

Procession of tears

Mourners gathered along the route to Resurrection Cemetery to pay homage to a fallen officer. The procession was six miles long

By **DANNY ADLER**
STAFF WRITER

Mournful bagpipes pierced the bitter cold as hundreds bid farewell to Middletown police Officer Chris Jones at Bensalem's Resurrection Cemetery Thursday afternoon.

Hundreds of police, firefighters and rescue workers joined Jones' family and friends at Resurrection for the fourth burial in 14 months an officer killed in the line of duty. The procession from the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia to Jones' final resting place stretched about six miles from the intersection of Street and Hulmeville roads to Interstate 95's Academy Road exit, police said.

Jones was killed Jan. 29 during a routine traffic stop on the Route 1 Superhighway.

As hundreds of cop cars traveled Hulmeville Road toward the cemetery, their lights a glistening sea of red and blue as far as the eye could see, dozens of bundledup community members gathered along the road. They clutched American flags, saluting the passing officer in silent awe of the impressive procession.

Motorcyclists from the Warriors Watch Riders and Patriot Guard Riders parked sparkling bikes along the route.

Michael DuBois, a Bensalem man who lives across the street from the cemetery, said police funerals are becoming all too familiar.

"We've taken a beating this year," DuBois said. "A typical traffic stop and the guy gets killed. It's absurd."

"The Lord always takes the good ones young," he said.

Bristol Township resident Lorraine Muzychko had known Jones for the last year. He was working on a theft case involving the Ann Taylor store she co-manages. Muzychko was devastated when she came home from work Jan. 29 only to turn on the TV and learn of Jones' tragic death.

"He was an amazing man," she said. "He was so unbelievably compassionate. The most unbelievable police officer I ever met in my life. ... He didn't deserve this. He was in the line of duty. He was doing his job."

Jeri Pregler of Bensalem sat on a curb across from the cemetery gates holding an American flag with a black ribbon tied to it. She said the flag was part of a welcome-home gift given to her husband, an Army National Guard helicopter pilot who recently returned home from Kuwait. She put the black ribbon on there to remind her that not everyone's so lucky.

"Not all the heroes come home," said Pregler, who wanted to show her support for the Jones family and local police.

"I feel like the officers are in danger every day," she said.

Edee Jackson from Bensalem, attending her second of the recent police officer burials at Resurrection, said the Middletown officer's death hits close to home.

"It's just a very sad day. From what I understand, he was just a very nice guy," said Jackson, standing by trucks from Cornwells and Nottingham fire companies, with their ladders soaring into the air, hoisting a large American flag over Hulmeville Road.

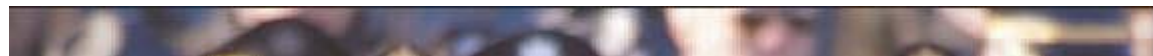
Trucks from Langhorne-Middletown and Pennel fire companies held another flag above the cemetery gates.

Up the street at Bensalem High School, a sign read: "Our thoughts are with the family and friends of Officer Christopher Jones, B.H.S class of 1989."

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Carleen Brennan of Pennel, who is a friend of Officer Chris Jones and his wife, Suzanne, watches as the hearse passes by in front of Resurrection Cemetery in Bensalem. STEVE GENGLER / **STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**





Middletown Township detectives Greg Kneiss (above left) and Dale Keddie (above right) attend the graveside service for fallen Middletown police Officer Chris Jones on Thursday. Police (left) from Bensalem and Lower Merion Township arrive at Resurrection Cemetery. BILL FRASER / **STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**





A Cherry Hill, N.J., police officer attends Thursday's graveside service. BILL FRASER / **STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**