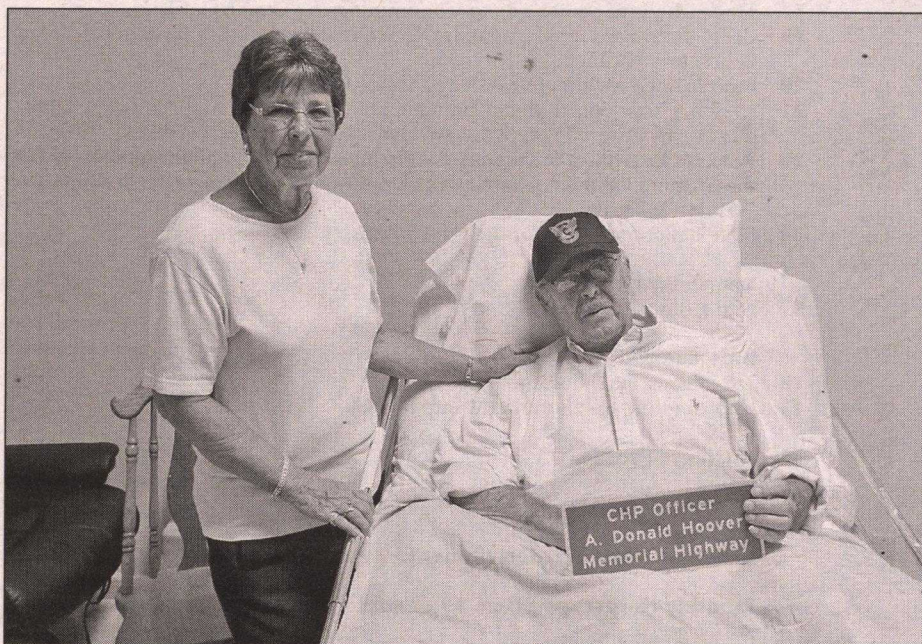


**Captain Matt Olson**

According to Richard's wife, Jean, that event didn't discourage the family from being motorcycle enthusiasts. "Richard and I took many rides throughout the west on our Gold Wing. We loved the people we would ride with and meet on our adventures."

Unfortunately 84-year-old Richard is dying of brain cancer. He was aware of the ceremony but has lost the power of speech. When the CHP found out his situation, Olson and CHP Public Information Officer, Sarah Jackson wanted to make sure that Richard could take part, so they put together this event presenting Richard with a plaque honoring his father.

Richard's daughter Donna Edwards was also there from St. Joseph Missouri to



**Jean and Richard Hoover receive a plaque representing the dedication that will be made in his father's honor in September.**

help take care of her father, and he is also being cared for by Hospice of Santa Cruz County.

The death of CHP Officer Donald Hoover was the first of three CHP officers killed on duty in Santa Cruz County and one of the 222 officers who have given their lives in the service of the citizens of

California since 1929.

The site of Donald's death in 1934 is what was known at the time as "Slaughterhouse Curve" at the intersection of Commercial Way and Soquel Drive near General Feed & Seed. The section of Highway 1 that is to carry his name will be nearby. ■