

Man killed by police after chase

Lower Lake-to-Geyserville pursuit ends when man waves gun at CHP officer, deputy

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By GEORGE LAUER
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A Sonoma County sheriff's deputy and a California Highway Patrol officer shot and killed a man who drew a handgun at the end of a car chase through three counties, authorities said Saturday.

The man drove through a CHP sobriety checkpoint in Lake County late Friday, then led officers into Napa County and finally Sonoma County before the chase ended near Geyserville.

He got out of the vehicle, started to run and pulled a handgun before the pursuing officers opened fire, investigators said.

The 35-year-old man, whose name and hometown were withheld pending notification of his family, was declared dead at the scene.

Investigators declined to say if he shot at the officers or how many times he was hit.

The shooting occurred at about 11:30 p.m. Friday, 90 minutes after authorities said the man drove his Jeep through a sobriety checkpoint on Highway 29 near

Lower Lake.

After leading officers on a pursuit south through Napa County and west into Sonoma County, his tires were flattened by a spike strip laid across Highway 128 east of Chalk Hill Road.

The chase continued at slow speeds into Geyserville before the Jeep pulled into an unmarked lane off Geyserville Avenue, police said.

When the man left his vehicle and ran, Sonoma County Deputy Sheriff Henri Boustany and CHP Officer John Daly chased him on foot.

Daly and Boustany both fired when the man pulled a handgun, Santa Rosa Police Sgt. Gary Negri said.

Santa Rosa police are leading the investigation into the shooting under an agreement among local law enforcement agencies for outside review of officer-involved shootings.

Petaluma police and the district attorney are assisting in the investigation.

Investigators remained on the scene for more than 12 hours, interviewing witnesses and gathering evidence. But few details were made public Saturday.

"We're being pretty tight with our information until we've had a chance to investigate and talk to everyone involved," Negri said.

Although CHP and the Sheriff's Department referred all questions about the incident to the Santa Rosa Police Department, Sonoma County Sheriff Bill Cogbill said Saturday it appeared that the officers responded appropriately.

"While we are in the very early stages of the investigation and a tremendous amount of work still needs to be done," he said, "it appears that our deputy and the CHP officer responded to an armed subject who posed an immediate threat to their safety."

CHP spokesmen, including one 20-year veteran in the area, couldn't remember a CHP officer being involved in a fatal shooting in the North Bay.

The last CHP officer-involved shooting in Sonoma County was in 2001 when two officers opened fire on a car-theft suspect who allegedly tried to run them over.

The driver, who was wounded in the arm, was later convicted of assault on an officer and sentenced to 17 years in state prison. The shooting was justified, according to the district attorney.

The last shooting involving a sheriff's deputy was in Windsor, where the Sheriff's Department provides police services. It occurred two years ago when a fleeing suspect was shot and wounded when he gestured as if he had a gun.

The last fatal shooting also was in Windsor, four years ago when two deputies investigating a report of an armed burglar shot a woman in her home. Investigators determined that the woman was mentally troubled and set herself up to be shot in a "suicide by cop."

Boustany has been a Sheriff's Department employee for seven years and a deputy for four years.

Daly, who is assigned to the CHP office in Rohnert Park, has been a CHP officer for two years.

Both officers were placed on paid administrative leave pending completion of the investigation, Negri said.



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