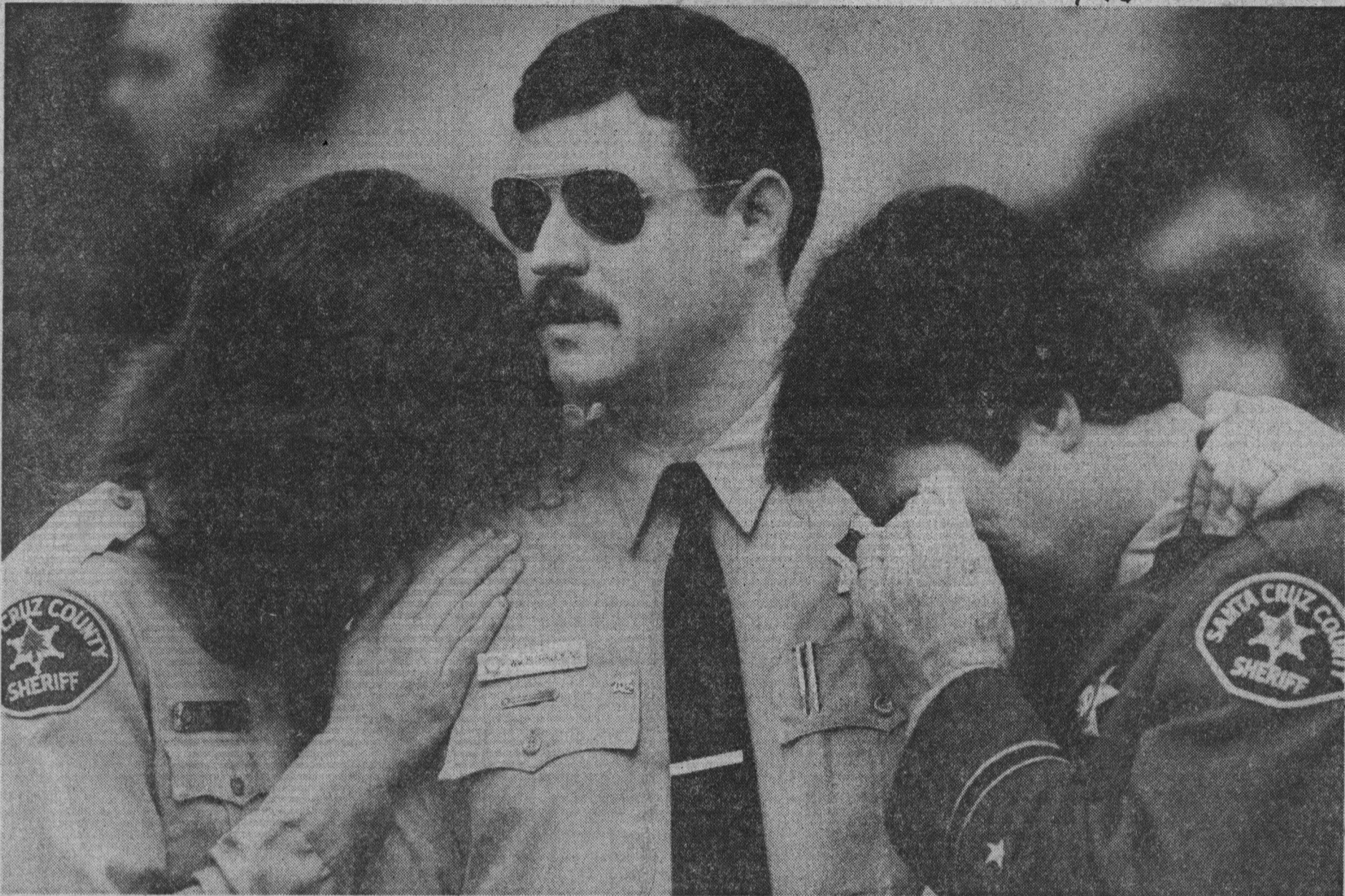


# Tearful tribute

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Examiner/Kim Komenich

Santa Cruz County sheriff's officer William Brookings comforts fellow officers Patricia Brookings (his wife) and Tom Gilbertson at the funeral in Felton yesterday of Deputy Michael Gray, 40. They were among more

than 500 police officers who came to pay tribute to Gray, who died Thursday without regaining consciousness after being shot Jan. 3 by a loner who lived off the land in the Santa Cruz mountains. St. John's

Catholic Church, where a Mass of Christian Burial was said for Gray, is just a hundred yards from where the seven-year police veteran was shot, and only two blocks from his home. Story/Page A6.

## Officers honor slain comrade

By Ivan Sharpe  
Examiner staff writer

FELTON — The people of this small village in the Santa Cruz hills watched in awe yesterday as hundreds of police cars filled the main street.

They came from San Bernardino, El Dorado and Humboldt counties and tiny cities all over California.

More than 500 police officers came to pay tribute to a slain comrade, Santa Cruz County sheriff's deputy Michael Gray, 40, who died Thursday without regaining consciousness after being shot Jan. 3 by a mentally deranged loner who lived off the land in the Santa Cruz mountains.

"I've lived here since 1945 and I'm quite sure this is the largest gathering I've ever seen here," said Neil Monahan, 67-year-old retired Oakland firefighter.

"The turnout's fantastic. What else can you say?" said a Santa Cruz sheriff's captain.

St. John's Catholic Church, where a Mass of Christian Burial was said for Gray yesterday, is just a hundred yards from where the seven-year police veteran was critically wounded, and only two blocks from his home.

The unpretentious white church was filled with 600 people. About 250 — including 120 officers — stood silently outside listening to the service over a loudspeaker. Even the air was still, and chimney smoke drifted up through the trees on the hillside.

Gray's oak coffin, draped with the American flag, lay before a flower-filled altar. Beside the wreaths was a display of "get well" notes written by children of DeLaveaga Elementary School, a reminder of Gray's 10-day struggle to live after he was shot.

It was a poignant reminder also of Gray's last words, spoken to his father, Bob Gray, a retired banker and Felton fire commissioner. He was the first person to reach his son after the shooting. "I'm just not going to die," Gray told his father, before lapsing into unconsciousness.

The slain officer's brother, Jim Gray, 41, a National Forest

Service ranger who lives in Oregon, gave the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, while his wife, Deanna, his 6-year-old son, Bobby, and other members of his family listened tearfully.

Father Mike Marini, pastor of Aptos Resurrection Church, eulogized his cousin. The six priests at the service included St. John's pastor, the Rev. John Kennedy, and the Rev. Jim Burdick of Castroville, a classmate of Gray's brother.

"This has been overwhelming for the family, which is a very close-knit one," Burdick said. "The family is very proud of Michael."

After the funeral procession left for Felton Cemetery, the assembled officers stood silently for 10 minutes as the local fire siren wailed.

Later, the hundreds of police vehicles drove off in a giant motorcade with emergency lights flashing.

Said Santa Cruz sheriff's Lt. Don Lovejoy, "When an officer is shot for totally senseless reasons, there's bound to be an outpouring of feeling."

Highway Patrol officer Jeff Lee, 24, who was shot when he came to Gray's aid, was released from the hospital last week. The man accused of the attacks, a 44-year-old recluse named Leslie Grover Wyman, killed himself in the woods after the shootings.