

The Pueblo Chieftain

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Fallen Pueblo Police Officer laid to rest



CHIEFTAIN PHOTOS/CHRIS McLEAN The casket of Pueblo police officer Nick Heine is escorted by fellow officers and his younger brother, Jason (center), from the Praise Assembly of God Church following services Thursday.



Pat Heine thanks all the people who have offered condolences on the death of her son during funeral services for him Thursday at Praise Assembly of God Church.



The young daughter of fallen officer Nick Heine, Rebecca, looks up at her mother during funeral services for him Thursday.

**By NICK BONHAM
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN**

Law officers from across the state gave a last salute and friends said their goodbyes to Pueblo police officer Nicholas Heine who was laid to rest today in grand fashion.

A crowd estimated at 850 family, friends, officers from around the state, community leaders and citizens who the 30-year-old cop somehow affected on the job attended Heine's funeral.

"We were not ready for him to go, but we are so thankful, Heavenly Father, to be blessed with Nick's presence and influence in our lives," Police Chief Jim Billings said in prayer. Billings, who also is an ordained minister, officiated the service held at Praise Assembly of God Church in Belmont.

Heine died on duty early Saturday of a congenital heart defect that had gone undetected. He and other officers were running between bar disturbances Downtown when he collapsed.

Fellow officers and rescue units tried to revive him, but the seven-year department veteran died at Parkview Medical Center. It was the first time an officer in Pueblo has died in the line of duty in nearly 35 years.

Pueblo gave a fine farewell to one of its finest.

An estimated 200 police cars, motorcycle units, fire trucks, ambulances and other rescue equipment with flashing overhead lights paraded through Pueblo to Roselawn Cemetery in Blende.

The procession stretched for miles. The route was dotted with onlookers, some who displayed American flags, some who wiped tears from their eyes.

From Belmont the procession snaked through town and past police headquarters on Main Street, where an American flag waved from the extended ladders of two fire trucks.

Citizens and officers lined both sides of the arch and saluted or covered their heart as Heine's hearse

and the motorcade rolled through.

At the cemetery, American flags were presented to Heine's mother and co-worker, Detective Pat Heine; and Nick Heine's widow, Melissa, and their daughters, Nichole, 7, and Rebecca, 4.

With the presentation of the flags, Billings told the two women: "This is presented on behalf of the men and women of the Pueblo Police Department and a grateful community in honor of Nick."

Officers stood at attention for the bag pipe rendition of "Amazing Grace," a 21-gun salute and the playing of "Taps."

Then came the final call.

"Unit Three 22 is 10-42," a police dispatcher said over an intercom.

A graveyard officer, Heine's call sign was Unit 322. The code "10-42" signals when an officer finishes their shift or has finished their tour of duty.