



Deputy was hometown kind of guy

By Richard W. Jaeger
Regional reporter

LIVINGSTON — Tom Reuter was a hometown boy who never strayed far from his roots.

He was born in nearby Platteville 38 years ago. He died shortly before midnight Sunday three miles from home, doing what friends say he always wanted to do — carrying out his duties as a deputy sheriff for Grant County.

It was a violent death, in contrast to the way Reuter lived his life as the father of five children, ages 6 to 15. He was gunned down by the blast of a 12-gauge shotgun, allegedly fired by a young farmhand he had stopped to help.

He joined the Grant County Sheriff's Department in 1982 as a part-time deputy and worked in Livingston as its police officer. He became a full-time deputy three years later.

Before taking up the badge and gun, Reuter struggled at farming and then was a technician for Tri-State Breeders.

Friends say Reuter, a Platteville High School graduate, always had a liking for law enforcement, and when the opportunity knocked, he took it, even though it meant working the 4 p.m.-to-midnight shift.

The shift worked out for Reuter and his wife, Dianne, and helped in the raising of their five children. Tom worked nights and Dianne worked days; they were able share in caring for their children.

"I think that is the horror of this whole thing. This senseless killing leaves a widow and five children," said Peggy Biddick, a longtime rural Livingston resident. "That is at the heart of all I have heard today from the women I have talked to. Why?" she asked.

Pastor Harold Zimmick of the Livingston Methodist Church where the Reuter children attended Sunday School and Bible Camp, asked the same question.

"It is hard to understand and explain to a family and to young children who ask that," the minister said.

Teachers and counselors at Livingston Elementary and Iowa-Grant High School spent most of the day Monday trying to lessen the grief for classmates of the Reuter children.

Sheriff's deputies were attempting to establish a formal fund drive for the family and were accepting donations through the sheriff's department.

Tom Reuter

LIVINGSTON, Wis. — Tom Reuter, 38, of Livingston, a Grant County sheriff's deputy, died of a gunshot wound early Monday morning, March 19, 1990, in rural Livingston.

Services will be at 1 p.m. Thursday at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Platteville, with burial in Rock Church Cemetery, Livingston. Friends may call from 2 to 9 p.m. Wednesday at Soman Funeral Home, Montfort.

Mr. Reuter was a Grant County deputy sheriff since 1985. Prior to that he farmed and was a technician at Tri-State Breeders, both in Grant County.

He was born on April 17, 1951, in Platteville, son of LaVerne and Frances (Sherwin) Reuter. He married Diane Allen on July 7, 1973, in Platteville; she survives.

He graduated from Platteville High School in 1969.

Surviving are a daughter, Sherry Reuter, and four sons, Dan, Doug, Tim and Andy Reuter, all at home; his parents; and two sisters, Mrs. Jack (Kay) Maisa, of Port St. Lucie, Fla., and Mrs. Shirley Mayo of West Bend, Wis.

A Tom Reuter Memorial Fund has been established.



Reuter

Tom Reuter

Grant County Deputy Sheriff Tom Reuter, 38, Livingston, died Monday, March 19, 1990, in the line of duty.

Deputy Reuter was born in Platteville April 17, 1951, son of LaVerne and Frances Sherwin Reuter. He was a farmer and technician for Tri-State Breeders before becoming a deputy sheriff in 1985.

He married Diane Allen, Montfort, in Platteville July 7, 1972.

He is survived by his wife, Diane; his parents, LaVerne and Frances, rural Platteville; two sisters, Kay (Mrs. Jack) Maisa, Port St. Lucie, Fla., and Mrs. Shirley Mayo, West Bend; one daughter, Sherry, at home; and four sons, Dan, Doug, Tim and Andy, all at home. He was preceded in death by his sister, Sherry Ingersoll, in 1980.

Services will be held at St. Mary Catholic Church, Platteville today at 1 p.m. Burial will be in Rock Church Cemetery, Livingston. Soman Funeral Home, Montfort, is in charge of arrangements.

A Tom Reuter Memorial Fund has been established. Donations may be made in care of Livingston State Bank, Livingston, WI 53554.

Wisconsin State
Journal
3-20-90

Telegraph: Herald
3-21-90

'Dedicated,' 'sincere' deputy mourned by law enforcement

by Steve Prestegard

The shooting death of Grant County Deputy Sheriff Tom Reuter late Sunday night has left county law enforcement officials in a state of shock and mourning.

"I don't know if there is a description for the way deputies feel, said Grant County Chief Deputy Lloyd Runde Monday morning.

Runde's eyes reddened and his voice choked as he talked about Reuter, a five-year veteran of the department who was shot to death on New California Road in Clifton late Sunday night. Reportedly, Reuter was on his way home at the end of his shift when he stopped for a tractor stopped in the road.

Gregory A. Coulthard, 18, Livingston, is being charged with first-degree intentional homicide in connection with the incident (see related story).

Reuter, who is believed to be the first Grant County law enforcement official killed in the line of duty, leaves a wife and five children. His death left those at the Sheriff's Department and others in law enforcement searching for answers to questions of why the incident occurred.

Sheriff's deputies, Lancaster police officers and Wisconsin State Patrol troopers all wore black strips of cloth over their badges in memory of Reuter. The flag at the Grant County Courthouse was lowered to half-staff Monday and Tuesday, and a moment of silence was observed at the Grant County Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday morning.

Reuter, who lived in Livingston, was described by other county law enforcement officials as a family man and dedicated to his profession. He had worked in farming and for Tri-State Breeders before becoming a full-time deputy in 1985.

Lancaster Police Chief Rodger Janssen described Reuter as "dedicated" and "sincere" and added, "You didn't have to talk to him very long before he'd be talking about his family and his kids."

Runde described Reuter as an "ex-



Deputy Tom Reuter

"Everybody has an image that it only happens in the cities. This brings it to light that it can happen anytime, anywhere."

—Rodger Janssen

cellent" deputy, adding that law enforcement was "one of his ambitions. He started here as a part-time officer, and wanted to get into full-time because he was interested in the profession."

continued on page 2A

Deputy Reuter remembered —continued from page 1A

Lancaster Police Chief Rodger Janssen described Reuter as "dedicated" and "sincere" and added, "You didn't have to talk to him very long before he'd be talking about his family and his kids."

Runde described Reuter as an "excellent" deputy, adding that law enforcement was "one of his ambitions. He started here as a part-time officer, and wanted to get into full-time because he was interested in the profession."

"Everybody has an image that it only happens

in the cities," Janssen said. "This brings it to light that it can happen anytime, anywhere."

A debriefing and counseling session for those involved in the search after Reuter's shooting was held Tuesday night.

Reuter, 38, was a native of Platteville. He is survived by his wife, Diane, five children—Dan and Doug, both 15; Tim, 13; Sherry, 10; and Andrew, 6—and his parents, LaVerne and Frances Reuter, of rural Platteville.

Reuter's funeral will be held at St. Mary Catholic Church in Platteville today at 1 p.m. He will be buried in the Rock Church Cemetery in the town of Clifton. More than 100 local law-enforcement officers are expected to attend the funeral.

A memorial fund has been established at Livingston State Bank. Contributions can be sent to Livingston State Bank, P.O. Box 96, Livingston, WI 53554.

Slain Deputy Remembered As Loyal To Family And Community

Minutes before Grant County sheriff's deputy Tom Reuter was scheduled to go off duty Sunday night at midnight, he was shot and killed on a rural road about two miles south of Livingston.

Reuter, 38, radioed to the sheriff's dispatcher that he was stopping "to assist a motorist" at 11:30 p.m. When he failed to report back or answer his radio, Deputy Robert Bloyer was sent to the scene where he found Reuter dead of a gunshot wound.

This was reported as the first case of a sheriff's deputy being killed in the line of duty in at least 30 years.

Reuter was about three miles from home when the incident occurred.

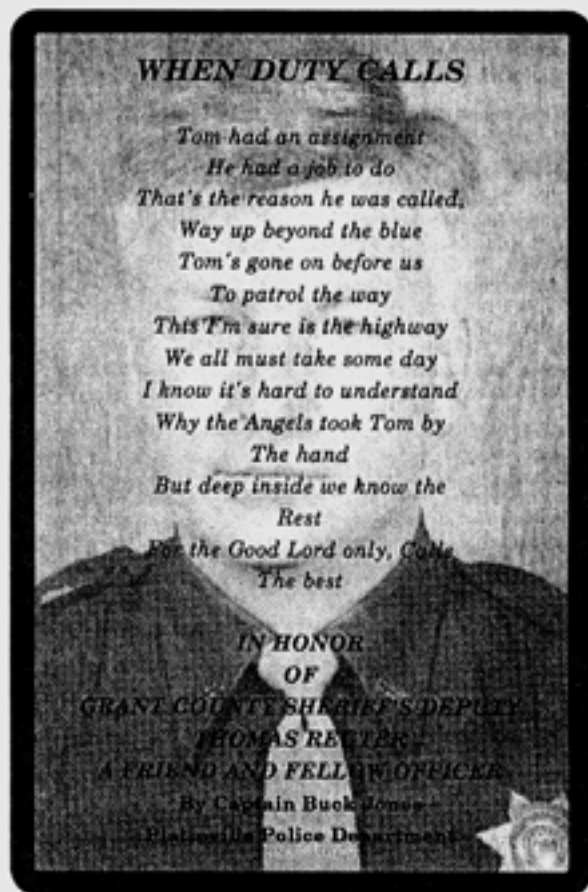
Reuter, a Platteville native, grew up in rural Platteville on his parents' farm. The son of LaVerne and Frances Reuter attended Platteville High School where he graduated in 1969. He farmed with his parents for a time and then took a job as a technician for Tri-State Breeders.

When the opportunity arose, he joined the Grant County sheriff's department, initially on a part-time basis and, since 1985, full-time. He worked the 4 p.m. to midnight shift.

Dick Papenthien of Platteville, a sheriff's deputy who worked with Reuter, recalled, "Tom was a quiet, capable sort of person. He was sincere about his job, he spent a lot of time with his family and I'd also see him at trap shooting events."

Reuter's family consisted of his wife, Diane, a former obstetrics nurse at Southwest Health Center who recently was promoted to a clinical director position. Their children are Dan and Doug, both 15, Tim, 13, Sherry, 10, and Andy, six.

Rev. Harold Zimmick, the family's pastor at Livingston



United Methodist Church, commented, "Tom was a real family man and was involved with his kids. I remember shuddering in the cold fall winds next to him on the stands at football games. He hunted and fished with the three older boys and he attended church activities with his family such as Bible School programs in which the children took part."

The minister added, "Tom loved his community of Living-

ston and would often speak about it. I appreciated that, to me as his pastor, he was a real and genuine person."

The largest church in the area, St. Mary's of Platteville, will be the site of the funeral service today at 1 p.m. Rev. Zimmick will be the principal celebrant of the ecumenical service with Fr. Mike Doro, pastor, and Fr. Arnold Reuter, an uncle, also taking part.

Platteville Journal
3-22-90



Slain deputy like brother to co-worker

By **PAT MOORE**
Of the Tribune staff

LANCASTER, Wis. — Nothing in Chief Deputy Lloyd Runde's 32 years in law enforcement had prepared him for Monday. In the history of the Grant County Sheriff's Department, no deputy has ever been killed in the line of duty.

All of that changed Sunday night. Thomas Reuter, 38, was shot to death on a town road about a half-hour before his shift would have ended. He was shot and left by the side of the road after trying to help an 18-year-old on a stalled tractor.



Reuter

Gregory "Goober" Coulthard, 18, Cuba City, is the suspect in the case. Monday afternoon, in a small conference room in the Grant County Law Enforcement Building, it was the soft-spoken, 55-year-old Runde's job to meet with the media. It was his job to answer questions about the slaying of his friend and co-worker.

Runde, looking tired and worn, paused occasionally, his eyes moistening as he talked about his friend or the sequence of events the night before. "It's been quite traumatic around here today," he said.

People often remarked on the physical resemblance between Runde and Reuter. But there was more than that. "I guess you might say our relationship was like a father and son one ... but I think Tom would've said it was more like brothers.

"Before he started working here, he and I sat down and talked about different things. We had the same general feelings in a lot of areas," Runde said Tuesday morning during a brief phone interview.

See **SLAIN**, back page

La Crosse Tribune

3-20-90

the media. It was his job to answer about the slaying of his friend and

La Crosse Tribune

3-20-90

■ Slain deputy mourned

Continued from front page

All day Monday the job of handling interviews by individual reporters fell to Runde.

Why not Sheriff Herbert Hottenstein?

Asked about that, Runde would only speculate. The sheriff was exhausted. "He'd known Tom Reuter probably longer than I did. Tom's parents live within a mile of where the sheriff lives. They're actually neighbors," he said quietly.

Reuter's death hit home and it hit home hard.

Runde said it had been erroneous when the media had initially been told that Reuter stopped a man on a tractor for a routine traffic check. "Actually he stopped to assist the man on the tractor," Runde said.

That was on New California Road, a town road just two miles from Livingston, a small community of 696 which is 18 miles from Lancaster and where Reuter, his wife, Diane, and their five children live.

"For 10 minutes we had no contact. The dispatcher checked back and could not get a response," he added. Another car, working 10 or 12 miles from the area, was dispatched. Reuter's body was found 20 minutes later by the side of the road.

A massive search began. Runde said lawmen from Crawford, Iowa, Richland, Dane, Sauk and Lafayette, Iowa, counties set up road blocks searching for the killer. "Probably 50 to 60 men," Runde added.

"Eventually we located some footprints in the snow. There were snow squalls in the area," he said. Police dogs from Dane County and Spring Green were used, and Coulthard was found in a barn five miles south of the scene, shortly after 4 a.m.

Runde described Reuter, the father of four boys and a girl, as a well-respected family man, active with his church, who liked hunting and fishing and looked forward to spending time off with his family. Some of his spare time was also spent cheering on his two oldest sons, 15-year-old twins, Dan and Doug, who are involved in athletics at school. Daughter Sherry is 10. Then there's Tim, 13, and Andrew, 6.

Being a deputy, he said, was Reuter's life. "We had talked about this before he went full-time in 1985," Runde said. Dealing with traffic fatalities, he said, was the toughest part of the job for Reuter.

Few new details in fatal shooting

Grant County Sheriff's Department officials released few new details Monday on the shooting death of deputy Tom Reuter.

Reuter died Sunday night after being shot once in the chest by a "deer type slug" from a 12-gauge shotgun, Grant County Coroner Donovan Nelson said. Reuter was shot at "close range, less than 10 feet," according to Nelson.

Gregory "Gooper" Coulthard, 18, Cuba City, was arrested in connection with the shooting following a search involving 70 law officers.

Coulthard, who is being held in the Richland County jail in Richland Center, was expected to appear in Grant County Circuit Court today.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Platteville. Visitation will be from 2-9 p.m. Wednesday at Soman Funeral Home in Montfort.

Eighteen miles from Lancaster, in the small community of Livingston, home to Tom and Diane Reuter and their five children, Clinton Warne, 76, took time out from his afternoon walk to talk about the incident.

"Do I know the Reuters? Sure I do. They just live three blocks up. I've known Tom ever since he married Merl Allen's girl. Tom was a swell guy. He was a stock inseminator — I think he worked for Tri-State Breeders at Westby before he got a deputy sheriff's job. I've lived here all of my life and this is the kind of town where everybody knows everybody else. People here feel awful bad. Awful bad. We don't know why it had to happen here.

"Course it happens someplace in the United States every day, I suppose. In Chicago they don't pay any attention to it. Let's just say it was a real bad night in Livingston. It's a sad day for Livingston. It sure as heck is."

Deputy Reuter remembered

Recently during the high winds [on March 15], my brother was involved in a tractor-trailer accident in Grant County on Wisconsin 81 south of the U.S. 61 intersection. We are all very thankful Mark made it through what was obviously a most terrifying experience.

Unfortunately, what saddened my brother and all of us here was the fact that deputy Tom Reuter was the officer who took care of my brother's acci-

dent. He told my brother if he hadn't done what he did, he'd be in the morgue right now. Tom felt Mark had handled the situation well.

My brother said he was the nicest man and was very helpful. He was nice to talk to and Mark really liked him. Our family extends our deepest sympathy to the Reuter family.

No words can express our thanks to Tom for being there for Mark.

Esther Weis
Menomonee Falls

4-5-90

Herald Independent

Love Story

Tom and Diane Reuter were college sweethearts; they met in chemistry class at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 1969.

"He used to give me a ride back to my dorm," Diane said. "We were friends first, then sweethearts."

The couple was engaged for two years while Diane went to nursing school at Madison General Hospital and were married on July 7, 1973, at the Platteville United Methodist Church.

"Married life for us centered around our kids," Diane said. "We went hunting and fishing and camping together."

Bow hunting was something they enjoyed in recent years, Diane said. They belonged to the Stitzer Sportsman Club and Tri County Archers.

Tom, who grew up on a dairy and hog farm in rural Platteville, enjoyed hunting as his chief entertainment.

In the early years of the couple's marriage, trap shooting was a favorite activity. "We kind of gave it up after we had three kids," Diane said.

The couple moved to Livingston in 1975 when twin sons Doug and Dan were a few months old.

Tom became interested in law enforcement while he worked part time as a Livingston police officer. He went to night school at Southwest Technical College, Fennimore, to qualify for law enforcement, Diane said.

Diane said her husband was opposed to gun control and hoped the media would not use her husband's death as an issue for gun control legislation.

"He was concerned about the person behind the gun," Diane said.

Tom loved guns and taught gun safety courses at Iowa-Grant High School.

Always safety-conscious, Tom also taught bicycle safety classes and made it a point to sit in school zones in Montfort and Livingston, Diane said.

A Grant County Deputy Sheriff for about five years, Tom was killed in the line of duty shortly before midnight on Sunday, March 18, a few minutes before he was to go off duty and join his family—wife, Diane, twin sons Doug and Dan, 15; Tim, 13; Sherry, 10; and Andrew age 6.



Tom Reuter's last birthday, pictured with Andrew and Sherry.



A 1988 family picture in Livingston.



*"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who
made heaven and earth."*

Psalm 124: 8



Tom Reuter at age six.

Thomas L. Reuter

Thomas "Tom" Reuter was born on April 17, 1951 in Platteville, Wisconsin, the son of LaVerne and Frances (Sherwin) Reuter. He and his three sisters: Mrs. Shirley Mayo of West Bend, WI; Mrs. Jack "Kay" Maisa of Port Saint Lucie, FL; and Mrs. Sherry Ingersoll - deceased in 1980; grew up on a farm in rural Platteville.

Tom graduated from Platteville High School in 1969. He had an avid love of trap shooting and traveled extensively to participate in shoots.

On July 7, 1973 Tom married Diane Allen in Platteville. Tom and Diane were blessed with five wonderful children: Dan, Doug, Tim, Sherry and Andy.

Tom lived for his family. He and Diane have planned their entire lives around their children. They have hunted together, enjoyed trips, worked, played and loved together. Tom was a devoted husband and dad and made the most of each day with them.



Tom joined the Grant County Sheriff's Department in 1985. He had worked diligently over the last five years to earn the respect, trust and comradery of his fellow officers.

Tom's warm and friendly manner will be missed by the

I remember one of the first occasions I met Tom Reuter. I was running radar near Livingston when he called me on the radio to meet with him. This was when he was chief of Livingston. We met in town, squad cars side by side. I remember him congratulating me on getting the deputy sheriff's job, and complimenting me on what a good job I was doing. Being a scared rookie was one thing, but being the first female road officer in the history of the department, I was more than a little bit insecure. But Tom's easy-going charm and sincerity made me feel at ease right away.

Very seldom do I meet someone I like instantly, I guess I'm a little on the suspicious side, but Tom was someone who grew on me right away. I've never known anyone so sincere. He would look you right in the eye and you knew what he was saying was coming straight from his heart. I guess that's why talking to him was such a joy--we could easily while away hours discussing just about anything. Just a month ago I stopped by the house to pick up a radar set--which should have taken all of five minutes. He was busy making supper for the family, but took time out to talk shop, politics, family, etc. Almost an hour later I wanted to talk more, but I figured it was time to go back to work!

After Tom joined the sheriff's department, you might say we "grew up" together on the midnight shift. With Vernon Stanfley, we named ourselves the "A Team," learning the ropes, getting the job done and having a lot of fun in the process. And above all, come hell or high water, we were always there for each other.

We took our job seriously, but Tom's sense of fun often took the edge off things. Along with dispatcher Ron Knutson, the four of us could fill quiet midnight shifts with dry-humoured radio banter. Occasionally we would gang up on Vernon, but I also enjoyed giving "Little Tommy" a hard time. I remember one time he accidentally drove his squad car into a small ditch and had to have a friend pull him out. He thought I was on the other end of the county and was ignorant of his situation. I can still see the look on his face when I pulled up with camera in hand and started snapping pictures. Fortunately he didn't strangle me. On another occasion he was turning around on a sideroad and managed to get a rear wheel off the ground and couldn't move. He called me on the radio to see if I could help him somehow. I arrived and we tried everything--sitting on the trunk to add weight, rocking it, etc. Adding to the embarrassment was the fact that we were near a main highway and scores of people were watching the spectacle. To add insult to injury, once again I dug out my camera and captured the moment on film. Some people might have been angry, but Tom took it all in stride, as he always did.

Then there was the time he and his rider, Dan Watson, showed up for breakfast in Boscobel wearing oversized "clown" glasses, or when he taped Dan snoring during a particularly slow night.

In addition to his sense of humour, Tom had other attributes which endeared him to us all. One of them was his devotion to his family. I can say in all truthfulness, he was the most dedicated family man I have ever known. Although he liked to socialize, if one of his kids had an event at school, birthday, or other special occasion, we couldn't make

him venture out with us no matter how hard we tried. There was never a doubt that Tom's family always came first in his life. As a husband he had to be equally devoted. We would kid him about doing laundry, cleaning and cooking meals in his crock pot, but secretly I admired him for giving so much of himself and relieving the burdens of his wife Diane.

Also so appealing were his humility--his gentleness and certain sense of vulnerability. The man was a prize--emotionally, intellectually, physically. He was someone we all wanted to be like and had a hard time measuring up to. But just try to give him a compliment--you could count on his shrugging it off, or actually getting quite embarrassed about the whole thing. His only counter was generally to commend you on something you had accomplished.

I always liked the way he seemed to be looking over my shoulder--telling me to hang back; wait for backup when I was in a questionable situation. Or when I drank too much at Intoxilyzer school and he made me stay at his house, talking to me and feeding me soda until he felt it was safe for me to drive home.

As a friend and as a co-worker, he was most definitely someone you could count on. Just a week or so ago I discussed that with him . . . how if I were ever in trouble I knew he would be there, and if he were ever in trouble I would be there for him. He told me that that was something that could be left unsaid--after all the years we had worked together it was something neither of us had to verbalize. I get the feeling most of his fellow officers felt this way about him.

In my own mind, I know that Little Tommy is in heaven now. And I hope for his sake, they have hunting there, and volleyball, and pizza, and Andy Griffith reruns.

I love you Tommy and I'll miss you always.