
When It Mattered Most

Remembering Our Fallen Medical Personnel in Iraq-Afghanistan

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in Iraq-Afghanistan**

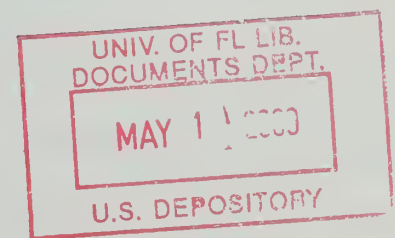
The proud tradition of caring for wounded American fighting forces goes back to the founding of our nation. Advances in medical knowledge, equipment, training, and evolving military doctrine do not change one thing: there must be medical personnel ready to care for their fallen comrades. From Yorktown to Gettysburg, at Belleau Wood and Midway, in the freezing Korean winters and the sweltering jungles of Vietnam, our military medical personnel have been on the battlefield to save their buddies. While often we focus on the elaborate technologies, the dramatic helicopter rescues, or the new medicines, it is the people that make every single thing happen. Today's military medical personnel in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world are upholding that long, proud tradition of caring and sacrifice for their fellow comrades in arms, risking and even losing their own lives. This book is their story.

(continued on back flap)

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Remembering Our Fallen Medical Personnel in Iraq-Afghanistan

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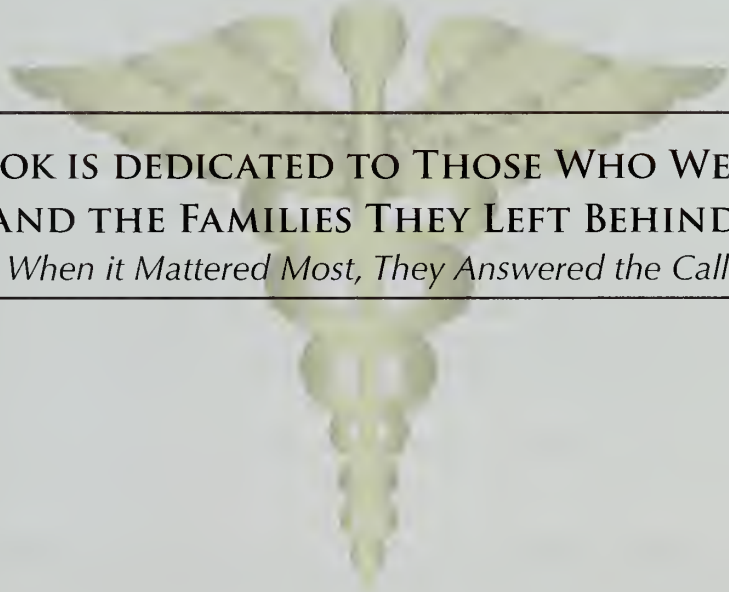
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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO WE'VE LOST
AND THE FAMILIES THEY LEFT BEHIND.

When it Mattered Most, They Answered the Call

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FOREWORD

“WHEN IT MATTERED MOST”



This is a book about a special group of Americans. The official term for what they do is front-line trauma care—which means their office is a battlefield; their job is to save others’ lives while risking their own. The medical personnel profiled in this book all paid the ultimate price in the performance of their duty. They have left behind devoted family members and friends who mourn, and a nation that will forever honor their deeds and memories.

These fallen heroes were part of a profession requiring skill, compassion, and the kind of fortitude to be simultaneously a warrior and a healer. Their calling is all the more difficult on an unconventional battlefield against an enemy that targets civilians and does not recognize or obey the laws of war. Since September 11, 2001, the medical personnel of the U.S. military have met this challenge selflessly and courageously.

Amid the tragedies of war, these are some of the most poignant contemporary accounts to reach the American public: a warrant officer coming under attack to rescue an Iraqi child; a sergeant drawing fire to allow his team to escape; a corpsman racing into a battle to treat a wounded Marine; and many more.

When It Mattered Most gives us 219 of these stories of sacrifice. Underlying all the accounts is something Americans need to know: that altruism in war is not only possible, but a daily reality for the brave men and women of military medicine.

Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense

PREFACE

“CORPSMAN UP!” “MEDIC!”



These are cries that few have ever heard, the calls that ring out when a Soldier, Marine, Sailor, or Airman is hit.

Fewer still can know the split-second decisions these brave young men and women must make: do they leave their protected position and scramble to the side of the casualty with rucksack, weapons, and other gear, or do they wait until the shelling or small-arms fire diminishes? How much time does that casualty have? How big of a risk is it to the medic and the casualty to scramble that 50 or so yards and carry him back, knowing full well that the enemy has little regard for the red cross on the sleeve? Some 30,000 times, our medics and corpsmen have faced that decision in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past six years—whether to stand when others are diving for cover. For 219 of them, it was the last decision they made.

I first met the medics training to be “91 whiskeys” seven years ago at Fort Sam Houston with Dr. James H. “Red” Duke, MD, one of the great Army trauma surgeons and a hero to Army medics, Navy corpsmen, civilian EMTs, and paramedics. The formation of medics greeted him with one of the loudest “Hooahs” I’ve ever heard.

We toured the simulation training center and found the screams, explosions, smoke, squirting “blood,” shouted orders, and general chaos to be at least as unnerving as anything we had seen in our emergency rooms.

I saw them again at Fort Sam Houston when I took the officer basic course in 2005. I was awakened at 5 a.m. by some sort of chanting, and looked out the window to see hundreds and hundreds of medics running behind their battle flag “Good medicine, bad places.”

I made it a point to meet them and to learn more about the kinds of people who would, at age 18 or 19, choose one of the highest risk military occupational specialties. I learned that their training is much more advanced than was the case even a decade ago. Today’s medics are trained to the level

of EMT-Basic, but also receive special training in tactical combat casualty care. Consequently, they have particular expertise in control of hemorrhage (bleeding), and some of these lessons are now making their way back to the civilian sector. These include the early use of the combat application tourniquet; bandages impregnated with chemicals such as chitosan, kaolin, or smectite to reduce bleeding; advanced airway skills such as surgical cricothyrotomy; and use of the combitube and in some cases endotracheal intubation. They also learn—in addition to the combat life-saver skills that all Soldiers learn today—needle-chest decompression and the use of the marrow cavity of the sternum (breast plate) for access when intravenous lines cannot be placed.

Our medics and corpsmen also have particular expertise in evacuation and care en route; in medical response to burns and biological, chemical, and radiological-nuclear threats; and, in general, to both natural and man-made disasters. The Air Force deserves credit as well for their forward-leaning programs relating to influenza surveillance and suicide prevention. They have also recently taken the initiative to “right-size” their hospital



infrastructure, creating a more streamlined and organized system for their medical personnel.

In addition to a wide variety of emergency room skills such as triage, injections, and vital signs, medics and corpsmen are trained in advanced cardiac life support and in basic “sick call” primary care. In actual practice, many of these experienced medics have done even more, such as placing chest tubes.

Medics and corpsmen have also played critical roles in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, such as in Peru and Bangladesh, the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, and the Pakistan earthquake.

Of particular importance has been their role in medical civic assistance in Afghanistan and Iraq, which has persuaded many Iraqis and Afghans of the good intentions of the Coalition forces.

“Where do we get such men and women?”

The examples of heroism are too numerous to list in any one book, but we in the Military Health System are proud that when the services recognized the service members of the year at the USO World Gala on October 2, 2008, Navy Petty Officer Third Class Joshua E. Simson, a hospital corpsman, was the USO Sailor of the Year. He earned it by administering medical aid to 17 U.S. and Afghan National Army Soldiers when their patrol was ambushed. The Soldier of the Year was Army Specialist Monica L. Brown of Texas, who became the second woman since World War II to earn the Silver Star. The medic was attached to the 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment in Afghanistan when her convoy was ambushed. Braving intense small-arms fire and mortar rounds, she treated five injured Soldiers and used her body to shield against enemy fire for 45 minutes while awaiting medical evacuation.

Staff Sergeant Matt Simms, a three-time Purple Heart recipient in Iraq, re-enlisted on January 14 to do even more. His last injury involved taking an AK-47 round in the helmet, causing a fracture of the third vertebra in his neck, and a fracture to his right hip as he fell into the turret of the tank, requiring yet another month’s hospitalization. One might wonder why he calls himself a “lucky SOB,” and that is because (as he says), “I am alive

today because of the great medical professionals in the Military Health System."

Another factor in his decision to reenlist was an incident that took place near Baghdad in October 2005 during the Iraqi national elections. His unit was tasked with providing security for one of the voting sites. There was a great turnout and a long line. After about four hours, Staff Sergeant Simms was summoned to the voting area to treat an Iraqi woman giving birth.

"I assisted her as well as I could, considering the situation. After about five minutes, we had ourselves a healthy, newborn baby boy. The woman had been waiting in line for three hours to vote for the first time in her life, and, after an hour, resumed her place in line to vote."

The third reason someone like this signs up again may be the impact they have every single day. When we wrote about Sergeant Simms on www.health.mil, the tributes poured in by the dozens. One reader wrote that "Staff Sergeant Simms is one of the best NCOs I've ever seen—he always has a smile and is the most humble person. Go by the clinic and shake his hand; I bet you'll have a better day just by talking to him." Another wrote in, "He is the kind of person that can make patients feel better when they are sick just by the way he talks to you."

"No greater love hath any man than this then to lay down his life for his friends."

One of the tougher things our medics have had to face is using their weapons to protect their victims, and then treating the enemy that they have shot. How do you make the decision to take a life in order to save a life? Unfortunately, some of our medics and corpsmen take this so to heart that it haunts them, and I have spoken with too many who have struggled with post-traumatic-stress-disorder due at least, in part, to these difficult decisions.

In this book you will read about medics like Specialist Nicholas K. Rogers and Specialist Douglas L. Tinsley; medics who have never hesitated to treat the enemy, much less their coalition allies.

Sergeant John T. Stone set up medical clinics near the forward operating bases to treat local civilians, and is credited with saving hundreds of



Afghan lives. Sergeant Tyler D. Prewitt was the only medic at the scene of an improvised explosive device (IED) explosion in Baqubah, Iraq, on September 28, 2004. He is credited with calmly instructing other fighters how to treat all the wounded, until he himself lost consciousness and died.

Specialist Joseph Gilmore, a combat medic, was on patrol in Iraq in 2007 when an Iraqi man came running up to his patrol carrying a small child who had been struck by a bullet through the right temple, which lodged in her neck. Even though she was blue and her eyes were clouded over, "Doc Gilmore" was able to save her. Private First Class Gabriel J. Figueroa was handing out candy and toys to Iraqi children when he was shot, only a few days after treating a young Iraqi girl's burns.

The decisions the medics, docs, and nurses on the battlefield have to make every day are a triumph of the human spirit. I experienced this myself when I had an elbow injury from an exciting humvee ride in Baghdad's red zone in October 2006.

The elbow got infected and needed to be drained at Baghdad's 10th Combat Support Hospital (known to Iraqis as Ibn Sina Hospital). While I was having my elbow drained and some antibiotics dripped into a vein, a nurse announced the imminent arrival of a couple of Black Hawk helicopters with Iraqi IED casualties. She announced she would need every available bed in the emergency room and also asked everyone who had not given blood lately to please do so. At that time, there was no Iraqi blood donation and collection, and all the transfusions for Iraqis—both allies and enemies—were donated by Coalition service members.



The nurse left and returned a few minutes later and barked at the major who was draining my elbow, "Didn't you hear me say that I need every available stretcher? That colonel's not sick. Treat him in the hall."

I was proud that the American Army nurse showed no favoritism with regard to rank or nationality, but triaged scarce resources strictly on the basis of medical need.



The standards that our medics and corpsmen set for themselves are standards of competency and courage that are hard to live up to. Doctors, nurses, and those in the infantry must all wonder, "Could I? Would I?"

This book is especially dedicated to our fallen medics and corpsmen, and to the handful of physicians and nurses who likewise have been lost, like Colonel Brian Allgood, the combatant surgeon for the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I). A West Point graduate and Ranger-turned-surgeon, whose spotless record as a military medical leader had taken him from the operating room to the fast track for general, Dr. Allgood died on January 20, 2007, with 11 other Soldiers, when their helicopter was shot down over Taji, Iraq. He was the fourth American colonel and the highest-ranking doctor to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried on October 12, 2007, at Arlington National Cemetery with the 11 other Soldiers who also died in the crash.

Specialist Benyahim B. Yahudah, even as he lay dying of a suicide bombing in Baghdad on July 13, 2005, spent his last minutes bandaging one of the children injured in the same explosion.

About half of our medics and corpsmen were married, and about half had children. In some cases, such as those of Sergeant David H. Stevens, Sergeant First Class William M. Bennett, and Chief Petty Officer Matthew J. Bourgeois, they were the only children of parents now left alone.

It is important for the families of our fallen to know everything about their benefits, which is why I would like to invite all the families of those in this book to go to www.TRICARE.mil, www.health.mil, www.nationalresource-directory.org, or www.militaryonesource.com and use the customizable beneficiary profile tool to ensure that you are receiving all you are entitled to for your sacrifice. The biographies in this book include many heroes, but so do the homes these heroes left behind.

One of the themes that repeats itself in some of these biographies is that of personal growth or redemption. Like that of Corporal Angelo J. Vaccaro and Petty Officer Third Class David A. Cedergren, who both went into the military because they “knew going into the military would straighten [them] out.” Sergeant David S. Stelmat, Jr., had been discharged for arguing with a superior in Afghanistan but was able to rejoin and served with courage and distinction in Iraq. Specialist Russell H. Nahvi, a 24-year-old combat medic with the Third Infantry Division, wrote, “I pray one day I can make the world proud of me. I hope I can restore an unknown peace to war-torn nations.” His sister said of him, “He grew in the military,” and when asked by family members how much it would take for him to reconsider his decision to join the Army, he simply replied, “Millions, it would take millions.”

The medics and corpsmen come from all parts of the United States, and a few are naturalized citizens born overseas. They have diverse backgrounds: Private First Class Roman Walter had been a Mormon missionary; Sergeant First Class Gerard M. Reed was an ordained minister; Sergeant Roy A. Wood was in fact a Major and a physician with board certification in emergency medicine, but the 47-year-old wanted so much to serve where he could be more useful that he resigned his commission and enlisted to serve as a medic. Sergeant First Class Nathan L. Winder was abandoned at birth, and adopted at age two by a family with eight adopted children, many of whom had special needs. Two of his siblings also served in the military, and as his mother, Terry Winder, said, “All were positive about their contributions in Iraq, feeling that the press had not represented the good things that happened there.” Mrs. Winder said that Nathan felt like they were making a difference. Staff Sergeant Darren Hubbell, was said by many to be the best medic they ever worked with, so much so that his example led his son to enlist. At the time of Staff Sergeant Hubbell’s death, during his third tour in Iraq, his 19-year-old son, Darren Jr., was also serving in Iraq.



Many of the medics and corpsmen enlisted to make a difference. As Specialist Jeffrey A. Williams would say to his friend Sergeant Adrian Taylor before every mission, “Taylor, it’s time to go save the world.”

Petty Officer Third Class Jeffrey L. Wiener was a paramedic in New York City when the terrorists struck the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. He lost many friends and colleagues in those attacks, which drove him to enlist in the Navy to be a corpsman.

These stories stress the bonds that formed between the medics and their Soldiers or Marines; a bond that is persistently referred to as brotherhood, and indeed as love.

As a medic, Mark Edgington said of his friend, Corporal Albert Bitton, who was killed February 20, 2008, in Baghdad, “I loved him with all my heart and I’ll miss him forever. He was my buddy, a fellow medic, and most of all a wonderful person.”

Hospital Corpsman Mark A. Retmier, who was treating local civilians when ambushed by the Taliban in northern Afghanistan, on June 18, 2008, will never be forgotten by Hospital Corpsman Third Class Tucker, who wrote, "I truly feel like I lost my brother. I know Marc will love to know he will live forever in ink on my body."

Sergeant First Class Patricia L. Jameson, who was ambushed as her ambulance approached to aid wounded Marines in Iraq on July 14, 2005, will never be forgotten by her fellow medic Rachel Blake, who gave the name "Jameson" to her daughter.

Needless to say, these brief biographies contain poignant expressions of the love of the medic's or corpsman's spouse. Hannah, the wife of Private First Class Joshua R. Anderson, who died of an IED explosion on January 2, 2008, in Kamasia, Iraq, described their last telephone call: "He said he loved me and I said I loved him and those were our last words." Hospital Corpsman Matthew G. Conte in his last phone call to his father, concluded the call with, "I love you."

How families can possibly deal with the loss of young heroes, at such an early stage in life, is incomprehensible. It is clear that the packed funeral services, and even parades and facilities named after some of these heroes, are not lost on the families. As the father of Staff Sergeant Justin R. Whiting said, "Our pride is deeper than our grief at this point."

Petty Officer Third Class Lee H. Deal's mother, who had received Mother's Day flowers from him a week before he died, said, "Lee's years in the military were the happiest, most fulfilling years of his life. He had found his purpose."

Laura Youngblood, who lost her husband Petty Officer Third Class Travis L. Youngblood, from wounds received in Hit, Iraq, from an IED while tending Marines of the 2nd Marine Division, says that her son Hunter, tells people, "Daddy is a hero and an angel." She says her son talks to him when nobody is around, and he tells her, "Daddy says we're going to be okay."

Sergeant Lee D. Todacheene was the first Navajo to be killed in the Iraq war. His wife, Jackie, wrote, "Though his smile is gone forever and his hand I cannot touch, I have so many memories of the one I loved so much. His memory is my keepsake with which I'll never part. God has him in his keeping. I have him in my heart."



Specialist Daniel E. Gomez died in a small-arms-fire attack in Iraq on July 18, 2007. A week before, he had written to his family, "... If I ever go to war Dad, I know that you'll be strong. But you won't have to worry because you've taught me right from wrong. You kept me firmly on the ground, yet still taught me how to fly. Your son is a soldier now, Dad. I love you. Hooah, even if I die ... and when I go to heaven and see that pearly gate, I'll gladly decline entrance and stand my post and wait. 'I'm sorry sir, I can't come in. I'm sort of in a bind. You see I'm still a soldier sir; I can't leave them behind'."

Almost a century ago today, as the world faced its greatest war, President Woodrow Wilson suggested that the mothers of fallen Soldiers be honored by a gold star on the window. He also made Mother's Day a national holiday. It had been suggested decades earlier by Julia Ward Howe, whose "Battle Hymn of the Republic" inspired Abraham Lincoln and Union Soldiers

during our deadliest conflict. Then, as today, homesick, anxious, but resolute Soldiers wrote loving and inspiring letters and even songs (like “Just Before the Battle, Mother”) to their families.

In our Civil War, hundreds of thousands died for the freedom of others, leaving widows then, as today, to raise families. Somehow, many of them overcame the odds against them.

In fact, it is remarkable how many great Americans have overcome the loss of their father in infancy or childhood, such as Generals Andrew Jackson, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Montgomery Meigs, Russ Zajtchuk, and Wesley Clark, as well as 10 of 43 presidents: Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, Jackson, Hayes, Andrew Johnson, Garfield, Cleveland, Hoover, and Clinton.

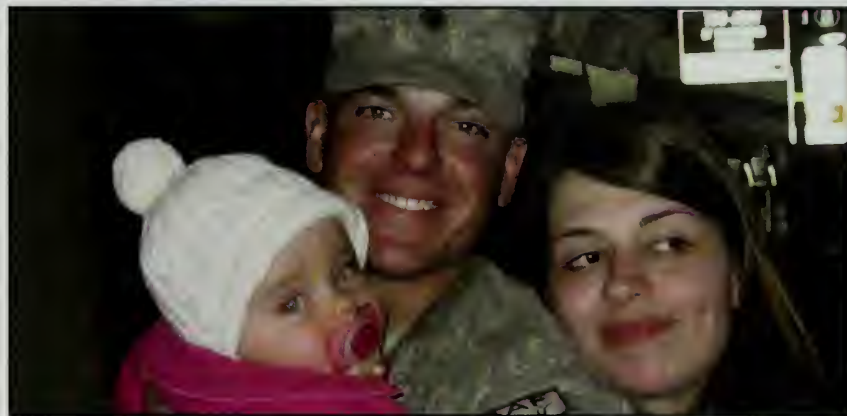
George Washington wrote, “I attribute my success in life to the moral, intellectual, and physical education which I received from my mother.” Andrew Jackson’s father died when he was born, and his mother when he was a boy. When asked how he rose from a dirt-floor cabin to the presidency, Jackson credited his mother: “She was as gentle as a dove and brave as a lioness. The memory of my mother and her teachings were, after all, the only capital I had in life, and on that capital I have made my way.”

How then can children possibly manage after losing their mother? Abe Lincoln, never close to his father, lost his mother at age nine. His step-mother, Sarah Johnston Lincoln, somehow helped him learn to read and write, though she could do neither. Years later, he wrote: “All that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my angel mother.”

The care of the families of our fallen medics and corpsmen, especially the mothers and wives who are so often the ones who soldier on, is our privilege. And honoring those who were—as the Navy hymn says of the greatest of healers, “strong to save”—is duty, made solemn by the recognition that we could not save them.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory, and may the Lord watch over their families.

S. Ward Casscells, MD
Assistant Secretary of Defense
Health Affairs



INTRODUCTION

As one of many authors chosen to write testimonials, I hesitated when I was asked to research and write for this commemorative volume about military medical members who lost their lives in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. I wasn't sure I could sufficiently honor such deserving heroes and their grieving families, who had sacrificed so profoundly and borne the unbearable loss of a loved one taken too soon. Can anyone be equal to such a task? Now, having delved into the lives and deaths of numerous Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen, I can only say that I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to try to honor them.

The men and women portrayed in the pages of this book lend credence to the axiom that with diversity comes strength. They came from all walks of life and a wide variety of socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. They ranged from the very young to the late middle-aged. The fallen medical personnel were born and raised in all corners of our nation. Some came from the cities of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Some hailed from the rural South. Others enlisted from the heartlands of the Midwest or the majestic Rocky Mountain region. Many were from the West Coast. A few came from other parts of the world to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces in hopes of achieving citizenship. Any of them could have been our next-door neighbor, but none of them could be called ordinary. Without exception, they distinguished themselves with great courage in the face of extraordinary danger and hardship.

Among the volunteer Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen commemorated in this anthology are many stories of patriotism and numerous acts of uncommon valor and altruism. For example, there was Army medic Specialist Bill McMillan, a former Virginia Military Institute student who received the Bronze Star just two months before his death for treating insurgents in Sadr City outside Baghdad. Or Sergeant First Class Peter Tycz, an elite Green Beret who held fast to his code of duty, honor, and country. Before this Army medic perished in the crash of an MC-130 aircraft in Afghanistan, he wrote to his family, "Know this: I do what I do not just because I like it, but to ensure that all of my family are safe from whatever treads on

us!" Then there was Navy SEAL and corpsman Petty Officer Third Class Christopher Anderson, who won the Navy Achievement Medal before he arrived at boot camp. Although he was a Sailor, a Marine in his unit called him "the most squared-away Marine" in their battalion. Another star performer, Captain Maria Ortiz, was such a respected Army nurse that her colleagues in the 28th Combat Support Hospital called her "the jewel of the clinic." She died in a mortar attack in Baghdad. Petty Officer Third Class Manuel Ruiz was serving his second tour as a Navy corpsman assigned to a helicopter team when he was killed in a chopper crash in Iraq. Totally committed to the mission, he had asked to return to Iraq because "he wanted to help people, and he knew he was making a difference." Another patriot, Army Airborne medic Sergeant First Class Benjamin Sebban, saw a truck filled with explosives heading toward his team of paratroopers and ran into the open to warn them. Incurring fatal wounds, he devoted his last minutes on earth to treating his buddies. He had volunteered to deploy to Iraq as a replacement for another soldier whose wife was having a baby. Navy Hospital Corpsman Dustin Burnett answered a special inner calling to serve his country and preserve his nation's freedoms. As a 14-year-old boy, he told his parish priest that he wanted to serve in the armed forces of his country. He died from wounds incurred when the vehicle he was a passenger in detonated an improvised explosive device. Philippine native and Army medic Specialist Lester Roque—like many other first-generation Americans—regularly sent money home to help his family. He died instantly when direct enemy fire hit his patrol in Aranus, Afghanistan. During a firefight in Afghanistan, Army combat medic Corporal Angelo Vaccaro heroically attempted to treat and retrieve his wounded fellow Soldiers. He reached the most seriously wounded victim, shielded him with his own body, returned suppressive fire to the enemy, and dragged the wounded trooper to a secure area. As he raced to recover another casualty, he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. As a tribute to his sacrifice and devotion to duty, the headquarters building of the Warrior Transition Brigade at Walter Reed Army Medical Center was named Vaccaro Hall. The remarkable integrity and nobility of purpose of the men and women memorialized in this volume represent an ideal for all to emulate.

As we worked on this privileged assignment, numerous challenges emerged. For the most part, we did not collect primary source information from family members and associates, out of respect for their mourning and because of time limitations. Instead, Archivist Debbie Gerlock gathered the background information from the World Wide Web and other secondary sources, and disseminated the information to the team of writers. The writers wrote individual testimonials highlighting salient facets of the fallen military medical members' stories. For the most part, the writers worked independently and were not in touch with each other. Thus, each writer coped alone with his or her personal responses to the extremely moving accounts of American lives lost on the field of battle for the defense of freedom. The writers gained special insight into families touched by the loss of fallen warriors. It is hoped that the testimonials gathered in this collection reflect the profound reverence and respect we feel for the grieving families, friends, and other survivors.

Another challenge had to do with maintaining a balance between objective analysis and recognition of the heroic service and sacrifices made by an amazing group of medical service members. True objectivity was impossible to achieve in this project and would in any case be incompatible with the purpose and tone of the book. Thus, the writers erred on the side of applauding the fallen medical warrior's virtues.

A third challenge was the dearth of readily available and factual information on which to base the testimonials. Privacy issues precluded researching official military records, and sensitivity concerns militated against making direct contact with the deceased's relatives and friends. For much of our information, we relied upon online media reports. All of these Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen deserve a full and accurate accounting of their legacy. Although we did our best, we know that our efforts were hampered in some cases by a lack of sufficient information.

But these challenges paled when we looked through the prism of the service and sacrifice of these heroes. All volunteered. None were pressed into service, and each and every one gave his or her fullest measure. Such voluntary, complete sacrifice merits the highest level of respect and recognition, and the unstinting appreciation of a grateful nation.

The following accolade was written in admiration of Army National Guard nurse Lieutenant Colonel Richard Berrettini. A makeshift bomb hit this nurse practitioner's Humvee when he was returning from a clinic he had set up and staffed for Afghan villagers in the Khowst Province. He later died at Brooke Army Medical Center.

One of the most respected members of any combat team is the medic. His is the first name heard when the bullets are flying, the grenades are exploding, and all hell is being unleashed around the soldiers. He dresses the wounds, comforts the wounded, and holds the hands of the dying. His soldiers know that he will put their well-being above his own, and for this reason alone they defend him with their own lives. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Berrettini was just such a medic.

This poignant tribute applies to all the fallen military health care providers honored in this book.

Stand down, you Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen. Your work here is finished.

Mary T. Sarnecky, RN, NP, DNSc
Colonel, Army Nurse Corps (ret.)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Today's military medical personnel are exceptionally well-trained and dedicated professionals who share the lethal dangers of the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan with those they serve. Whether from the U.S. Army, Navy, or Air Force, the medical officers and enlisted medical personnel are always with their fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen to treat their routine illnesses and to bind their wounds. They bring their life-saving skills and the latest medical technologies to the farthest forward American troops, allies, civilians, and even injured enemies. Backed by modern medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) helicopters, swift medical evacuation airlift, and a sophisticated worldwide network of modern hospitals, they have played a major role in markedly improving the survival rates for seriously wounded, ill, and injured personnel. In fulfilling their selfless duties, these medical heroes have often fallen in combat or suffered debilitating wounds. Their sacrifices and successes reflect a long and proud tradition in the U.S. armed forces that stretches back to the earliest days of the American Revolution (1775-1783).

The War of Independence

The bloody clash between colonial American militias and British regulars at Lexington and Concord near Boston, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775, spurred the Continental Congress to establish the Continental Army under General George Washington on June 14. The numerous American casualties suffered at the Battle of Breed's (Bunker) Hill, including General (Dr) Joseph Warren, just five days later prompted Washington to ask Congress in Philadelphia to create a military medical organization to care for his wounded, ill and injured Soldiers. On July 27 the Congress authorized a hospital department for the Army, thus establishing the predecessor of the current U.S. Army Medical Department.

The American colonists based their own organizations, procedures, and medical and surgical treatments on European and British military and medical practices. Like their British counterparts, American regular and militia regiments had surgeons and surgeon's mates to care for the officers

and men in camp and on the battlefield. These men filled many jobs—physician, surgeon, nurse, and apothecary. Regiments had their own crude hospitals, establishing a tradition that would last until World War I. Army general hospitals cared for seriously ill or wounded soldiers in hopes of returning these valuable, trained men to service. From 1775 until World War I, when wartime battle deaths first exceeded those from disease, the medical personnel who served in these hospitals probably faced as much danger of dying from the diseases of men they were nursing as the patients themselves.

George Washington clearly understood the basic responsibility of the military commander to care for the health of his troops. He knew from his own earlier military experiences that disease was as much his enemy as the British. That he understood the importance of this fact was shown in his courageous decision—based on preliminary medical evidence—to inoculate his entire Army against smallpox in 1777-78. This bold action maintained the Army's fighting strength not only against the British but also against a deadly contagious disease that was potentially more dangerous to American independence than British muskets and cannons. In so doing, he also established another significant tradition of American military medicine—the mandatory immunization of all personnel to protect them against diseases that would debilitate the Army's fighting strength. Over the years since then, this fight against disease, now formalized as force health protection, has been at least as important as efforts to save lives of the wounded on the battlefield.

Facing a vigorous British naval blockade of American ports, the Continental Congress approved the creation of a Navy for the united colonies in October 1775 and then established a Marine Corps to provide onboard fire support in November 1775. These ships contained the U.S. Navy's first sick bays, where surgeons and surgeon's mates of the Continental Navy ministered to the Sailors and Marines who were wounded, ill, or injured in vicious ship-to-ship combat with the Royal Navy. With this, the Navy established its own tradition of the ship's surgeon and medical care for all but the smallest ships in the fleet. Thus, before the new nation even declared its independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776, both naval and

ground medical surgeons were serving the most urgent needs of American Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines.

With American independence won in 1783, the new government's focus shifted from the Army and Navy that had won that victory. But even though a permanent U.S. Navy did not exist until 1798, the need for shipboard and onshore care for Sailors and Marines had been established. The U.S. Army and its medical force suffered through periods of virtual nonexistence from 1783 until the War of 1812. The American military performances in the War of 1812 (1812-15) and later in the War of Mexico (1846-48) were at times totally inept while at other times well-organized and effective. During these years both services established permanent medical organizations to oversee medical and surgical care—the Army Medical Department and Surgeon General's Office were authorized in April 1818, while the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (Navy Medical Department) and Surgeon General's Office were authorized in August 1842.

The Civil War

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 pushed the United States into a fratricidal conflict that stretched the limits both of the Union and Confederate Army and Naval medical services and of existing American medical science. Out of the carnage, Surgeon Jonathan Letterman of the Union Army's Army of the Potomac pulled together the bits and pieces of previous American military medical practices and placed his own stamp on them. The Letterman system of echeloned battlefield care, hospitals, and evacuation combined with a rear-echelon general hospital network to provide more definitive care for the wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers that later became the standard for the world's militaries. In its essentials, this system even today remains the basis for the Army's medical service.

The long years from the end of the Civil War to the Spanish-American War (1898) saw a small Army located at numerous forts and garrisons throughout the land and securing the ever moving western frontier. Each regiment and fort had its own medical service and small hospital manned with surgeons and hospital stewards to care for the officers and Soldiers and their families. They accompanied the Soldiers on innumerable expeditions against the Native American tribes, during which they were often killed or wounded. Meanwhile, naval surgeons faced different types of medical and

health challenges as the Navy transitioned from wooden sailing ships to the new generation of steam-powered, armored fighting vessels.

During these years, the Army Medical Department enhanced the overall quality of medical care for its Soldiers with several important initiatives that remain embedded in American military medicine to this day. Realizing it had no trained corps of enlisted medical personnel, the Army established the Hospital Corps in 1887 to assist the medical officers in nursing and care of the Soldiers in garrison as well as during active field operations. However, they were largely used to support and evacuate the wounded troops in the field and were not directly integrated into the units.

Also in 1887, the Army introduced first aid instruction for all officers and enlisted personnel so that, if wounded, they could care for themselves and each other on the battlefield until trained medical personnel could reach them. This instruction was codified eventually in Army handbooks and field manuals on soldier first aid that were issued to every soldier. Over the years, this program evolved into "buddy aid" and now Combat Life Saver training which have saved innumerable lives.

Along with its first aid training, the Army Medical Department developed first aid packets or kits that were added to the soldiers' personal equipment before the Spanish-American War and have remained a permanent part of it since. Thereafter, these kits were constantly improved with the most recently developed medicines and bandages. In World War II, the soldier's first aid kit contained pain-killing morphine syrettes and sulfa drug tablets that could be taken immediately upon wounding to provide infection fighting medicine.

The Spanish-American War

The Spanish-American War (1898) and Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) confronted the Army and Navy with very significant health problems arising from diseases. Principal among them were typhoid in the American mobilization camps and yellow fever and tropical diseases in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippine Islands. The Hospital Corps rapidly expanded to more than 6,500 men from fewer than 800 noncommissioned officers and privates early in 1898. They generally performed their duties well in their first wartime test and suffered the loss of 10 men in battle and 106 to disease.



Walter Reed

One of the major deficiencies in the Navy's medical care system during the latter part of the century was the lack of an enlisted medical force. On June 17, 1898, just after the war began, Congress remedied this shortcoming and authorized an enlisted Navy Hospital Corps. The first 25 Navy "corpsmen" soon went to work onboard ships and in Navy hospitals.

During the war, the Army introduced professional nursing care when it hired female contract nurses to minister to its wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers. In February 1901, this change was formalized with the establishment of the Army Nurse Corps as an in-

tegral part of the Army Medical Department. This step brought the latest advances in nursing care to the Army's hospitals and foreshadowed the eventual demise of the enlisted Hospital Corps as trained female nurses increasingly assumed responsibility for the nursing duties that were previously its domain. A female Navy Nurse Corps was established at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in 1908.

The same 1901 congressional action that brought the female nurses into the Army also authorized the hiring of contract dental surgeons. This recognized the growing importance of oral and dental hygiene in enhancing the overall health of the force. This small group of dentists achieved such positive results in improving the Army's health that a commissioned U.S. Army Dental Corps was established in March 1911. A similar Navy Dental Corps was established in 1912.

The often devastating effects of diseases on military readiness during the Spanish-American War prompted major reforms in the Army, especially

in the area of preventive medicine, field sanitation, and combating contagious diseases. The Army's Major Walter Reed solved the mystery of yellow fever, thus paving the way for controlling this deadly worldwide disease and permitting the building of the Panama Canal. The Army Medical School's laboratory also pioneered the development and production of various typhoid vaccines that were intended for the military but were also shared with the public. By 1911, vaccinations for typhoid became mandatory for all Army personnel and largely eliminated that deadly disease in the Army by the end of World War I.

The transition of the Army from many widely scattered separate companies and regiments to a modern force began with its experimental "maneuver division" in 1911-12. These tests resulted in the creation of new medical military formations, such as medical regiments, sanitary trains, field hospitals, and motorized ambulance companies. The new units would enhance medical and surgical care on the battlefield and in bivouac, and speed rearward evacuation. In 1914, the Army pushed medical personnel into its ground combat units when infantry, artillery, and cavalry units added Medical Corps' surgeons and enlisted personnel of the Hospital Corps. At the same time, the continued growth of the Army Nurse Corps freed Hospital Corps personnel for other medical duties. However, these trained enlisted personnel still retained many significant responsibilities that were critical to the efficient daily functioning of the Army's hospitals. Then, in the National Defense Act of June 1916, the Medical Department (Enlisted Force) formally replaced the Hospital Corps. This reflected another important step in the evolving role of trained enlisted medical personnel. From mainly nursing and other general care duties at Army hospitals, they were expanding to a wider range of duties that also included caring for and supporting Soldiers in the active field units in peace and war.

World War I

In April 1917, America entered the ongoing European war on the side of the Allies with an Army, Navy, and Marine Corps that were unprepared for combat operations or even movement to France. Before WWI many of the surgical and medical procedures used had not been updated in nearly 20 years, but with the new conflict several important advances were codified as best medical practices, and research into new techniques and technolo-

gies was prioritized. Among the most important of these was standardizing the practice of laparotomies (actually opening the abdomen to find the cause of a medical illness). In the past, laparotomies had been difficult because of infection and were often more dangerous than the illness or wound itself, but with more advanced surgical techniques and conditions their use became more viable.

Also during this time, Gen. J.M.T. Finny established both a central laboratory and an experimental surgery center in the theater of operation. These centers, and those who ran them, such as Major Walter B. Cannon (subsequently professor of medicine at Harvard and the leading physiologist of his era), laid the groundwork for the rich military medical tradition of battlefield research. In the years to come research done in theater during WWI would yield breakthroughs in the treatment of burn care as well as new techniques for treating damaged organs and critical care.

Nonmedical advances also contributed greatly to saving lives. WWI saw the advent of motorized ambulances, which led to a dramatic decrease in the time between injury and treatment. Not only did this save lives from blood loss, but being able to treat patients earlier allowed for many more surgical options including laparotomies. Clerical advances also contributed to better medicine during this time. Maj. Harvey W. Cushing, the Yale and Harvard professor who went on to greatness as the father of neurosurgery, kept detailed records and notes on all of his surgeries, which became the basis for one of the first trauma registries.

Several new changes in military medical training also proved critical to the postwar remaking of the Army's frontline medical system. First was the new program of intensive field and medical training for all Medical Department officers and enlisted personnel that began at the Army's Medical Field Service School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Second were the changes in the Army's organization in the 1920s that added trained medical personnel, now called combat "company aidmen," as integral personnel in the Army's ground combat units. Their wartime strength was increased to 95 (11 medical officers and 84 aidmen) in each infantry regiment, and 87 of them were now pushed down to the battalions and companies so that each company had two aidmen.

For the first time in its history, the Army placed trained medical personnel under the command of Medical Corps officers directly on the firing lines with the infantry, artillery, cavalry, and engineers who carried the burden

of ground combat. The Navy Medical Department had already made similar changes and integrated its corpsmen with the Marine infantry units that they supported. Whether Navy or Army, these corpsmen and aidmen lived and worked directly with those they served.

The active duty Army Medical Department expanded during the conflict from roughly 7,500 medical, dental, and veterinary officers and nurses in April 1917 to almost 58,700 in the United States and France by November 1918. During this same time, the enlisted force, without which nothing else could function, jumped from 6,619 men to 264,181. Such a vast expansion was needed to provide the full array of medical support to an Army of 4 million, 2 million of whom served in and with the American Expeditionary Forces' 38 divisions in France. To overcome this enormous challenge, the Army and Navy Medical Departments relied on the American civilian medical community to build and staff much of their wartime hospital structure. In doing so, the Army and Navy obtained the best-trained and most skilled military and naval medical officers and nurses that the United States had yet fielded in a major war.

The Navy assigned 60 medical and 12 dental officers and more than 500 hospital corpsmen to support the "Devil Dogs" of the 2nd Division's Marine Brigade in combat in France. For the first time, Navy hospital corpsmen were actually assigned to the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments down to the company level.

The trench warfare and fire-swept battlefields of World War I presented grave challenges to Army and Navy medical personnel when they finally entered the ground conflict in large numbers in 1918. These men soon were affectionately known as "Doc" in their units and, as frequent dispensers of pills, were also kiddingly called "pill rollers." Often horrific artillery and machine gun fire on shell-torn, heavily defended battlefields made movement of any kind extremely difficult and deadly. Exposing themselves to enemy fire, enlisted "Docs" treated the wounded as far forward as possible. They bandaged wounds, applied splints, provided rudimentary treatment, filled out medical treatment diagnosis tags, and moved the wounded to the battalion and regimental aid stations where the surgeons labored before evacuating them to the rear.

The effects of modern weaponry on the battlefield and the severity of the fighting presented other new medical challenges for military and naval medicine. The horrors of the slaughter of trench warfare brought to the fore

the need for professional psychiatric treatment of shell-shock and combat fatigue cases. The Army Medical Department called upon pioneering American psychiatrists to develop and coordinate the treatment and care of psychiatric casualties and psychological stresses of combat in France and the United States. While similar casualties had occurred in all previous wars, little was then understood of their causes and treatment in those conflicts or afterward. In World War II and later, a complete system was developed for handling such cases from division psychiatrists and combat fatigue centers at the front to the rear area psychiatric hospitals. Many men were successfully returned to their units while the most seriously afflicted were removed from combat. The objectives of today's network of military combat stress control units and highly trained personnel are to relieve the stresses of combat, wounding, and death and thus to reduce the instances of post-traumatic stress disorder in the future.

On World War I's tortured battlefields, many medical personnel, and especially the litter-bearers, suffered grievously. They repeatedly demonstrated their heroism in going to the aid of their comrades, with often fatal results for themselves. Army Medical Department personnel suffered 167 killed in action and 3,715 wounded in action, 236 of whom died of their wounds. The majority of these casualties were among the enlisted men in the front lines. 120 were killed in action, 3,265 wounded, and 209 died of wounds. This price was high, but their large sacrifices meant that 207,393 American Soldiers survived their wounds or gassing to return to duty and reenter civilian life upon completing their service. Army medical personnel received a total of two Medals of Honor (both enlisted litter-bearers) and 340 of the recently authorized Distinguished Service Crosses (DSCs) for extraordinary heroism in combat, 47 of them posthumously (9 officers and 38 enlisted men). Of these DSCs, 95 were awarded to medical and dental officers and Army nurses, three of whom received two awards, and 245 to enlisted medical, ambulance, and dental personnel. Private Harry Liebeskind of the 26th Division received two awards.

Navy medical personnel suffered one dental officer and 15 corpsmen killed in action, two corpsmen died of wounds, and 12 officers and 146 men wounded or gassed while supporting the Marines in their toughest fights against the Germans. They received 684 awards for heroism, including six Medals of Honor; two of these were awarded to Navy corpsmen who, as a group also received 55 Navy Crosses.



Administering ether in the battlefield

The Army and Naval medical services drew a large number of critical lessons from the bloody fighting of World War I. Perhaps the most important of these confirmed that trained medical personnel had to treat the wounded as soon as possible after they were hit by hostile fire (the fabled "Golden Hour" of the time). Bleeding, the major cause of battlefield deaths, had to be stopped. The trained personnel then had to administer pain killers along with anti-tetanus shots, treat shock cases, stabilize the patients, apply splints, and move the wounded to supporting evacuation hospitals for life-saving medical and surgical treatment. These critical tasks would fall to trained enlisted medical personnel because there were simply too few hard-to-replace Medical Corps officers to undertake such dangerous frontline work. However, by 1918 the front line had become a lot closer to home.

In a single year, between 1918-1919, one-third of the world's population was infected with a virulent strain of influenza. This epidemic, the worst in medical history, was caused by a mutation that combined human and avian strains of the virus and left most people defenseless. It resulted in the death of up to 50 million people, including up to 43,000 U.S. servicemen serving abroad. Many now believe the virus first appeared at Camp Funston in Kansas and moved quickly to Ft. Devens in Massachusetts, where it spread to Europe and beyond via trade routes and military ships. That year

more people died of the flu than of war wounds and by the time it had run its course, influenza had taken more lives than all of WWI combined. Out of the chaos came a clearer understanding about the importance of hygiene in military camps and within the general population. Much of the spread of the disease (and resulting infections like pneumonia) could have been significantly mitigated with proper hand washing and improved living conditions. However, after taking these lessons to heart, the Army went a step further and at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) Dr. Maurice Hilleman developed the world's first flu vaccine in 1957. This vaccine development was the first step from an historic Army vulnerability toward what has become an Army responsibility and capability in influenza prevention.

World War II

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, forced a reluctant United States into WWII and pulled the U.S. into a global war against Japan, Nazi Germany, and Italy. During the war the Army Medical Department expanded to more than 650,000 to support an Army of 6.4 million and an Army Air Force of 1.8 million, while the Navy Medical Department grew to 170,000 in support of the Navy of 3.4 million and a Marine Corps of nearly 500,000. Navy corpsmen and Army combat aidmen and litter-bearers would participate in every major combat action of the war, from Pearl Harbor through the worldwide campaigns in Africa, the Mediterranean, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific to the final victories in Europe in May and the Pacific in September 1945.

Shortly after the war began, the Army increased the medical support in its infantry regiments that carried the burden of combat to 10 officers and 126 men, with 2 officers and 36 enlisted men in each of the three infantry battalions. Of these men, 13 aidmen and 12 litter-bearers were actually assigned to the infantry companies and their platoons so that trained medical aid was immediately and directly available to the Soldiers on the battlefield. Divisional medical battalions provided the motorized evacuation of the wounded, ill, and injured from the infantry regiments and battalion aid stations to the divisional clearing stations and on to rear area evacuation hospitals for definitive care. In this life-saving work, they also suffered their share of battle casualties.

Officers and enlisted medical personnel accompanied their Army units in seaborne assault landings and jumped with the airborne forces in all major airborne operations in Europe and the Pacific. Their divisional medical support followed quickly and set up evacuation and clearing stations for the wounded, ill, and injured. In the Pacific, the Navy soon assigned their medical officers and corpsmen to the Fleet Marine Force for combat support. In this expansive theater of operations, the Navy and Marines faced a more difficult problem—the Navy's main fixed hospitals were thousands of miles away from the invasion sites. Navy corpsmen hit the beaches with their Marines from Guadalcanal through Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Landing with the Marines, the corpsmen and battalion surgeons treated the casualties under fire and evacuated them to divisional hospitals set up on the invasion beaches. From there, the wounded, ill, and injured were moved to transports and the larger landing ships, acting as floating hospitals, and Navy hospital ships.

Being up front with the Soldiers and Marines in the intensive ground fighting meant that the medical personnel suffered very heavy losses in killed and wounded. The Army had 14,589 casualties among its medical personnel, including 2,265 killed in action and 11,826 wounded in action (498 died of their wounds). Navy's medical personnel paid an extremely high price in blood in their bitter battles across the Pacific. Medical and dental officers suffered 102 killed in action and 274 wounded (seven died). The heaviest losses were among the hospital corpsmen with the Marines who suffered 1,170 killed in action.

Such sacrifices meant that Army and Navy personnel were also widely acknowledged for their heroism under fire. Army medical personnel were awarded seven Medals of Honor in Europe and the Mediterranean (three posthumous) and four in the Pacific (three posthumous). Seven Navy medical personnel received Medals of Honor (four posthumous) in the Pacific fighting.

Small and highly mobile Army and Navy medical units were created during the war to bring the life-saving surgical skills to the frontlines that the regimental and battalion medical personnel could not and were not intended to provide. In vicious jungle fighting on the small islands of the Pacific and in Asia, Army portable surgical hospitals operated as close as 100 yards from the Japanese lines to save wounded Soldiers who would never survive a rugged evacuation to the rear. In Europe the first gliders to land in



Medical air evacuation

Normandy in the early morning hours of D-Day, June 6, 1944, carried supplies and reinforcements to the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, including two special airborne surgical teams. That same day 18 other surgical teams landed with the infantry assault forces on Omaha and Utah Beaches. They were there to save the Soldiers' lives at the risk of their own. These carefully selected and trained teams were precursors of today's Army forward surgical teams and the Navy's Forward Resuscitative Surgery System.

Many wartime improvements were made in frontline care that significantly enhanced survival rates. Because of the standardized use of laparotomies and other best practices learned from earlier conflicts the number of service members succumbing to abdominal wounds was down to 15 percent, three times lower than in WWI. This time period also saw the first widespread use of plasma and whole blood as well as penicillin. The introduction of new antibacterial sulfa drugs continued to improve medical processes and procedures. The Army also introduced Army-wide standardized surgical procedures to improve treatment of combat casualties as they moved through the chain of evacuation to the United States. Advances in preventive medicine also resulted in vastly improved control of contagious

and tropical diseases, even in the most disease-ridden areas of the world where the American forces operated. On the battlefield, however, nothing was more important to the medical successes in WWII than the surgeons. For the first time there was no shortage of highly trained and battle tested surgeons operating on the front lines, and it made all the difference to the wounded soldiers' chances of surviving.

One of the most influential medical researchers in history, Dr. William Beaumont, did not live to see the tradition of the clinical laboratory research he began in 1822 reach its fruition. Dr. Beaumont's work was the foundation of Gen. Finney's WWI central laboratory and experimental surgery centers whose tradition was continued in WWII with the Board for the Study of the Severely Wounded in 1944. As those that came before it, the board, founded on the scientific principles of experimentation and observation, boasted some of the greatest breakthroughs in the medical science of its time. During WWII they performed watershed research in a variety of battlefield medical challenges, including crush syndrome, penetrating chest wounds, shock, and the brain's response to trauma.

An important new element was the introduction of transport aircraft and carefully trained medical personnel of the Army Air Forces' Air Transport Command and the Naval Air Transport Service for large-scale medical air evacuation. The rapid movement of the most seriously ill and severely wounded often began from landing strips near the frontlines. From combat theaters, large air transports carried the patients to well-staffed and well-equipped Army general and Navy hospitals in rear areas and even in the United States. This innovative evacuation system vastly improved their chances of survival and recovery. In the years after the war and in later conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, the armed services and Department of Defense increasingly adopted medical air evacuation as a standard procedure that permitted the reduction of the in-theater hospital infrastructure to a bare minimum. This evolution is now fully seen in Operations Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Iraqi Freedom in Iraq. Wounded, ill, and injured service members are airlifted via a flying intensive care unit to a modern hospital, such as Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

These WWII advances in medicine, surgery, care, and evacuation resulted in the best wartime survival rate for wounded, ill and injured American personnel ever recorded. Of 599,724 Soldiers wounded in action, 26,309 died, resulting in a survival rate of 95.6 percent. The survival rates for the

ill reached the highest levels ever achieved in American military history. These achievements resulted from the excellent health care provided to the wounded, ill, and injured from the frontlines to the general hospitals and a wide-range of new miracle drugs. The ceaseless efforts and sacrifices, not only of medical officers and nurses but also of the hundreds of thousands of enlisted medical personnel who served in the tactical units and hospitals in the Army and Navy, made such results possible.

World War II greatly accelerated advances in medicine and surgery that produced new antibiotic and antimalarial drugs; vastly improved the quality of care for, and survival rate of, the wounded, ill and injured; and pushed preventive medicine to new levels. Of the numerous wartime lessons, one of the most significant was the urgent need for a mobile, fully capable surgical hospital close to the front to handle the most serious, nontransportable casualties. In August 1945, based on the work and recommendations of the great surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey, the Army Medical Department created the mobile Army surgical hospital (MASH), allocated at one per division, to fill this important void in frontline surgical care. The fully mobile MASH had the surgical and nursing capacity to treat virtually any casualty, hold nontransportable casualties, and move anywhere on the battlefield within hours.

The creation of an independent U.S. Air Force in 1947 led to the establishment in 1949 of a new Air Force Medical Service. The postwar development of large piston-engines and jet transports allowed the Air Force to push forward with the development of a more refined and rapid system of medical air evacuation. The Air Force Medical Service also developed easily transportable medical equipment and hospitals that could be moved quickly with any deploying air combat units to provide medical support.

Korean War

When communist North Korea invaded South Korea late in June 1950, it sparked the Korean War (1950-53) which caught the American military ill-prepared due to the discharge of so many medical personnel at the end of WWII. Army and Navy medical personnel and units were quickly pulled together and dispatched to Korea to support the combat units sent to stem the communist advance. The long struggle in the cold mountainous terrain, with poor roads and few rail lines on the Korean Peninsula, presented



Helicopter evacuation

serious problems in treating and moving casualties. The tactical and geographic conditions spawned what turned out to be one of the most critical developments in American military medicine—the initial large-scale use of helicopters to move frontline casualties to rear-area Army MASHes and evacuation hospitals and Navy hospital ships.

Although still in its infancy, helicopter medical evacuation, soon to be called MEDEVAC, proved to be a life-saving innovation by slashing the time required to move the wounded from the battlefield to a fully equipped surgical hospital. During the war Army helicopters alone evacuated nearly 21,000 patients and played a significant role in producing the highest survival rate (97.6%) for the wounded in American military history. These flimsy aircraft (then capable of carrying only two patients and the pilot) revolutionized battlefield care and evacuation when teamed with the MASH, whose skilled surgeons and nurses could handle virtually any casualties.

The work of the helicopters complemented the extremely hard work of Army and Navy medical personnel in the rugged Korean terrain. In the often fierce hand-to-hand fighting with North Korean and Chinese Communist forces, the Army enlisted personnel, now generally known as “combat medics,” were still tightly integrated with their assigned combat units and suffered accordingly. Navy medical companies were again assigned to Marine units to provide care and corpsmen to the units in camp and



Medic treating casualties

combat. While Army medics saved many lives, 830 of them were killed in action and 3,270 were wounded. The Navy lost 108 corpsmen killed in action. In recognition of their often fatal efforts to save their fellow Soldiers and Marines, Army combat medics were awarded three Medals of Honor (2 posthumously) and Navy corpsmen received five (4 posthumously).

The advances of the Air Force Medical Service in medical air evacuation techniques, equipment, and aircraft allowed the swift movement of the most serious Army and Marine casualties within Korea itself and to Army and Navy hospitals in Japan and the United States Combined with the excellence of frontline medical care and helicopter evacuation, the airlifting of casualties for definitive treatment played a critical role in pushing the survival rate of Army wounded to new levels.

Dr. Frank Spencer and his colleagues pioneered vascular repair, one of the most important innovations during the Korean conflict. Despite Dr. J.M.T. Finney's teaching that, "Anyone can cut off a leg; it takes a surgeon to save one," and Dr. DeBailey's innovations in vascular surgery, standing orders stated that, "The primary suture of all wounds of extremities under war conditions is never to be done. The guillotine or open circular method of amputation is the procedure of choice in traumatic surgery under war conditions." Dr. Spencer and his colleagues ignored those directives as they

developed new forms of arterial surgeries that allowed for the first time the preservation of limbs that would have otherwise required amputation.

Vietnam War

Less than 10 years after the end of the Korean War, American fighting forces were once again entering what became a major land war in Asia in the Republic of Vietnam. Army and Navy medical elements arrived in Vietnam with the first American forces to provide medical care for them. Accompanying the first Army field hospital into South Vietnam in April 1962, was the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) equipped with the new UH-1 Huey medical evacuation helicopter. As with earlier post-Korean War helicopters, the Huey was large enough to allow the addition of life-sustaining medical equipment and a trained flight medic as a permanent member of the crew so that the wounded could be treated en route to the hospitals. The 57th and the other units that followed it to Vietnam completed the revolution in Army field medicine and evacuation that began in Korea in 1950.

Supporting South Vietnamese combat units, Major Charles Kelly of the 57th Medical Detachment, using the now famous call sign "Dustoff," established the enduring legacy of all medical evacuation helicopter crews ever since. During a mission on July 1, 1964, the American advisor on the ground told him to leave due to heavy enemy fire. Kelly replied, "When I have your wounded," and was then hit and killed by enemy fire. That spirit and devotion exemplified the Army combat medics and Navy corpsmen who served with Army and Marine Corps ground combat units in Vietnam from the American buildup of 1965 through the withdrawal of American forces in 1973.



Aeromedical evacuation

Ground combat in the dense jungles and flooded rice paddies of South Vietnam was often close, hand-to-hand, and extremely fierce. Medics and corpsmen shared those dangers and suffered with their men, and in doing so saved many lives. In a war with no fixed fronts, medical care changed markedly from previous wars. Army and Navy hospital units were fixed facilities and centrally located in tactical operating zones. It was the helicopters that allowed most battle casualties to be shuttled from the ever moving tactical fronts directly to them without regard for the traditional battalion aid station. By the time the war ended, the Army was in the process of removing its battalion surgeons from their ground combat units and replacing them with “physician extenders” or physician assistants. The MEDEVAC helicopters simply overflowed the battalion aid stations to deliver casualties to the fixed hospitals for surgery and treatment, so that was where the surgeons would be concentrated. This change placed an even greater reliance on the unit’s medic to care for the troops in camp and combat.

In terms of patient care, the conflict in Vietnam introduced a new generation of medical monitoring equipment as well as devices such as ventilators designed to sustain life during surgery and recovery. The Vietnam era also saw some of the most progressive thinking as old techniques were re-examined, new ones invented, and best practices from the past 50 years were formally institutionalized.

In Vietnam, Navy corpsmen and Army medics suffered equally with their Soldiers and Marines during the long years of combat. Navy collecting and clearing companies assigned to the Marine infantry regiments to care for and remove the casualties shared the same dangers as their fellow corpsmen in the frontlines. The Navy Medical Department lost 7 officers, 689 corpsmen, and 2 dental technicians killed in action, while the Army suffered more than 1,100 combat medics killed from 1964 to 1972. Once again, the sacrifices of military medical personnel were recognized with awards for extraordinary heroism—four Navy corpsmen (2 posthumously) received Medals of Honor, and in the Army 15 frontline medics (8 posthumously) and two MEDEVAC pilots.

Perhaps the most dangerous of all assignments in the jungles of Southeast Asia fell to those military medics who served with the Army Special Forces and special operations elements of the Navy, Marines, and Air Force. On long missions that penetrated deep into enemy-controlled territory, these very highly trained medics and corpsmen were the only medical



LT Jones washes wound

assets available to treat wounds, injuries, and illness until evacuation helicopters could be called in.

During the war, Dustoff crews and helicopters carried nearly 900,000 allied military personnel and Vietnamese civilians to safety. It is impossible to determine how many lives they saved in the process, but it was certainly substantial. The cost was heavy—199 helicopters were lost and 208 pilots and crew members were killed by hostile fire, and 545 were wounded, plus another 48 pilots were killed and 200 were injured in non-battle crashes.

U.S. Air Force’s medical airlifters further reinforced their mission of prompt evacuation during the Vietnam years. Patients were swiftly moved from South Vietnam to Japan, the Philippines, Hawaii, and the United States for treatment and recovery. Their continuing successes cemented the changes that had begun back in the closing days of World War II.



Hover extraction

tial ground war against the Warsaw Pact in Europe required a revised medical force and thinking on how to provide medical support to fast-moving, deeply penetrating heavy forces. Redesigned, more mobile combat support hospitals were designed and equipped to augment the support that the existing MASHes provided to the divisions. Complementing this new force were new and more rigorous training programs for all medics. The UH-60A Black Hawk MEDEVAC helicopter, capable of carrying 4 litter or 14 ambulatory patients, entered service in 1982 and greatly expanded the evacuation capacities of the existing Huey force.

Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama

On October 23, 1983, a new and sinister threat against American forces became a reality when a truck bomb destroyed the U.S. Marine headquarters and barracks near Bierut International Airport in Lebanon. In the blast, 220 Marines, 3 Soldiers, and 18 Sailors were killed, including the Navy battalion surgeon and 15 of his corpsmen. Again, the corpsmen paid an extremely high price in the line of duty.

The new Army medical force passed its first test in Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada on October 25, 1983. Further refinements followed. The next serious test came in Operation Just Cause against Panama in December 1989. It, too, was easily passed, but not without the loss in action of an

Although much had been learned in the jungles and rice paddies of Vietnam, the Army had suffered serious degradation due to the Vietnam conflict. The creation of the all-volunteer Army in the mid-1970s entirely changed the Army and its Medical Department. The new Army doctrine of air-land battle that later emerged for a poten-

Army combat medic. The next major challenge came with the August 1990, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The American response was quick as elements of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force soon arrived in Saudi Arabia to defend it from attack. Operation Desert Shield saw the rapid buildup of a large American and coalition force, along with its full complement of integral medical support and attached medical and hospital units. The Navy's two superbly equipped hospital ships were also soon safely positioned in the Persian Gulf to treat even the most grievous wounds and injuries.

Operation Desert Storm

One of the most common and deadly injuries in the Iraq conflict has been critical burns. During WWII, the National Research Council Committee developed a breakthrough method of fluid resuscitation. However, treatments and techniques evolved very slowly in the decades thereafter. The next major watershed for burn care came during Vietnam in the form of antimicrobial chemotherapy. While this treatment is still in use today, Operation Desert Shield/ Storm marked the first use of theater-wide burn care. Burn-specific treatment teams were placed at every major evacuation hospital, and the Burn Center at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) is considered the finest burn facility in world both for treatment and research. MHS doctors are also working with engineers to devise vehicles whose gas tanks are less prone to ignite upon IED impact and better shielded for those inside.

The operational phase of the campaign against Saddam Hussein's forces, Operation Desert Storm, began with an aerial assault in January 1991, and an overwhelming ground attack in February. Army, Marine, and coalition casualties were swiftly moved to trauma operating rooms for surgery and then on to care in hospitals and onboard the Navy's hospital ships. Again, Army medical personnel suffered 4 killed in action with the loss of a MEDEVAC helicopter and 11 wounded in addition to 28 non-battle deaths. Only 2 of 356 wounded Soldiers died of their wounds, an astonishing 99.4% survival rate, that confirmed the quality, training, and dedication of all military medical personnel.

After the Gulf War, military medicine underwent continued improvements to attune it to the constantly changing worldwide environment and the emerging threats of biological, chemical, and radiological weapons. Hu-

manitarian aid and peacekeeping missions in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo filled out the decade of the 1990s. The Army initiated another makeover of its tactical medical units into a more modular force in the Medical Reengineering Initiative (MRI). It also began the retooling of its combat medics into the military equivalent of highly trained civilian emergency medical technicians (Military Occupational Specialty 91W, later changed to 68W). These battlefield “docs” currently carry the newest life-saving equipment and are recertified on an annual basis to maintain the most up-to-date knowledge of battlefield care. This constituted one of the most important life saving changes to the modern military. At the same time, the surgeons in the forward surgical teams assigned to ready combat brigade are the first to have begun honing their skills in the emergency trauma wards of big city hospitals before being deployed.

Planning to meet repeated contingencies such as those of the 1990s, the Air Force Medical Service developed its highly mobile Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS) units in 1998-99. New Critical Care Air Transport Teams of specialists were created to staff the medical air evacuation aircraft that now carried the burden of evacuation.

Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom

The Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, ushered in a new world of challenges to military medicine. All of the military medical personnel assigned to the DiLorenzo Pentagon Health Clinic immediately responded to aid victims of the devastating crash of American Airlines Flight 77. Their work was just the beginning as American forces embarked on Operation Enduring Freedom against the Taliban and their Al-Qaeda associates in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. The first American military medics into Afghanistan were those who accompanied the special operations forces, which entered the country to assist indigenous anti-Taliban forces. Once the large American forces were committed, Army, Navy, and Air Force medical personnel and their units were side-by-side with them as they drove out the Taliban and allowed the formation of a new democratic government. MEDEVAC helicopters and U.S. Air Force medical evacuation transports played their designated roles in swiftly moving the wounded, ill, and injured back to Landstuhl and the United States for treatment and recovery. These “fly-

ing ICU’s” are modified C5 and C17 aircraft that carry onboard all the essentials of a working hospital intensive care unit. This breakthrough allows patients to be stabilized on the move, saving valuable time. It was during the continuing fight against the remaining Taliban insurgents in the following stability and sustainment phase that the first Army medic lost his life, when Master

Sergeant Jefferson D. Davis, an Army Special Forces medic, was killed on December 5, 2001, from a friendly fire incident. The first Navy Corpsman to lose his life was Chief Petty Officer Matthew J. Bourgeois, who died on March 27, 2002, after stepping on a land mine while training near Kandahar, Afghanistan. Since then, 47 more military medical personnel have lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan.

In 2003, American and coalition forces under U.S. Central Command turned their attention to removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Following the pattern that had been evolving steadily since World War II, medical planners emphasized a lean hospital structure and force in Kuwait and Iraq, and the air evacuation patients directly to Landstuhl and Rota Naval Hospital in Spain. Army forward surgical teams trained and fought with the forward combat brigades to provide life-saving intervention as far forward as possible. The new Army medics (91W) assigned to the frontline combat units would receive the first test of their newly acquired skills. The medics’ aid bag was also filled with various new medicines and technologies, such as fibrin sealant and chitosan bandages, and blood clotting compounds such as Factor VII that stop bleeding and control hemorrhaging. All military personnel were later issued one-hand tourniquets that they could quickly apply to stop bleeding from extremity injuries until medical assistance arrived.

With the opening of Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 19, 2003, Army and Marine forces quickly disposed of Saddam’s forces during often hard



One hand tourniquet

fighting. Supported by medical evacuation helicopters and mobile Army and Navy surgical and hospital units, including 18 Army forward surgical teams and 6 Navy resuscitative surgery teams, medics and corpsmen again fulfilled their commitment to aiding their colleagues regardless of the dangers. Along with seven other Army air ambulance units, the 507th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) employed 12 of the new HH-60L Black Hawks while supporting the V Corps. For the first time ever a dedicated Army MEDEVAC unit, the 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), supported the I Marine Expeditionary Force (Reinforced). Proving that it was indeed mobile, the 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital from Germany and its five attached forward surgical teams accompanied the 3rd Infantry Division on its 78-hour, 270-mile thrust from Kuwait to the area of Najaf. There it set up, survived a monster desert sandstorm, and was soon handling American as well as Iraqi military and civilian casualties. On March 27, part of the Army's 250th Forward Surgical Team jumped with the 173rd Airborne Brigade at Bashur Airfield near Kirkuk in the airborne operation that opened the coalition's front in northern Iraq with Kurdish fighters. The number of soldiers who were killed in action and who died of wounds were low during the maneuver phase, which ended on April 30, totaling 53 for the Army and 56 for the Marine Corps. While the Army suffered no medics killed during this phase of Iraqi Freedom, Navy Petty Officer Third Class Michael Vann Johnson, Jr., assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, died on March 25, 2003, after he was struck by a grenade fragment.

The end of active ground combat operations in Iraq on April 30, 2003, did not bring peace. The ensuing stability and sustainment operations merely ushered in years of escalating and deadly violence from Al-Qaeda in Iraq and numerous Iraqi insurgent groups that would claim thousands of American and Iraqi lives. It was not long before the first of many American medics lost his life. On May 28, 2003, Army medic Specialist Jose Amancio Perez, III was killed by hostile gunfire at Taji. Since then, numerous Army, Navy, and Air Force medical personnel and units have served in Iraq under often very difficult conditions. The growing level of violence until the surge of late 2007 claimed increasing numbers of killed and wounded medi-

cal personnel. Deadly improvised explosive devices, suicide car and truck bombings, suicide bombers, snipers, rocket and mortar attacks, and ambushes have cost the lives of 144 of these selfless medics and corpsmen.

The continuing development of personal protective equipment for the American forces, especially vastly improved ceramic body armor, improved the survivability from wounds to the thorax and abdomen that in the past have been the most life-threatening. However, the insurgents' use of powerful improvised explosive devices have resulted in increasing numbers of severe wounds to the head and extremities. While Soldiers and Marines are now surviving wounds that in previous wars would have killed them on the battlefield, they are also suffering grievous head and extremity wounds that require long-term care and rehabilitation. Traumatic brain injuries are now under extensive study. There have been approximately 850 traumatic amputations, but the development of advanced computer-assisted prosthetic devices and extensive rehabilitation programs have even returned Soldiers to combat in rare instances. Combat stress control units are constantly working in theater to reduce the psychological costs of conflict. The long-term effects of post-traumatic stress disorder continue to be addressed in the Departments of Defense and Veterans' Affairs so that servicemen and women can return to productive civilian pursuits after serving the nation.

Constantly working in the most difficult and dangerous of circumstances and locations, medics in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world have upheld that long and proud American military tradition of caring and sacrifice for their fellow servicemen and women, even at the risk and often the cost of their own lives.

S. Ward Casscells, MD
Assistant Secretary of Defense
Health Affairs

John Greenwood, PhD

Basil A. Pruitt Jr., MD, FACS, FCCM

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JEFFERSON D. DAVIS

Died: December 5, 2001

Rank: Master Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1983-2001

Master Sergeant Jefferson "Donnie" Davis was killed on December 5, 2001, when a bomb dropped from a B-52 landed near his position north of Kandahar, Afghanistan. Two other Soldiers were also killed. The 39-year-old Green Beret was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Nearly 1,000 family, friends, and comrades said goodbye to their fallen hero at the Elizabethton High School Gymnasium in Elizabethton, Tennessee, on December 18, 2001, and he was buried with full military honors at Happy Valley Memorial Park.

A survival training course roused Davis's interest in the military, and he enlisted in the Army in August 1983. He served in Korea for three years as a medical specialist before graduating from the Special Forces Qualification Course and receiving his assignment to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He went on to serve as a medical sergeant on both Operational Detachments A 562 and 564, and completed a tour as senior instructor at the Special Warfare Center in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He then returned to the 5th Group, where he was selected to be the team sergeant for Operational Detachment A 574. During his time in the military, Davis served in Operation Desert Storm and numerous contingency operations.



throughout Southwest Asia. He deployed on his final tour in October 2001.

Donnie was born on October 22, 1962, in Watauga, Tennessee, to William Lon and Linda Davis. He played both football and basketball at Elizabethton High School. After graduating in 1981, he attended Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina, again playing football.

He later transferred to East Tennessee State University. His family says, "Donnie loved riding his Harley, skydiving, fishing with his son, bragging about his beautiful daughter, working in his yard, and just spending time with his family." He was a member of Fairview Baptist Church. Famous for his common sense approach to life, Donnie was described by his cousin Penny as "always a good guy." His wife Mi Kyong called him "the kindest and most wonderful father and husband that anyone could ask for." Donnie's family was proud of his military service.

Debbie Sams remembered her brother as a practical joker and said, "There's not a word I could use to express how wonderful my brother was. You could ask anybody in the community and there's nobody that could say a bad word. He was such a loving man. He's such a hero to my family." He was an outgoing, protective, and strong member of the family, and everybody leaned on him. His father remarked that Donnie was "always for the underdog," and his mother said he was "always very considerate."

At the funeral service, Master Sergeant Monty Flanigan said this to the crowd:

"Death does have meaning. I would like for us to look at what the death of J.D. means to America ... Daniel Webster

once said, 'God grants liberty only to those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it.' This was the attitude of J.D. Death to J.D. means that his life's work is done.... He finished his course, he fought the good fight, and he kept the faith. And that to J.D. means that his reward is ready ... J.D. has led this nation through combat so that we might enjoy the same freedoms that we still (enjoy) and have enjoyed over the last 200 years."

Chief Warrant Officer Rob Way, who trained with Davis, said he was "the greatest of the quiet professionals," referring to a term used for the Special Forces. Captain Jason Amerine, who was with Davis on the day of his death, said he would like the men who sacrificed their lives that day, including Davis, to be remembered as "the best that America has to offer." Jefferson "Donnie" Davis was the best that America has to offer. He was the best son, the best brother, the best husband, and the best father. He was also the best Soldier this country could ever have defending our freedom.

Davis received many awards and decorations during his service, including the Purple Heart, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Army Commendation Medals, the Defense of Saudi Arabia Medal, the Liberation and Defense of Kuwait Medal, the Special Forces Tab, the Ranger Tab, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Combat Medical Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, and the Military Freefall Parachutist Badge.

Donnie leaves behind a devoted family that includes his wife, Mi Kyong; a daughter, Christina; a son, Jesse; a sister, Debbie, and her husband, Tim; a brother, Danny; and special friend, Karen Jenkins; in addition to numerous extended family and friends.



MATTHEW J. BOURGEOIS

Died: March 27, 2002

Rank: Chief Petty Officer

Unit: Navy Special Warfare Development Group

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1984-2002

U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Matthew “Matt” J. Bourgeois, a Hospital Corpsman, was killed on March 27, 2002, when he was serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. His death resulted from wounds sustained when he stepped on a land mine while conducting small unit training at Tamak Farms, an abandoned al-Qaeda base near Kandahar, Afghanistan. The 35-year-old Navy SEAL was assigned to the Navy Special Warfare Development Group, Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, in Norfolk, Virginia. He had been serving in Afghanistan for approximately two months and was slated to return to the United States in another month. A memorial service was held at the base chapel of Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base in Norfolk, Virginia, on April 5, 2002.

Bourgeois began his military career in the Florida National Guard, serving with that component from 1984 to 1987. He subsequently enlisted in the Navy. He trained as a Hospital Corpsman and later underwent Navy SEAL training in San Diego. During his 14-year tenure as a SEAL, he deployed in support of the First Persian Gulf War and continued to serve honorably up to the time of his death.

Matt spent his teenage years in Tallahassee, Florida, after moving there with his family from Illinois. He graduated from Leon High School. Throughout his life, he maintained



exceptionally close contact with his family. In fact, he called his wife every night from Afghanistan. Friends and relatives remembered Matt as “a loving husband and father, a loving son and brother, a true friend and warrior who never once questioned his commitment to his family and his country.” Matt’s wife Michelle said that he demonstrated “perseverance and determination,” and always strived for excellence. She said he “was quick-witted and sharp” and “could bring a smile to your

face with a comical phrase in the snap of a second.” Marci Labrum, a friend and the wife of a fellow SEAL, characterized Matt as a “witty perfectionist,” adding that he found humor in everyday experiences, which helped lighten the load of his high-pressure job. She concluded that Matt had a unique charm. Matthew’s grandfather, Louis Bourgeois, spoke of him as “a good kid who loved to hunt and fish.”

A former shipmate wrote a tribute to Bourgeois, who he said lived and died in an exemplary manner: “Our country, our Navy, and the world is better for you having been here. May the Lord grant you fair winds and following seas.” Another Navy colleague recounted how Bourgeois “treated me as a member of the team, pushing [me] to improve myself physically and mentally even though I was not a SEAL. It was a great loss when he died, not only to those who knew him but to many others who will never get to know him. I know he improved the lives of many people he will never meet. He was a good man, friend, and warrior. He will not be forgotten.”

Chief Petty Officer Matthew Bourgeois was a highly decorated Sailor. His long list of medals includes the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, three Good Conduct Medals, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, two Southwest Asia Service Medals, four Sea Service Deployment Ribbons, the Pistol Sharpshooter Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Kuwait Liberation Medal. He also received, posthumously, the Bronze Star, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and the Purple Heart

in acknowledgment of his extraordinary service and sacrifice. The Navy Federal Credit Union in Virginia Beach, Virginia, established the Matthew Bourgeois Memorial Fund in honor of his heroism.

Matthew left behind his beloved wife, Michelle; his cherished son, Matthew, Jr.; his parents, Tom and Mae Bourgeois; and a number of other caring relatives and a multitude of grieving SEAL colleagues.





JASON D. CUNNINGHAM

Date of death: March 4, 2002

Rank: Senior Airman

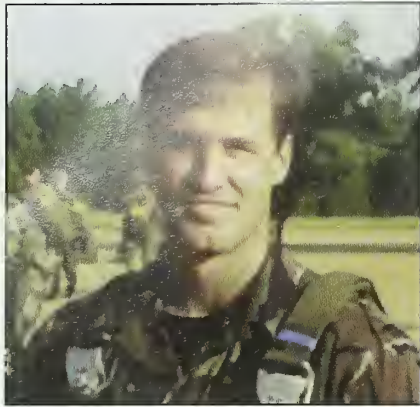
Unit: 28th Rescue Squadron

Branch: U.S. Air Force

Years in Service: 1995-2002

Senior Airman Jason Dean Cunningham was killed in Afghanistan on March 4, 2002, in a rescue mission in support of Operation Anaconda, during Operation Enduring Freedom. Cunningham died from injuries sustained from enemy fire while he was selflessly treating wounded comrades on a mountain ridgeline in enemy territory on the deadliest day of combat for an American unit since 1993. He was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The ceremony included full military honors, a flyover by a pair of HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters, and a 21-gun salute. A final heartbreaking salute was made by the Senior Airman's four-year-old daughter, Kayla, as her father was laid to rest in an American flag-draped casket.

Cunningham's military career began in February 1995 when he enlisted in the Navy. Although he had once wanted to be a Search and Rescue swimmer for the Navy and had already passed the fitness test for the Navy SEALs, Cunningham instead decided to train to become an Air Force Pararescueman, whose motto "That others may live" personifies the man Jason Cunningham was. He left the Navy and joined the Air Force in 1999 to fulfill his dream of becoming a pararescueman because, according to his wife Theresa, "That was him. The job was made for him." He completed his 21-month pararescue training in June 2001. Cunningham was stationed with the 28th



Rescue Squadron out of Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, at the time of his deployment to Afghanistan in February 2002. He was the primary Air Force Combat Search and Rescue Medic assigned to a quick reaction force during Operation Anaconda. Cunningham exemplified bravery and selfless acts of courage when, according to Air Force officials, he remained

inside the burning fuselage of his helicopter to treat wounded comrades, then moved them to safety amid enemy fire, placing his own life in danger. Even after he was mortally wounded, he continued to care for and direct the care and treatment of his comrades.

Born in Carlsbad, New Mexico, on March 27, 1975, Jason attended Carlsbad High School before enlisting in the military. Instilled with the desire to help others, he was a volunteer firefighter and lifeguard who also enjoyed running and had a black belt in tae kwon do. According to his wife, who Jason met and married while he was in the military, "All his actions spoke for themselves. He never did anything by halves. He was there for Mother's Day, his birthday, my birthday, Valentine's Day. He once drove 16 hours to be home for 10. He was a great man. He was a great father." Jason's brother-in-law, Jared Marquis, was inspired to join the Air Force because of Jason. Jared explained that "most people have a hero or someone they credit for being the person they are today. For me...that credit goes to Senior Airman Jason Cunningham."

Airman Cunningham's military comrades held him in equally high esteem. Described as "good-natured" and "enthusiastic," he was respected by his peers and his superiors alike. According to Staff

Sergeant Craig Clark, "He was the very man you'd want with you in combat. He died in the service of us all. I'm a better person because of his example and friendship." Jason's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Vincent Savino, said, "Not everyone would do what he did that day. He went above and beyond. He gave the ultimate sacrifice—his life. He spent his whole life preparing for that one moment. He was a great man. I know several soldiers who are alive today because of him."



Cunningham was posthumously awarded the prestigious Air Force Cross, an honor that has been bestowed on fewer than two dozen servicemen and that is second only to the Medal of Honor. A citation accompanying this distinguished award stated that, "Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, and in the dedication of his service to his country, Senior Airman Cunningham reflected the highest credit upon himself and the U.S. Air Force." He was also awarded the Purple Heart for his wounds in battle and the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal for his rescue work. A compound at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, a portion of the Basic Training Facility at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, and the Airman Leadership School on Moody Air Force Base in Georgia have all been dedicated in Airman Cunningham's honor.

Jason is survived by his wife, Theresa, and their two young daughters, Kayla and Hannah. He is also survived by his parents, Lawrence and Jackie Cunningham, his sister, Lori, and his brother, Chris.



JERRY O. POPE II

Died: October 15, 2002

Rank: Ensign

Unit: Intelligence Department of the American Embassy in Yemen

Branch: U.S. Navy

Ensign Jerry "Buck" O. Pope II, a 35-year-old Navy SEAL, was killed on October 15, 2002, in a traffic accident in Yemen while serving his country in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Pope was assigned to the Intelligence Department at the American Embassy in Yemen and was participating in a training exercise with the Yemeni Special Forces. Family and friends celebrated his life on October 21, 2002, at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek Chapel in Norfolk, Virginia, and again on October 30 at the Marine Corps Base Quantico Chapel in Quantico, Virginia. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, on November 21, 2002, where family, friends, and teammates said their final farewells to their fallen hero.

A native of Arizona, Pope graduated from Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina, in 1998, with a bachelor's degree in health science. Upon his graduation, he was accepted into the Interservice Physician Assistant Program and later received his commission as an officer. Prior to becoming a physician assistant, Pope graduated from Basic Underwater Demolition School/SEAL in Class 165 as a Fire Controlman Third Class and reported to Navy SEAL Team FOUR. While with the SEALs, Pope encouraged younger Soldiers and Sailors to pursue their academic goals and fulfill their personal and professional potential.

Jean Strand, lead academic counselor for Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base Campus in Fayetteville, North Carolina, said that Pope helped develop the program of science courses that is currently offered at the school. She said, "Because of his endeavors in facilitating the use of military resources for the provision of Campbell courses, we have been able to offer a strong curriculum that has served more than 250 other Campbell students, many of whom are now in physician assistant training or in medical school." She added, "His untimely death is a loss not only to his family and the Navy, but to the university community as well."

Buck Pope served his country with honor, valor, and sacrifice. He answered the call of freedom, and for that his country owes him an eternal debt of gratitude.

Buck leaves behind his wife, Andrea Pope; and young children, Drew, Leah, and Jack.



CHRISTOPHER J. SPEER

Died: August 6, 2002

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1992-2002

Sergeant First Class Christopher J. Speer, an Army Special Forces Medic attached to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, died on August 6, 2002, from injuries sustained on July 27, 2002. He and four other Soldiers were wounded when their reconnaissance patrol was ambushed near Khowst in eastern Afghanistan. Speer was evacuated by air first to Bagram Air Force Base, then to Ramstein Air Base in Germany for evaluation and treatment. His wife flew to be with him for the last week of his life, and she made the decision to remove him from life support and to donate his organs for transplant. At his funeral on August 13, 2002, at the Village Chapel in Pinehurst, North Carolina, Speer was mourned by family, friends, and military comrades.

Speer enlisted in the Army in July 1992. After completing basic training, he studied to be a combat medic and was assigned to the Army Hospital at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. In November 1994, he volunteered for Special Forces medical training. As a Special Forces medic, Speer became the ultimate first responder in a medical crisis because of his rigorous schooling in trauma medicine, dentistry, public sanitation, medicine, and surgery. When he completed training in 1997, he was assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group, and later to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at

Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Speer deployed to Afghanistan in Spring 2002 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Six days before he was injured, Speer rescued two wounded Afghan children who had wandered into a minefield. He provided emergency treatment at the scene and took the children to a U.S. Army field hospital, ultimately saving their lives.

Born in Denver, Colorado, in 1973, Christopher graduated from Sandia High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1992: He decided to follow his older brother, Todd, into the military, a move that did not surprise his teacher, Jay Stephenson, who said, "His appearance and his behavior had that military bearing. You could look at him and visualize him being in the military; that was his goal."

Christopher's wife, Tabitha, wrote about her husband, "I spent the happiest years of my life with him. We married and had two beautiful children. Chris made all my dreams come true, it was as though he completed me." She also said how much she sees her beloved husband and best friend in their children's faces, and with his smile and silly little smirk. Every year, little Tanner looks more and more like his daddy. "They both have your sense of humor and are always smiling. We love you, you are our true HERO! I Love You Today, Tomorrow and Forever!"

Before deploying to Afghanistan, Christopher wrote notes to his wife, Tabitha, and their two small children, Taryn and Tanner. "You are always on my mind and forever in my heart." He wrote a note to his children on a card that had two whispering puppies on the cover.

One puppy said to the other, "Do you want to know a secret?" The card said, "I love you." Christopher then wrote, "It's no secret how much I love you. Take care of each other. Love, Daddy."

Speer also earned the respect of his fellow comrades. Staff Sergeant Vasquez of Fort Polk, Louisiana, recalled the day that Speer and his team were killed: "I will never forget that day, the fighting was fierce and indescribable! I saw you enter that building with your team and saw what came out of it! You were a brave man and are deeply respected; you paid the ultimate price. Some people take what we have over here, our freedom, for granted and will never know your story, but you are remembered by those who fought alongside you and by your wife... " Speer was remembered by all as a capable and confident Soldier with an unflappable sense of humor. When the chips were down, he could pick up his co-workers with a smile and a laugh. They remembered him as a loving husband and father who had a sparkle in his eyes whenever he talked about his family.

Speer was a highly decorated Soldier who was awarded the prestigious Soldiers Medal, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. To keep his memory alive, an infirmary at a Special Forces base in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, has been named the Christopher J. Speer Medical Clinic.

Christopher leaves behind his wife, Tabitha; his two children, Taryn and Tanner; and his brother, Todd.



PETER P. TYCZ II

Died: June 12, 2002

Rank: Master Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1988-2002

Green Beret Master Sergeant Peter P. Tycz II died on June 12, 2002, in the crash of an Air Force MC-130H Combat Talon II aircraft, in Paktika Province, Afghanistan. The plane crashed after taking off from an airfield southwest of Gardez in undulating, rocky terrain near the Bande Sardeh Dam. Tycz was the senior medic aboard the aircraft. Two others perished in the accident. At the time of his death, he was serving with the 3rd Special Forces Group out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. His family held a visitation at the Hamp Funeral Home on June 14, 2002, and a Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the next day at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Tonawanda, New York.

Tycz joined the Army in 1988 because, as his mother Terry laughingly put it, "He had no idea what he wanted to do." He served as a fire support specialist until 1990, then left the active force and joined the Army Reserve. After three years, he returned to active duty, in 1993. He completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1997 and was assigned to Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), garrisoned at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He participated in missions in Africa, Bosnia, the Persian Gulf War, Panama, and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. His fellow Soldiers called him "the Rock."



Peter was born on January 2, 1970, in Cheektowaga, New York. He graduated from Tonawanda High School in Tonawanda, New York, in 1988. Over his years in the Army, Peter's primary motivation became clearer to him—he served his country to protect his family's freedom at any cost. Shortly before his death, he wrote to his mother, "Know this: I do what I do not just because I like it, but to ensure all of my family are safe from whatever treads on us!" In the same

vein, he cautioned, "I will have to make great sacrifices to make sure our lifestyle is not threatened, and I'm prepared to do that." Terry recalled that Peter rarely referred to his military adventures. The only information he shared was that he was more than eight hours away. Instead, he talked about food. His mother said, "He always needed food." His family sent many care packages. On the day of his funeral, the last box—stuffed full with candy, dried foods, DVDs, and soft rock music—sat unsent on his mother's living room floor amid the floral arrangements.

Another family member mentioned that Peter loved, and was loved by, dogs and kids. His father remembered that his son talked about living in an 800-year-old bombed-out castle in Afghanistan, where he and his comrades had adopted a dog and her puppies. Terry said that her son's last departure was especially difficult for her. She revealed that she kept tight control over her emotions during that visit so as not to distract Peter from what was to come. Her resolve paid off. Terry discovered that, "He came across with such strength that I left there with a totally different attitude."

The Army promoted Tycz to the rank of master sergeant posthumously. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star with V device, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with 10 oak leaf clusters, four Good Conduct Medals, the Joint Service Achievement Award, the NATO Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with star, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Medical Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Special Forces Tab, and the Dominican Republic Jump Wings. A memorial, the Tycz Children's Fund, was set up to provide support for Peter's children. Vietnam Veterans Chapter 77 formalized the Peter P. Tycz II Memorial Scholarship in his honor, and Peter's life and sacrifice were memorialized on the Tonawanda High School Wall of Fame in 2006.

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton stood before the Senate on June 24, 2002, and paid tribute to the fallen hero: "Master Sergeant Tycz's sacrifice for his country reminds us of the enormous debt of gratitude we owe all of our men and women in uniform—those who risk their lives and, in particular, those who have been lost in the defense of our country. Their courage and steadfast determination keeps America safe and our freedom strong."

Peter is survived by his beloved wife, Tami; his five cherished daughters, Felicia, Faith, Tiffany, Samantha, and Elizabeth; his parents and stepparents, Terry and Kevin Harnden, and Peter and Paula Tycz; his sister, Tracy; and his step-siblings, Kevin, Jennifer, and Ann.



MICHAEL C. BARRY

Died: February 1, 2003

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 205th Area Support Medical Battalion, Missouri Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1991-2003

Sergeant Michael C. Barry, an Army Medical Specialist, died in an accident in Doha, Qatar, on February 1, 2003. In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he was a member of the 205th Area Support Medical Battalion, Missouri Army National Guard, Kansas City, Missouri. Barry was buried with military honors on February 11, 2003, at the Shawnee Mission Memorial Gardens, Lenexa, Kansas.

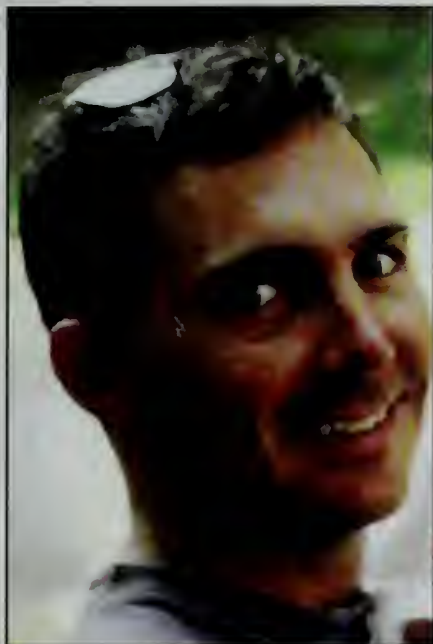
Barry had joined the Missouri National Guard in 1991, serving as a medic, preventive medicine noncommissioned officer, and radiology technician throughout his 11-year career. In December 2002, he deployed as a member of the 205th Area Support Medical Battalion, joining the U.S. Central Command in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Michael graduated from Tri-City Christian School in 1992 and served as a special procedures technician at Overland Park Regional Hospital, Kansas. He received an associate of science degree in radiological technology from the Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas. In 2001, he married Specialist Jennifer Holder, who also served in the National Guard. Michael was a member of the Kansas City Baptist Temple, where he coached a youth soccer league as well as intramural volleyball.

Friends and family will always remember Michael for his brilliant smile and his enthusiasm and positive attitude. His parents, Michael and Maria, are grateful for the outreach of love and support they have received from around the world since Michael died. His service and sacrifice are remembered and much respected. Michael's fellow Soldiers remember him as a good friend and dedicated medic. He brought with him onto the battlefield not only a devotion to duty, but also a strong religious belief. Those he served with are grateful for all he did, how he stood by them and placed their welfare above his own. Specialist Jessi Mead says that Michael's light will not fade, nor his memory pass, because they live on in those he has touched. Michael was a great Soldier and still stands as an example to the members of the 205th MED, who will always miss him and cherish his memory.

Michael Barry's many awards include the Army Achievement Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Missouri Seditious Service Ribbon, and the Missouri Long Service Ribbon. To honor his life, the Michael C. Barry Missions Memorial Fund has been set up at the Kansas City Baptist Temple, Kansas City, Missouri.

Michael was a loving husband, son, brother, and friend. He leaves behind his wife, Jennifer; his parents, Michael and Maria Barry; his brother and sister-in-law, Steven and Tonya Barry; as well as a large extended family.



WILLIAM M. BENNETT

Died: September 12, 2003

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1986-2003

Sergeant First Class William M. Bennett, an experienced Soldier and medic, was killed in the line of duty in the early hours of September 12, 2003, outside the town of Ar-Ramadi, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bennett served in the Army for 17 years and was most recently assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. His Special Forces unit was carrying out a raid on enemy forces sequestered in a villa outside Ar-Ramadi when a firefight erupted. The battle took the lives of Bennett and Master Sergeant Kevin N. Morehead of Little Rock, Arkansas, and wounded seven other men. His funeral was held on September 20, 2003, at Oak View Baptist Church in Walland, Tennessee, and he was buried in Oak View Cemetery in Walland.

Bennett had a long and distinguished military career. He joined the Army in December 1986, shortly after graduating from Heritage High School in Maryville, Tennessee, and completed bridge crewmember training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. His first assignment was to the 11th Engineer Battalion based at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. In 1989, he completed Army diver training at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center in Panama City, Florida. He was then assigned to the 7th Engineer Detachment based at Fort Kobbe, Panama, where he participated in Operation Just Cause. In 1991, Bennett

was sent to Saudi Arabia to participate in Operation Desert Storm. He volunteered for Special Forces training in 1992 and graduated from the Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1994. He studied Arabic at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, also at Fort Bragg. In July 1994, he was assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group. He participated in many overseas deployments, including combat operations in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Bill was a man of contradictions. He was extremely physically fit and liked to work out, but he also enjoyed savoring a good cigar. He was highly intelligent and often questioned authority, but was able to respect decisions he disagreed with.

Master Sergeant Jeff Mason thought Bennett was cocky when they first met, but soon came to see that “Bill not only talked the talk, he walked the walk.” Others remember him for his loyalty and love of country. Sergeant First Class Steve Ferrell said, “Bill honored God, his country, Special Forces, his teammates, and his family by always setting an esteemed example in all aspects of his life.” Because of his sacrifice, the majority of his unit survived the raid in Ar-Ramadi and went on to complete other valuable missions for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bennett is deservedly known as a hero who gave his life for his mission, in service to his country, and to help and save his friends and comrades.

Professor Brian Glyn Williams spent a considerable amount of time in northern Afghanistan working with the people who were liberated from the Taliban by Bennett and the rest of his Operational Detach-

ment Alpha 595 team. Williams says to both Bennett’s family and his fellow Soldiers, “I do not use the term ‘hero’ lightly, but Bill is remembered as a hero by those in this land who suffered for so long from the Taliban before their liberation. I had the sad task of conveying the news of his death to some of those Afghan-Uzbeks whom he fought alongside. They were overwhelmed with sorrow and went into mourning; they felt as if they had lost a brother and a protector. I promised to convey their heartfelt thanks and prayers to you, and am humbled to be able to do so.”

Bennett received numerous honors and awards during his service, including the Bronze Star for Valor, the Army Commendation Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Army Achievement Medal, the Combat Medical Badge, the Second Class Diver Badge, the Special Forces Tab, the Military Freefall Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, and the United Arab Emirates Parachute Badge. In addition, Bennett was recommended posthumously for a Silver Star for his actions the night he was killed.

Bill is survived by his wife, Allison, and son, Seth, as well as his parents, Leonard and Kathleen Bennett. The community of Seymour, Tennessee, where Bill lived, and the members of Oak View Baptist Church in Walland, Tennessee, where he was an active member, feel his absence sharply, as does the wide circle of friends and relatives he leaves behind.



RICHARD P. CARL

Died: May 9, 2003

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Richard P. Carl was killed on May 9, 2003, when the UH-60A helicopter on which he was flying as crew chief collided with a power line over the Tigris River, near Samarra, Iraq, during the rescue of a wounded Iraqi child. The crew was maneuvering to avoid enemy ground fire when the helicopter struck the wires. Carl and the aircraft were assigned to the 571st Medical Company, an air ambulance unit out of Fort Carson, Colorado. They were deployed to Iraq to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Two pilots onboard were also killed, and a medic was rescued from the river in critical condition. Carl was buried in the Glenn Rest Cemetery, Glens Ferry, Idaho.

Richard grew up in Twin Falls, Idaho. He was smart and goal-oriented, with a terrific sense of humor. He is remembered as the good-hearted teenager who was on hand for neighbors when they needed help around their homes. In high school, Richard was typically the first to volunteer. He joined the Army after graduating from high school out of a desire to better himself and to serve his country. Love and support poured in from around the world for the sacrifice Richard made. There is a sense of pride that this young man had accomplished what many never do. He was able to follow his path in life, helping others out of the goodness of his heart and never seeking recognition or adulation.



Carl's loss was greatly felt in the 571st. His comrades not only lost a fellow Soldier but, more important, a great friend. He was a role model to many just by being a supportive and compassionate man. His brother-in-law and fellow Soldier, Specialist Harold Reasons, said that Richard exemplified how a man should lead his life by assuming the responsibilities of a man, a Soldier, and a husband. Specialist Shawn Hinton worked with Carl in Iraq. Hinton

said that everything he does for the Army now he does to the best of his ability, because that's the kind of person Carl was and he wants to emulate him.

First Sergeant (retired) George Litteral was Carl's platoon sergeant in Korea. He said Carl was always his go-to guy to get any mission accomplished..."and in his usual fashion of 100 miles an hour." Litteral

said Richard spoke often of his family, and his work values showed the fine upbringing he received. Having once been on a MEDEVAC crew himself, Litteral knew why Richard wanted to be in a MEDEVAC unit: "He wanted to help people." Litteral said Richard was one of the best Soldiers he has ever had the pleasure to serve with, and he knows without a doubt that he is up in heaven doing what God asks, at his usual 100 mph speed.

Richard is an example of our military's commitment to risk life and limb to help innocent Iraqi civilians wounded in the war. Dick Long was part of the crew that started the 571st in Vietnam. He wants Richard's friends, family, and the American people to know that "Richard gave his life trying to save others. He will never be forgotten in the brotherhood of the 571st." For Richard's sacrifice, he is a hero in the hearts and minds of all those who served before and with him.

Carl was posthumously promoted to sergeant. He is survived by his wife Audrey, his daughter, Ealy Ann, and his son, Dominick.



HANS N. GUKEISEN

Died: May 9, 2003

Rank: Chief Warrant Officer Two

Unit: 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1989-2003

Chief Warrant Officer Two Hans N. Gukeisen was killed on May 9, 2003, when the UH-60A helicopter that he was flying collided with a power line across the Tigris River near Samarra, Iraq. The crew had been dispatched to evacuate a wounded civilian child and was maneuvering to avoid enemy ground fire. Gukeisen and the aircraft were assigned to the 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance), home-based at Fort Carson, Colorado. They were deployed to Iraq to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Two other crew members on board were also killed. Gukeisen was rescued from the river in critical condition, but died of his wounds. He had been in Iraq for about six weeks when the accident occurred. His body was returned to Fort Carson for a unit memorial service at Butts Army Airfield. He is buried in Sturgis, South Dakota.

After joining the Army in the fall of 1989, Gukeisen trained as a scout and served with the 3rd Armored Division in Germany, deploying for Operation Desert Storm. After the war, he left active duty and served with the South Dakota Army National Guard while he took classes at the South Dakota School of Mines. He then re-enlisted in the Army and returned to Europe to serve in the 1st Armored Division.

Gukeisen applied and was accepted for Warrant Officer School. He went from there



to flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and became an Army aviator. Receiving his flight wings, he then reported for duty with the 571st Medical Company at Fort Carson, deploying with them in 2003 for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Major William LaChance, Gukeisen's company commander, said, "He was unquestionably one of my best warrant officers."

It came as no surprise when Hans wanted to join the Army; his father is retired from the U.S. Naval Reserve, and his brother, Raymond, is in the Army Special Forces. Terry is proud of the way his son turned out. He died doing what he loved—flying helicopters.

Hans was born in La Mesa, California, in 1971, to loving and devoted parents, Terry and Margaret Gukeisen. Growing up in Rapid City, South Dakota, Hans graduated from Lead High School, Lead, South Dakota, in 1989. He was active in high school, taking part in metal shop, car repair, and power lifting. These hobbies continued into his adult life. Hans also enjoyed the outdoor life. Friends and family remember Hans as someone who knew how to enjoy life and who was compassionate and considerate of others.

Hans spent a lot of his spare time working with his good friend Bill Burleson on his other passion, building a 1971 Dodge Demon with a Chrysler engine and a gold stripe down the middle. Hans left the car with Bill, and said he wanted some of his ashes thrown into its carburetor in case he didn't come back. Bill has done just that.

Chief Warrant Officer Two Michael Espinoza has fond memories of Gukeisen composing their class song to the tune of Jimmy Buffet's "Margaritaville." Gukeisen brought a calmness to all those around him with his humor and professionalism. His colleagues remember him as smart and loyal, with a passion for flying helicopters. As deeply affected as they are to have lost such a good and close friend, they do not dwell on his death, but celebrate his life, his smile, and his heroism.

Thankful to have shared in Hans's life are his wife Holly; his parents, Terry Gukeisen and Margaret Gukeisen; his grandmother, Eleanora Gukeisen; his brother, Special Forces Sergeant First Class Raymond J. Gukeisen II; two nephews, one niece, and several close friends.



CHRISTOPHER J. HOLLAND

Died: December 17, 2003

Rank: Specialist

Unit: A Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Armored Division

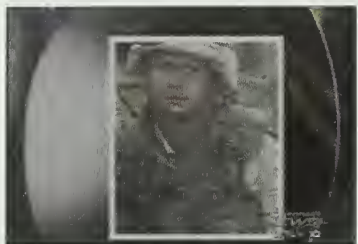
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2002-2003

Specialist Christopher J. "Chris" Holland, a 26-year-old Army medic, died December 17, 2003, in Baghdad, Iraq. While on patrol, his unit was ambushed and he was hit by small-arms fire as he tended the wounds of his injured platoon leader. The courageous young Soldier was assigned to the A Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Armored Division and was garrisoned at Smith Barracks, in Baumholder, Germany, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Family and friends of the fallen hero gathered on December 23, 2003, to celebrate a pre-Christmas mass in honor of their beloved son at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Brunswick, Georgia. Holland later was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia. Every Memorial Day without fail, Holland's family makes a pilgrimage to his gravesite, where they pray for the repose of his soul.

Chris was born August 19, 1977, in Brunswick, Georgia. He graduated from Brunswick High School in 1995, and furthered his education at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia. There, Chris received a bachelor's degree in business management in 2000. Wanting to enter the nursing field, Chris chose not to pursue a career in business, but instead enlisted in the Army in August 2002. He attended basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and subsequently graduated from advanced individual

training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He served an initial tour in Baumholder, Germany, beginning in April 2003, before deploying to Kuwait and later to Iraq with his unit. According to his mother, Chris adjusted easily to Army life, earning the respect of his fellow Soldiers, who called him "Doc."



According to his father, Chris had "played Army as a child. We've got pictures of him with his little camouflage T-shirt." His father also said that in spite of the rigors of combat in Iraq and the hazardous environment, his son was eager to reenlist, because, he told his dad, "I'm so proud to be

in the Army and to be doing something for my country." His uncle described Chris as "outgoing, fun-loving, and athletic," and said he "loved to laugh." His fellow medic, Specialist Alan Amelinckx, remembered Chris as "a great medic, a great friend, and a great Soldier. This world is a darker place without him."

Specialist Holland was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Christopher is survived by his parents, James and Mary Jo, and his sister, Amanda.



CRAIG S. IVORY

Died: August 17, 2003

Rank: Specialist

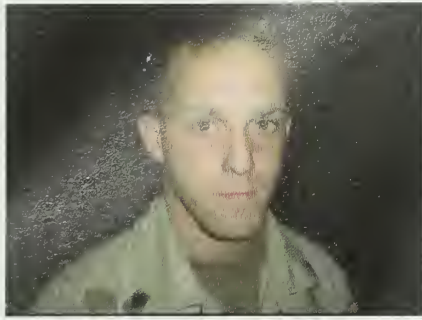
Unit: 501st Forward Support Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Southern European Task Force

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Craig S. Ivory, an Airborne Medical Specialist and attached to the 501st Forward Support Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Southern European Task Force, Vicenza, Italy, died August 17, 2003, from a stroke after being in extreme battlefield conditions, including 135-degree heat while serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried on August 23, 2003, with military honors, at the Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, Annville, Pennsylvania.

Craig enlisted in the Army in January 1997. During his first tour, he functioned as a mechanic, and later trained as a paratrooper and finally as a medic. He served tours at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Bliss, Texas; Pusan, Korea; Vicenza, Italy; and Kirkuk, Iraq. On March 26, 2003, Craig was among 1,000 paratroopers from the 173rd dropped into northern Iraq. He spent five months supporting the field units as a medic. His father recalls Craig's exchange with an English-speaking Iraqi woman who pleaded with him, "Please don't go home. We need you to protect us." Craig consoled her and explained that while they have their own homes and one day would have to leave, "We're here for you now."

Craig, who was born in 1977, in Charleston, South Carolina, came from a military family. His father and mother both served as naval medical personnel, and one of



his brothers is in the Army Reserve. Craig graduated in 1996 from State College Area High School, State College, Pennsylvania, where he lettered in football and track and field and played clarinet in the school's concert and symphonic bands. He loved competitive sports, especially bull riding and wrestling. His friends and fellow soldiers pay homage to him with "Cowboy up!"—a fitting tribute to their friend, brother-in-arms, rodeo rider, and soldier.

Craig's friends and fellow soldiers remember him as a fireball—he was always the first in a fight, and first to render aid

afterward. He was proud when he graduated from jump school and wrote often of his dreams and hopes. He wanted to serve his country and to do his father and family proud. Rhonda Robertson fondly recalls, "He claimed he was a Texan, we teased him that he got here as fast as he could! I miss his lopsided grin and his sense of fun. His eyes would dance when he was up to mischief." It wasn't until Craig

became a medic that he found his niche, which reflects his motto in life: "What we do in life echoes through eternity." He was proud of being a medic as his father was before him. Craig touched many lives, both military and civilian. His fellow soldiers are proud to have served with him and call him "Doc" and friend. They remember Craig with a big grin on his face and an indomitable attitude. Staff Sergeant Misty Bates was with Craig on the day of his death—a day that will live with her always. She says, "It's funny how you meet someone and in such a short amount of time they truly touch your life in a way no one else could. I miss you just as much today as when I taped your patron saint across your chest that day in Kirkuk. You will always be with me; I love you, man. Cowboy up!"

Specialist Ivory was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star medal and the Army Commendation medal. His former military supervisor published a memoir that features a chapter about Craig. Because Craig had been planning to follow in his father's footsteps as a physician's assistant after his military career, his family established the Craig Ivory Memorial/Veterans Caucus Scholarship annual scholarship for military personnel desiring to attend physician's assistant training. In addition, to honor Ivory's service, the clinic he worked at in Kirkuk was named the Ivory Combat Clinic, and his family donated a memorial bench to his high school.

Craig is survived by his parents, Patrick and Terry; as well as a sister and two brothers.



MICHAEL MALTZ

Date of death: March 23, 2003

Rank: Master Sergeant

Unit: 38th Rescue Squadron

Branch: U.S. Air Force

Years in Service: 1978-2003

Master Sergeant Michael Maltz, of the 38th Rescue Squadron, died on March 23, 2003, in Operation Enduring Freedom, when his HH-60 Pave Hawk Helicopter crashed in southeast Afghanistan. Maltz, along with the five others on board, was on a humanitarian mission to provide medical evacuation for two seriously injured Afghan children. Master Sergeant Maltz was memorialized with a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Matthew Roman Catholic Church in Dix Hills, New York. He was buried with full military honors, including a gun salute and a flyover by two military helicopters, at Pinelawn National Cemetery on Long Island. Maltz's family was presented with the flag that had been draped over the fallen hero's coffin.

According to his sister, Terri Strippoli, Maltz was "a career military man." He enlisted in the Air Force on August 8, 1978, and traveled the world on various missions during a decorated military career that spanned almost a quarter of a century. His first position in the military was as an apprentice cable splicer stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. From 1980 to 1985, he was assigned to the 1827th Electronics Installation Squadron at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas. He cross-trained into pararescue in December 1985. After completing varied training that included an Advanced Combat Tactics Course, in which he was selected as class honor graduate, he was assigned to the



55th Aerospace Rescue and Recover Squadron and 1730th Pararescue Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, from 1986 through 1989. His next assignments included Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska; Pararescue Instructor at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas; Patrick Air Force Base, Florida; and Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. His final assignment was to the 38th Rescue Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, from which he deployed to Afghanistan in support of the 347th Rescue Wing and Air

Force Mission. Scott Gearen, a retired pararescueman and friend of Maltz, said, "Maltz was scheduled to retire, but four days before retirement, he called to have his retirement papers taken back because he wanted to volunteer to stay on and do this mission."

Michael Maltz was born September 19, 1960, on Long Island, New York. He graduated from Half Hollow Hills High School, Dix Hills, New York, in 1978, and enlisted in the Air Force soon after graduation. According to his family, he always had an adventurous spirit and loved a challenge, and he liked to skydive, ski, and climb mountains. He was a "poster boy for the Air Force" according to his sister, who recalls that he was even pictured on the cover of a recruitment pamphlet for the pararescue group. A childhood friend, Jedd Matus, knew that Maltz had found the right career and remembers that "he was proud of all his accomplishments. He would tell me how he would save guys on the side of mountains."

In a ceremony honoring the fallen hero, Senior Master Sergeant William Sine of the 38th Rescue Squadron described Maltz, who led many rescue missions over the years, as "an awesome pararescueman who lived and breathed the job." He went on to say that "as an instructor, Maltz shaped and molded numerous PJs." Maltz was

well-respected as a very fair but hard-line instructor who was dedicated and closely bound to his students. He earned the nickname "Iron Mike," but was known to have a heart despite his tough exterior. Air Force Master Sergeant Arthur Boyd told mourners at the church that Maltz, whom he considered "a good friend...has made the ultimate sacrifice." In a moving tribute to Maltz and his fellow fallen comrades, Brigadier General John H. Folkerts said that "we will not forget the valuable contributions they made to this country and the impact they made on the Air Force."



Michael's family and friends remember the impact he made on them as well. His mother, Patricia Iverson, knew of his great love and dedication to the Air Force and said, "He had no fear of anything. The only fear he had was getting out of the Air Force." His brother, Derek, stated quite simply, "Obviously, he was a hero. He died defending the country and we're very proud of him."

Master Sergeant Maltz's military career was extensive and highly decorated. His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal (seven awards), National Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon (five awards), NCO Professional Military Education Graduation Ribbon, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, and Air Force Training Ribbon.

Michael is survived by his sons, Kyle and Kody; his mother, Patricia Iverson; his father, John Maltz; his grandmother, Alice Maltz; his sister, Terri Strappoli; and his brothers, Derek and Richard Maltz.



JOSHUA MCINTOSH

Died: June 26, 2003

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2001-2003

Navy Hospital Corpsman Joshua McIntosh died on June 26, 2003, from injuries he received in a non-combat-related shooting in Karbala, Iraq. The 22-year-old was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, in Twentynine Palms, California in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was laid to rest in Willamette Memorial Park in Albany, Oregon.

McIntosh enlisted in the Navy in 2001, with the hope of furthering his education and entering the field of nuclear medicine. He finished his medic training in Chicago, went to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and then was assigned to Twentynine Palms. He deployed to Iraq in January 2003. McIntosh was from a special part of the Navy that the Marines call their own. While his official title was Hospital Corpsman, to his unit he was affectionately known as "Doc" and he was charged with caring for sick and injured Marines in Iraq.

Joshua was born on September 25, 1980, and graduated from Kingman High School in Kingman, Arizona. During a Veteran's Day ceremony at the school, students gathered to remember those who have died serving their country. After Joshua's name was read, "Taps" was played, a solemn tribute to a fallen classmate and friend.

McIntosh was an outstanding shipmate and always brought a smile to any situation. Corporal Nathan C. Olsovsky, who served with McIntosh, recalls, "He was a very likeable person who always had a smile on his face. He was an excellent corpsman and showed no fear or hesitation in helping a fellow warrior who was hurt and under fire.... He is our brother in arms and gave his life for his country." McIntosh made a lasting impression on the hearts and minds of those with whom he served. A common adage within the Navy community is, "Navy corpsmen are loved because they live, eat, fight and, sometimes, die with the Marine units they are assigned." That theme certainly rang true for McIntosh.

Joshua is survived by his father, Dwaine McIntosh.



KEVIN N. MOREHEAD

Died: September 12, 2003

Rank: Master Sergeant

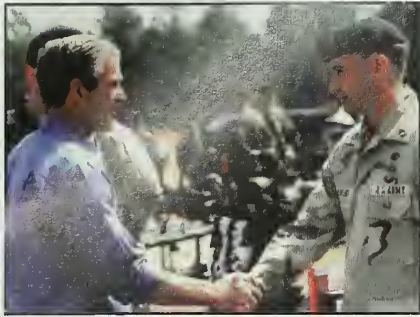
Unit: 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1989-2003

Master Sergeant Kevin N. Morehead sacrificed his life for his country on September 12, 2003. His unit was conducting a pre-dawn raid on enemy forces in Ramadi, Iraq, when he was struck by a bullet during a firefight. The 33-year-old Green Beret was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Master Sergeant Morehead was just two weeks shy of returning home, having volunteered to remain in Iraq to orient the replacement unit that had arrived to relieve his team. Friends and family gathered September 22, 2002, at the Powell Funeral Home in Bald Knob, Arkansas, to celebrate Kevin's life. He was laid in his final resting spot with full military honors next to his grandfather in Fredonia Cemetery in Bald Knob.

Morehead joined the Army in 1989 and completed his entry training as a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In 1991, he deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm, after which he volunteered for Special Forces training, completing the Medical Sergeant Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He studied Arabic at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School before being assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group. Morehead was a qualified Ranger, an excellent sniper, and a skilled medic. He deployed to Afghanistan soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and then to Iraq in January 2003. In addition to numerous overseas deployments that included Africa, Pak-



istan, and Yemen, Morehead's military education includes the Combat Medic Course, the Airborne Course, the Special Forces Qualification Course, Special Forces Combat Diver Course, the Primary Leadership Development Course and the Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses.

Kevin was born September 14, 1969, to Jim and Jeanette Morehead. Kevin graduated from Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1987, and attended the University of Arkansas for a brief time before enlisting in the Army. Kevin was an avid hunter and fisherman, was active in his church, and loved his aunt's pumpkin pie. Kevin married the love of his life, his wife Theresa, and they had a baby daughter, Taylor, who preceded her father in death.

Family members describe Kevin as someone who would "help anybody at anytime." His uncle, Wardell Nixon, described him as "one of a kind." Kevin's 16-year-old cousin, Kyle, revered his older cousin as a role model. He said of Kevin, "He was a good friend and a good Soldier. I'm going to join the Army like him to be a Green Beret. He'll never be forgotten."

Kevin's parents are proud of their son's military service and commitment. They speak fondly of the time he gave a field demonstration for and had lunch with President Bush at Fort Bragg in March 2002, and they treasure the picture taken of their son shaking hands with the President of the United States. The patriotic family decorated their driveway with a sign that reads, "Our son has your back." Jim Morehead said of his son, "He loved the military; he loved what he was doing. He was well trained."

During a memorial service held at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Kevin was remembered as an honorable man who volunteered to take on the most dangerous missions for his country. He was described as a

devout Christian who strove to be the best at what he did. Former Afghanistan resident Osman Babakhan memorialized the American hero who worked diligently to liberate his country:

"...he was the only nicest person I have met in my life, word of 'friend' had only one meaning in his idea (no color different, no culture and no religion) the only thing that he expected from his friends having clean and kind heart. Kevin can be the best example of those who not only supported their country and nation but they were savior of 1000s of people in Afghanistan and Iraq to bring them freedom, bring them message of peace and democracy and put on shine of a real human life on them. We proud of him, we keep his memory perennial in our heart till there is [no] beat."

Babakhan's comments epitomize the hero that Kevin Morehead was. He was a friend to the oppressed and fought hard to bring them freedom, peace, and democracy. He gave them hope for a better life. Kevin Morehead is the best example of a true American hero.

Master Sergeant Morehead's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with V device for valor, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal, the Combat Medical Badge, the Expert Field Medical Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the Scuba Diver Badge, the Driver Badge, the Kenyan Parachutist Badge, the Ranger tab, and the Special Forces tab.

In addition, The Morehead Commando Training Center in Afghanistan was named in his honor for his efforts in rounding up terror suspects.

Kevin is survived by his wife, Theresa, and his parents, Jim and Jeanette Morehead.



DAVID J. MORENO

Died: July 17, 2003

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 4th Marine Division

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1998-2003

Petty Officer Third Class David J. "D.J." Moreno, a 26-year-old Navy Hospital Corpsman assigned to the 4th Marine Division at Naval Medical Center, San Diego, California, lost his life July 17, 2003, from a non-hostile gunshot wound in Hamishiyah, Iraq. After completing a mission and unloading weapons, one of the guns accidentally discharged, killing Moreno instantly. Naval and Marine Reserve units, including a color guard and rifle squad from Cheyenne, Wyoming, presented military honors during Moreno's funeral services. Family and friends said their farewells to their honored hero at the Christ the King Catholic Church in Gering, Nebraska, followed by his interment at West Lawn Cemetery, a few feet from his grandparents' graves.

Moreno enlisted in the Navy in 1998. He served three years at a naval hospital in Guam before being assigned to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, California.

He was born in the Philippines on June 16, 1977, to David and Yolanda Moreno. The family then moved to Nebraska, where David graduated from Lincoln Southeast High School, Lincoln, Nebraska. Hoping to one day become an actor, David studied performing arts for a semester at the University of Nebraska. David decided to join the Navy and use his GI bill to further his acting studies, but then took a serious interest in

medicine and pediatrics. David was an avid movie buff, committed to attending midnight advance movie screenings, often showing up on his parents' doorstep at 11:00 p.m., tickets in hand, eager for his father to join him at the theater.

Family and friends remember David as "a very gentle, very mild-mannered, soft-spoken young man." In his eulogy to David, Reverend Gerald Harr recalled David's passion for medicine, particularly pediatric medicine: "He was a rich young man. D.J.'s joy came as a Navy medic, and when he delivered a baby, it was part of a holy presence." Reverend Harr compared a brave and dedicated David to General George S. Patton: "There is something in the human spirit that longs for greatness, and war seems to be a vehicle to draw greatness from an individual." Reverend Harr asked David's grieving family to hold strong in their faith, reminding them that "There is no greater love than to give one's life for his friends." Petty Officer Third Class Kevin Allen called Moreno the best friend that anyone could ever have. "I met him at my first duty station in Guam and we were good buddies ever since. We used to play practical jokes on each other all the time." Allen will carry his friend's memory with him forever in his

heart, and whenever he thinks of him, he will remember the good times and all the laughs. Other fellow Sailors describe Moreno as a very funny and kindhearted person who loved his family immensely and loved spending time with them. While on leave, he would bring friends home and share his family. They would all quickly learn that Moreno's entire family was very warm, kind, and funny. Like many, Hospital Corpsman Matthew Lubold feels honored to have known Moreno even for the short time they served together. "You will never be forgotten and the love you had for your family will endure long after you have gone," Lubold said; "Your son was a great man and Sailor who served his country with honor. There is nothing anyone can say or do to make the pain of losing your son, brother, grandson better, but it is because of men like him that give us the freedom to live as we choose and for that I will be eternally grateful."

Hospital Corpsman Moreno was presented a Navy-Marine Corps Achievement medal for individual valor.

In addition to his parents, David and Yolanda, David leaves behind two sisters, Holly and Sharlotte.



PAUL T. NAKAMURA

Died: June 19, 2003

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 437th Medical Company (Ambulance), 3rd Medical Command

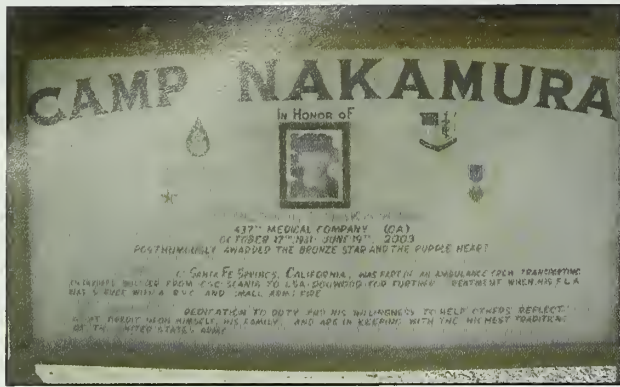
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1999-2003

Specialist Paul T. Nakamura, an Army Reserve Soldier assigned to the 437th Medical Company (Ambulance), 3rd Medical Command based in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was killed in action on June 19, 2003, on a highway in al-Iskandariyah, Iraq, 20 miles south of Baghdad. Supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, Nakamura was part of a crew transporting an injured Soldier in the back of the ambulance when the vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade that killed him and injured two other crewmen. On July 2, 2003, family, friends, military personnel, and extended family members from Okinawa, Japan, attended his funeral at Rose Hills Memorial Park, in Whittier, California. He was the first Japanese-American to be killed in the Iraq War.

Nakamura enlisted in the Army Reserve in late 1999, training as a combat medic. He treated 80 individuals during more than 220 ground medical evacuation missions in Kuwait and Iraq.

Paul was born and raised in Santa Fe Springs, California. He was described as an all-American boy, a Boy Scout, a Junior Olympian, a high school athlete, and a bit of a daredevil. Paul was a lifeguard who had taught swimming since he was 17 and belonged to the high school water polo team. Family members recalled him as a rascal, a risk-taker, and



full of laughter. They remember how when Paul was a young boy, he and his friends raced their bikes down a steep hill and Paul was the only one who didn't hit his

brakes. Unfortunately, he hit a tree. But, that was Paul, full of adventure and excitement.

Like many parents, Paul's parents had reservations about his enlisting; but Paul was motivated by patriotism. He told his parents, "Mom, Dad, I'm so proud I was born in the United States." Paul's family is very proud of him and all he did for his fellow comrades. To them and many others, he is and always will be a hero. "He died helping

others," said his sister, Miki Stensel-Morales. Paul was quoted in a story in the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*, "We've seen a lot of casualties, a lot of people in pain, but when they see us, they're happy," he said. "They know they're getting out of here." Many of his fellow Soldiers remember their friend and fellow Soldier for his compassion and thoughtfulness. They remember how Paul had a special energy that made him stand out. He was remembered as gregarious and boisterous, a child at heart, and a courageous Soldier. Lieutenant General James Helmly remarked how Paul came "embedded with the fundamental values of good citizenship, a solid work ethic, honesty, loyalty, and courage." Staff Sergeant Jason Valles said, "Not a day goes by that I don't thank you for your service, brother. Though I was your NCO, being in the same unit, we were all family. I'm back in Iraq, and I serve to honor you and others who have given the ultimate sacrifice. You are a great man that made a great Soldier to serve with. Thank you for the laughs and memories. I am honored to have served with you, my brother."

In November 2003, the main living area of Convoy Support Center Scania was named Camp Nakamura in honor of Paul's memory.



JOSE AMANCIO PEREZ III

Died: May 28, 2003

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 6th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2000-2003

Specialist Jose Amancio Perez III, an Army medical specialist assigned to the 6th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment out of Fort Sill, Oklahoma, was killed in action on May 28, 2003, when the vehicle he was driving in Taji, Iraq, was ambushed and hit by a grenade. Although Perez was shot in the chest, he drove to a secure position, ensuring the safety of the three passengers in the Humvee. His courageous and heroic efforts epitomized his intense dedication to the welfare of those in his care. Emergency care failed to save his life, but his memory lives on.

On June 6, 2003, family, friends, and military comrades filled St. Francis de Paula Church in San Diego, Texas, for his funeral mass, celebrated by the local bishop. He was buried in the San Diego City Cemetery with military honors.

After graduating from high school in 1998, Perez worked as a welder before joining the Army in 2000. He trained as a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and was assigned to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in February 2001. His unit deployed to Iraq in April 2003.

Amancio was born in 1981 in San Diego, Texas, to parents Jose "Amancio" Jr. and Elsa. He was described as a person who loved his family, his country, and the Army. His



dedication to duty exemplifies his family's legacy of military service. His grandfather served in the Navy in World War II, and his uncle was killed in action during the first Gulf War. Amancio's irrepressible sense of humor was matched only by his desire to help others. "I'm very proud of him," said his cousin Candice Benavides. "You know the work he did out there."



Amancio's death affected not only his immediate family, but deeply resonated throughout his small community. He was more than the son and brother of the Perez family; he was the

heroic son of San Diego. His brother, Joshua, said that he lost not only a Nintendo partner, but also a role model: "I admired him being in the Army, because he was a medic. I hope people remember that he was a very special person in this world."

Amancio is remembered as a sharply dressed, competitive young man who worked hard but knew how to enjoy himself. "He loved the Army," said his best friend, Rene Salaiz. "He spoke of it proudly, just like when he caught an interception in a football game. He flashed his dog tags around." Family and friends feel blessed to have had such a wonderful and caring person in their lives, even though it was for such a short time. He leaves a legacy of kindness and compassion with those who knew and loved him. He is their hero.

"One of the things he always wanted to do was be a paramedic, and he was using the combat medic as a step to do that and help people," said friend and fellow Soldier Specialist Alvie Jones. Perez's amazing sense of humor was greatly appreciated by his comrades through many hours of fear and loneliness. He could crack a smile out of a stone wall. He was considered a model Soldier and a great medic. He took care of his Soldiers; they are forever in his debt and honored to have served with him.

Staff Sergeant Kenneth Blackmon served alongside Perez and shared many unforgettable experiences with him. Blackmon says that Perez was a great friend—one of the best people he ever met. Although it was very difficult for Blackmon to make it through the rest of his tour in Iraq without Perez, he was determined to honor this noble and heroic man. He credits Perez's inspirational talks and unconditional friendship for helping him persevere. "Thanks for being the person that you are. I will see you on the high ground. I know that you are in a better place, helping people as you have helped me. I love and miss you a lot, Becho," he wrote on a memorial website. Perez's fellow Soldiers, brothers-in-arms, and battle buddies will carry his memory in their hearts. He made the ultimate sacrifice doing exactly what made him proud and strong.

Perez was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He has been memorialized as one of 20 "Texas Fallen Heroes," whose portraits were exhibited in a traveling display throughout the State of Texas in 2003. The display continues today with over 400 of Texas' sons and daughters who have lost their lives fighting the Global War on Terrorism.



JASON PLITE

Date of death: March 23, 2003

Rank: Senior Airman

Unit: 38th Rescue Squadron

Branch: U.S. Air Force

Years in Service: 1999-2003

Senior Airman Jason Plite died on March 23, 2003, near Ghazni, Afghanistan, while serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. A member of the 38th Rescue Squadron out of Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, Plite was killed when his HH-60G Pave Hawk Helicopter crashed on its way to rescue two injured Afghan children. Funeral services for the fallen Airman were held at South Baptist Church near his family's home in Lansing, Michigan. Hundreds of mourners came to pay their respects. Following the service, Plite was buried at Delta Center Cemetery with full military honors, including a Color Guard and a 21-gun salute. A lone bugler played Taps.

Plite's military career began in 1999, when he enlisted in the Air Force with the dream of becoming a firefighter. Once Plite learned about pararescue, however, there was no other job for him. After completing basic training with honors, Plite began his arduous pararescue preparation and training with the Air Force Indoctrination Course, the U.S. Navy Special Forces Combat Divers Course, and Military Free Fall School. He continued the challenging preparation for pararescue work with Army Basic Airborne School, Air Force Survival School, Paramedic Upgrade Course, JFK Warfare Center's Joint Special Operations Medical Training Course, and Pararescue Recovery Apprentice Course. He earned his Maroon Beret in March 2002. After earning the



honor of wearing the beret, Plite's first duty assignment was to the 38th Rescue Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. Because of his ability to perform rescue and recovery operations in temperate, arctic, desert, mountainous, and open sea environments, Senior Airman Plite became an integral part of his unit's support of the 347th Rescue Wing and Air Force Mission. He was on his second deployment to Afghanistan when he was killed in the crash.

Growing up near Grand Ledge, Michigan, Jason had a reputation as both a gifted artist and a strong athlete. During his high school years, he was known as a "Jack of all trades" for his ability to excel in both the arts and athletics. His artistic abilities are displayed in the mural featuring five jazz musicians that he painted on the wall of a coffee house in Grand Ledge. He showed his discipline and dedication as an athlete through his karate training, in which he earned a black belt, and in his position as captain of his high school's varsity swim team. His competitive drive enabled him to set the school swimming record in the 200-meter freestyle relay in 1997. After graduating from Grand Ledge High School in 1999, he enlisted in the Air Force.

Staff Sergeant (Select) Sean Cunningham, of the 38th Rescue Squadron, remembered Senior Airman Plite as "a man who loved his job

and loved being a PJ. He was strong, he was energetic, enthusiastic.... He wanted to learn everything, he wanted to know everything, he wanted to be the best PJ he could be." Those who served with Jason knew him as a man who lived by the Air Force pararescuers' motto, "That others may live."

Friends of the fallen Airman say that he had a "servant's heart" and that "he died doing what he loved." Plite's neighbor, Michael O'Berski, said of him, "He was there to pick up the people who are broken. He paid the ultimate price for it. At 21, he made a difference that our children will be grateful for." O'Berski's son, Dan, who was Jason's best friend, said, "He had a soft heart and was tough outside. You wouldn't have even known he was in a special, elite group." Although Plite's family didn't speak publicly following his death, his mother, Dawn, wrote in a letter that was distributed at his funeral services, "We have always encouraged Jason to live life to its fullest, to pursue all his hopes and dreams and to make the most of each and every day. We assure you that he did exactly that! He loved what he was doing." Plite's friend, Andy George, echoed those sentiments, saying, "I know he wouldn't have changed a thing. That is really what he wanted to do."



In Senior Airman Plite's military career, he was honored with the Charles D. King award for Excellence in Academic Performance and Leadership, the Air Medal, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Air Force Training Ribbon.

Jason is survived by his parents, Charlie and Dawn Peterson and Tom and GERALYN Plite; siblings, Alyssa and Shaynah Peterson, Patrick and Michael Plite, Christopher Hug and Nicole Michaud; grandparents, Marv and Sheralyn Plite; the love of his life, Amy Emerine; the Air Force pararescue family, and many other family members and friends.



TAMARRA RAMOS

Died: October 1, 2003

Rank: Specialist

Unit: Medical Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2000-2003

Specialist Tamarra J. Ramos, an Army medical specialist attached to the Medical Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, out of Fort Carson, Colorado, died of cancer on October 1, 2003, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. She had been air-evacuated from Iraq in August 2003 after she was diagnosed. Although she was aggressively treated with chemotherapy and other therapeutics, Ramos died at the medical center.

Funeral services were held on October 9, 2003, at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Applebachsville, Pennsylvania. She was buried with military honors at the Pleasant Hills Cemetery, Pleasant Valley, Pennsylvania.

Ramos enlisted in the Army in 2000. She attended basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and advanced individual training to become a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Her first duty assignment was Fort Carson, Colorado, where she was inducted into the Honorary Order of the Spur, a program that recognizes those troopers and officers who have demonstrated a level of professional expertise which exceeds that expected of other Soldiers in the Army. While assigned with this unit, Ramos trained in Egypt as part of Operation Bright Star. She and her husband, Eric,

were assigned to the same unit and deployed together in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the Spring of 2003.

Tamarra was a native of Quakertown, Pennsylvania. She was born in 1979, one of six children. Her desire to help others evolved from her own health struggles. When she was 16 years old, she overcame aplastic anemia after enduring two bone marrow transplants. She is described as upbeat and dedicated to the welfare of others. She is a touching example of someone who lived every moment with joy and energy.

Janet Flores-Ramos was honored to know Ramos. "We met in November 2001, at Fort Carson. We were in the same unit and had almost everything in common. We deployed to Iraq in April 2003. Unfortunately, Tamarra was the only person who did not return home with the rest of the unit. She was loved by all, especially by me and by her husband Eric. I named my daughter after the only best friend I'll ever have, Tamarra. Tamarra, you'll always be in my heart. Thank you for making me the person I am today." Amy Taylor bunked with

Ramos and often mentioned her when she wrote to her family. In a fitting tribute, Taylor's mother Sandra says to Tamarra, "I see in you the poignant, ephemeral nature of life, but from what I hear and read, you were the soul of happiness. Amy said you were always laughing, always happy; you brought joy to everyone around you."

Ramos's fellow Soldiers said she "touched many lives, especially in the regiment, with her drive and dedication." A proud "scalpel trooper," Ramos was the only trooper who had been assigned to Treatment Platoon, Headquarters Platoon, and Ambulance Platoon. Many of her comrades remember her as a great Soldier and a great friend, who always put the needs of others before her own. She was full of life and devoted to helping others. Her fellow Soldiers will hold her in their hearts as a brave and noble hero.

Tamarra is survived by her husband, Eric; her parents, David and Mary; her brother, David; and her sisters, Melanie, Dia, Miramani, and Kamaria.



JOHN ROBERT TEAL

Died: October 23, 2003

Rank: Captain

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1990-2003

Captain John Robert Teal lost his life on October 23, 2003, when an improvised explosive device exploded near his convoy near Baqubah, Iraq. The 31-year-old Medical Service Corps officer was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, in Fort Hood, Texas, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Friends and family honored their beloved son and brother on November 3, 2003, at St. Peter's United Methodist Church, in Montpelier, Virginia, after which he was given a hero's burial on November 4, 2003, in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

A member of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps while in high school, Teal joined the Army Reserve in 1990 at the age of 17. He attended Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, graduating in 1994. Upon graduation from VMI, Teal was commissioned in 1995 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as a first lieutenant in the regular Army. His assignments included the Army Medical Department Officer Basic Course at Fort Sam Houston, Texas; the 25th Infantry Division and Tripler Army Medical Center, both in Hawaii; the Combined Logistics Captains Career Course at Fort Lee, Virginia; and the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood, Texas. In Iraq, he was the 2nd Brigade Medical Plans Officer, with duties that included civil affairs responsi-



bilities. At the time of his death, he had been selected for promotion to major and was being considered for a position with the Joint Chiefs of Staff following his tour in Iraq.

John was born April 17, 1972, in Hanover County, Virginia, and graduated from Benedictine High School, a Catholic college preparatory school with a junior ROTC program, in 1990. He was a member of the National Honor Society and the Honor Platoon and was instrumental in instituting a proper military flag ceremony, which he conducted daily while at Benedictine. John's interest in the mil-

itary was evident during childhood in his love of playing Soldier, dressing in fatigues, and patrolling ditches around his family's home. John loved travel, swimming, and listening to The Dave Matthews Band and Frank Sinatra. He participated in the Iron Man competition in Sydney, Australia, several years ago and was an ardent bike rider while at the forward operating base (FOB) in Iraq. But even with all of his interests, his father said, "the military was his life." Known to his friends as "JR", John was described by friends and colleagues as a genuine character. As the Brigade Surgeon put it, "Who rides a mountain bike in an FOB in Iraq, especially in 2003? John was unique." John was also known for his engaging personality that brightened up every room that he entered. His mother described him as "fiercely patriotic" and "never without a smile." He had an incandescent cheerfulness, wit, and an ability to make people laugh when times were tough. One of John's fellow officers remembered him this way: "He was one of the funniest, kindest, good-natured guys I've known. From the first time I met him, while stationed in Hawaii, he had me laughing." A former VMI classmate recalls, "JR could make the most mundane, tedious training enjoyable. Just a remarkable young man who would do anything for someone in need."

Colleagues attested to the high regard in which Teal was held and recounted how he treated every Soldier with respect, regardless of rank. Teal had a desire to make contributions to the lives of others. His civil affairs duties in Iraq required him to work closely with Iraqi town councils in the efforts to assist in the rebuilding of Iraq. This was a task he relished, and it fueled a desire to work eventually with a nongovernmental organization, such as the Red Cross. Emmie Teal remarked that her son spent his final days helping sick children and meeting with Iraqi citizens. Everything Captain John R. Teal did, he did with zeal, commitment, and competency. He grew from a boy playing Soldier into an honorable and dedicated man serving his country with passion and fervor. John Teal was a true American Soldier.



Captain Teal served his country admirably for several years. During his service, he was recognized with a number of awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, three Army Commendation Medals, three Army Achievement Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Expert Field Medical Badge, and the Air Assault Badge. The Army also memorialized Captain Teal with the establishment of the John R. Teal Leadership Award, to be given to Army Medical Service Corps officers serving in the Health Care Operations specialty who have performed in an exemplary manner while making significant contributions to the mission of the Army Medical Department. The award is presented annually to an officer in each component of the Army: Active, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard.

John is survived by his parents, Joseph and Emmie, and a sister, Elizabeth, as well as many extended family members and friends.



BRIAN K. VAN DUSEN

Died: May 9, 2003

Rank: Chief Warrant Officer Three

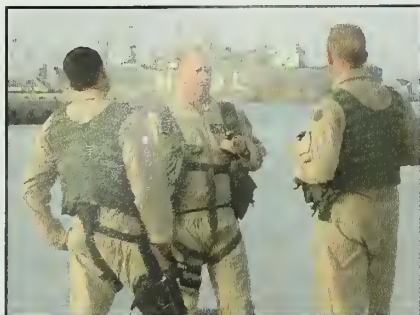
Unit: 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Chief Warrant Officer Three Brian K. Van Dusen was killed on May 9, 2003, when the UH-60A helicopter he was piloting as aircraft commander collided with a power line over the Tigris River, near Samarra, Iraq. The crew had been dispatched to evacuate a wounded Iraqi child and was maneuvering to avoid enemy ground fire when they struck the wires. Van Dusen and the aircraft were assigned to the 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance) based at Fort Carson, Colorado. He was deployed to Iraq to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Two other crewmembers onboard were also killed. A medic onboard was rescued from the river in critical condition. A mass for the fallen hero was held May 19, 2003, at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Security, Colorado.

Van Dusen had been in the Army for 19 years when the 571st was deployed to Iraq. He had received orders to a unit in Germany, but he requested that those orders be cancelled so he could deploy with the 571st. Company commander Major Bill LaChance said, "He believed in this mission." Van Dusen died performing the kind of mission that was his reason for joining the Army.

Brian lived by the motto, "You can rest when you die." He raced motorcycles, skied, hunted deer and pheasant, golfed, scuba dived, fished, played softball, and spent lots



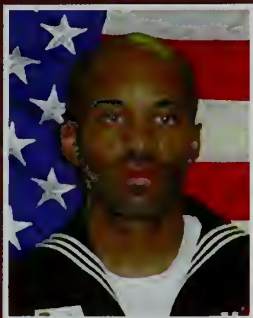
of time with his family. Those who knew him remember a man who could bring out the best in others. He had a gentle manner and a wonderful sense of humor, and he loved to fly. All he ever wanted to do was to become a pilot and help people. Most of all, he loved his family. Brian was especially close to his brother David, who remembered, "He believed in saving lives, not taking them." When he left Fort Carson for Iraq, Brian took with him a bag of lollipops. His wife, Bridgette, asked him what they were for, and he explained that the best way to a country's heart was

through its children, so he intended to throw the lollipops out to the kids as he flew above them. The day he died, she received a letter from him in which he happily reported that he had finally been able to hover close enough to the ground to throw out the lollipops, to the great delight of the Iraqi children.

Black Hawk pilot Dave Mozden served with Van Dusen with the 57th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Van Dusen flew with Mozden when he was still wet behind the ears, laughing at his eagerness and calmly helping him learn from his mistakes. Mozden says that it is because of Van Dusen and others like him that he is the pilot he is today. Van Dusen's compassion and enthusiasm made a big impression on the young pilot.

Other comrades remember that Van Dusen possessed natural skills and abilities as an aviator. But, more important, he had the attributes to be a good friend and an admirable person. Chief Warrant Officer Three (retired) Chuck Sage remembers Brian's sense of humor and calm demeanor. "When things go bad in the cockpit," Sage said, "calm is a good thing. Van Dusen didn't excite very easily and always made good decisions." Sage wants Van Dusen's children to be very proud of their father: "He was a good man and a good friend."

Brian is survived by his wife Bridgette; children, Joshua, Kelly, Angel, and Joseph; parents, David and Jacqueline; brother, David; and sister, Victoria.



MICHAEL VANN JOHNSON, JR.

Died: March 25, 2003

Rank: Petty Officer Second Class

Unit: Naval Medical Center San Diego, 1st Marine Division Detachment

Branch: U.S. Navy

Petty Officer Second Class Michael Vann Johnson, Jr., of Little Rock, Arkansas, died in the line of duty on March 25, 2003. The 25-year-old corpsman was assigned to the Naval Medical Center San Diego, 1st Marine Division Detachment, out of San Diego, California, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Johnson was killed by grenade shrapnel while riding in a Humvee with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, the unit he was assigned to care for in Iraq. Mourners filled the Agape Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, to pay tribute to the fallen hero on April 16, 2003. As fellow Sailors bade their final farewells with a 21-gun salute, Johnson was laid to rest at the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery in North Little Rock.

Born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Michael graduated from Parkview High School, where he played basketball and football. He then attended the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas, before he and his wife, Cherice, moved to San Diego, California, for his assignment to the 1st Marine Division. Michael enjoyed basketball, liked to draw, and was a fan of the Los Angeles Lakers.

At his memorial service, Michael was remembered as a "hero" and a "superhero." Almost as though he was trying to prepare her, Michael wrote his mother, Jana, short-



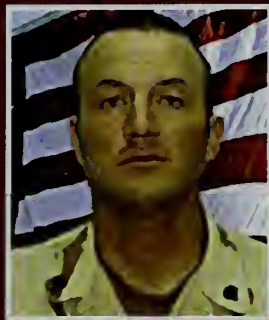
ly before his death, "Mom, I love you, and don't be afraid if I don't return; realize I'm in heaven with God." His mother reflected on the loss of her son during the service, "I'd like to think you took Michael while he was at his greatest performance in life. He had a very honorable job. He indeed did

his job, so I must let him go." Michael's father, himself a retired Air Force member, reflected on his son's passion for helping people and his motivation behind his decision to enter the field of combat medicine: "He never understood why anyone would mistreat anyone else. He had a big heart. And he is my hero. He died for the freedom that we have, the freedom that we love." Older sister Janisa said, "The men that he trained with, they were like brothers. He didn't want to see them go over and fight and he sit back and do nothing."

Petty Officer Third Class Christopher Johnston, who was with Michael the day he was killed, said, "Vann was a corpsman, and a damn good one." Battalion surgeon Lieutenant Commander Dave Healy stated during a renaming ceremony in Johnson's honor, "That I have had the honor to work with men like Johnson and see them

work to save lives in the heat of battle is something that I will be eternally grateful for." The Hospital Corpsman Pledge reads, in part, "I dedicate my heart, mind and strength to the work before me. I shall do all within my power to show in myself an example of all that is honorable and good." Johnson did more than just live that pledge; he died adhering to it. Johnson dedicated his heart, mind, and strength not only to his work, but also to his family and his country. As a tribute to the sacrifice he made, the clinic that Johnson worked at in San Diego, The Branch Medical Clinic, was renamed Johnson Hall in a naming ceremony on September 17, 2003, at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot. In attendance were his family and many of the Sailors he worked with. The hall is lined with a painting and many photographs of Johnson so that those who walk its passage may observe "an example of all that is honorable and good."

Posthumously, Johnson was awarded the Purple Heart and promoted to Petty Officer Second Class. Michael is survived by his wife, Cherice; his father, Michael Sr.; his mother, Jana; and seven siblings.



RONALD W. BAKER

Died: October 13, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 39th Support Battalion, Arkansas Army National Guard

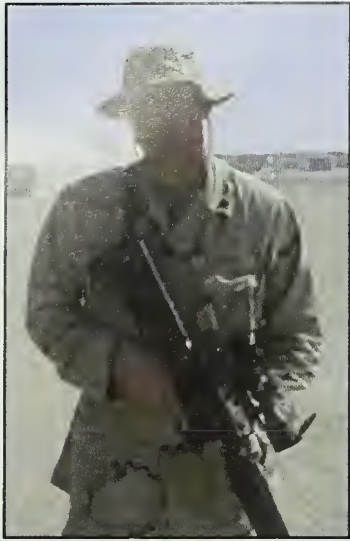
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2001-2004

Sergeant Ronald W. Baker died on October 13, 2004, of injuries sustained on October 7 when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near his patrol vehicle in Taji, Iraq. Baker was a medical supply specialist assigned to the 39th Support Battalion, Arkansas Army National Guard, Lonoke, Arkansas. He was buried with military honors at the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery in North Little Rock, Arkansas, on October 21, 2004. To honor his memory, his hometown declared the day of his funeral "Sergeant Ronald Baker Day." He was promoted posthumously to sergeant.

Baker joined the Arkansas Army National Guard shortly after September 11, 2001. He worked as a medical supply technician and was responsible for requisitioning, receipt, inventory management, storage, and preservation of medical supplies and equipment. He had served several months at Camp Taji before volunteering for the supply mission that was attacked.

Baker was in the gunner's turret of a Humvee when a roadside bomb concealed in a parked car exploded as the convoy passed. His unit knew time was of the essence, so the Soldiers pulled the damaged Humvee onto a flatbed truck and rushed it to the Combat Support Hospital at Camp Anaconda, near Balad, Iraq, with Baker



still inside. "He volunteered to go on that mission," said Lieutenant Colonel Allen Hargis. "As far as I'm concerned, Specialist Ronald Baker died a hero."

Ronald lived his entire life in Arkansas. He was born in Searcy and was raised with his brother and sister in Cabot. He continued to live in this town after his marriage and the birth of his daughter. His civilian employment was a business of which he was part owner with his father in Beebe, Arkansas.



Baker's close friend and fellow Soldier, Sergeant Les Neal, thinks of him every day. They became friends at Fort Hood, Texas, and he will always consider Baker his friend. Sergeant Johnnie Kyle Wood began his military career together with Baker when they were in infantry school, and Wood remembered how gung-ho Baker was. The day they left Arkansas for Fort Hood, they all went to lunch, and all

Baker could talk about was how much he loved his family, his wife, and his little girl.

Ronald is survived by his wife, Joanne, and their daughter, Alexis.



PABLITO PEÑA BRIONES, JR.

Died: December 28, 2004

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 1st Marine Division Detachment, Naval Medical Center San Diego

Branch: U.S. Navy

Hospital Corpsman Pablito Peña Briones, Jr., died on December 28, 2004, while serving his country in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A native of Anaheim, California, the 22-year-old died as the result of a non-combat-related incident in Fallujah, Iraq. His home unit was the 1st Marine Division Detachment, Naval Medical Center San Diego out of San Diego, California.

As a corpsman, Briones was one of the most respected members of his team. Former comrade Hospital Corpsman Aaron Jackson of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, attended Field Medical Service School with him and remembered him as an “awesome” person. Another comrade, Mina Lorenzoni, served in the same unit with Briones: “We carpooled together to Camp Pendleton; we worked together, and he was the most hardworking doc.” Chaplain (LCDR), Father Ron Camarda, remembers when Pablito came into his life briefly at Bravo Surgical. “I prayed with him and shared a tear with him. I lift him up in prayer often. Peace, joy, love.” Shipmate Petty Officer Third Class Nunez called Pablito his hero and bid him farewell: “May you rest in peace and know your efforts were not in vain. HOOORAAHH! and may you hear that up there.”

On January 3, 2005, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered Capitol flags flown at half-staff in honor of Pablito. The governor said, "The loss of Seaman Briones is felt deeply by all who knew him. His memory will live on in his community, through his loved ones, those who served with him, and those who enjoy freedom because of his sacrifice." The governor's sentiments mirror those of all citizens who owe a debt of gratitude to Briones for his service and sacrifice.



DAVID A. CEDERGREN

Died: September 11, 2004

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Forces Atlantic

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2000-2004

Petty Officer Third Class David A. Cedergren died accidentally from possible electrocution on September 11, 2004, near Iskandariyah, Iraq. He was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Forces, Atlantic, at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. David was laid to rest at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Cedergren enlisted in April 2000 and trained at Naval Station Great Lakes, Great Lakes, Illinois. He was promoted to Petty Officer Third Class in March 2003 and volunteered for training as a field medic in October 2003, knowing it would increase his chances of being sent to Iraq. In Iraq he was working with a group of Marines assigned to small boat patrols on Iraq's rivers, and he stayed with the detachment when they were transferred to land duties. His last letter to his sister recounted how he had tended wounded Marines peppered by fragments of an improvised explosive device.

David grew up with a large and loving family in Zimmerman, Minnesota. He dropped out of alternative high school, but re-enrolled at South St. Paul High School after deciding to join the Navy as a medic. His brother, a Navy veteran, recalled "He knew



going into the military would straighten him out." In his four years in the Navy, David received several letters of commendation and appreciation. He planned to leave the Navy upon completion of his active duty service obligation and attend nursing school to become a nurse anesthetist.

His family recalled him as a "protector" with a cheerful smile. A brother recounted

that David "didn't go over there as someone to kill, he went over there because he wanted to help people." David's big heart and compassion for others knew no bounds. He would have given anything he had to anybody at any time. "And he had a smile that would cheer anybody up, no matter what they were going through." David was the kind of guy who would share his care packages from home if he noticed a fellow Sailor without one. He would often joke with his sister, Jodi, to help ease her fears, that Iraq was the land of "long, never-ending sandy beaches." Throughout his time in Iraq, his good humor and sense of purpose never faltered. When not occupied with caring for others, David liked working on cars and motorcycles and practicing tae kwon do. David couldn't wait to return home that October. His close and loving family was expanding. His brother Brad had recently married, and his sister Jodi was pregnant and due in November. Jodi now works with veterans, which helps her honor her brother and carry on his memory and work. David's mother, Deb, is

thankful to all those who touched her son's life and helped to make him the person he was. His brother Barry speaks for the entire family by saying that although it has gotten easier to deal with his little brother's death through the years, he is still missed a great deal.

Petty Officer Third Class Chris Reynolds fondly remembers Cedergren as a tall, lanky guy with a strangely deep voice that sometimes made him seem a little more intimidating than he actually was. Reynolds quickly learned that Cedergren was an exemplary Sailor (recruiting-poster quality!), an exceptional corpsman, and a great shipmate. Both the Hospital Corps and the Marine Corps will miss him and are honored to have known and served alongside a true American hero. Corpsman Brady Freeman served alongside Cedergren and feels the loss of his close friend deeply. Freeman calls his friend a true Green Side Corpsman and Devil Doc. Many of his fellow Sailors who worked with Cedergren at Naval Hospital Cherry Point, Cherry Point, North Carolina, knew him to be a wonderful shipmate who brought out the best in everyone: "Goodbye, Sailor, and thank you. You are my hero."

David is survived by his father and stepmother, Bart and Pam Cedergren; his mother, Deb Cedergren; two brothers, Barry and Brad; two sisters, Jodi and Kristy; and a large extended family. Memorial donations were requested to the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society of Arlington, Virginia.



RUSSELL L. COLLIER

Died: October 3, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery Regiment, 39th Infantry Brigade, Arkansas National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1975-2004

Sergeant Russell L. Collier, an Army Medical Specialist, was killed on October 3, 2004, when, without thought for his own safety and carrying only his medic's bag, he ran to the aid of Sergeant Christopher Potts, who had been hit by small arms fire in Taji, Iraq. Collier had carefully disarmed himself so that he could quickly render aid to the injured Soldier. While he advanced under direct enemy fire, he was killed. Collier served with the 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery Regiment, 39th Infantry Brigade, Arkansas National Guard, out of Russellville, Arkansas, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried with military honors on October 12, 2004, at the Springfield National Cemetery in Springfield, Missouri.

Collier served in the Army, Navy, and National Guard for more than 18 years. He received his emergency medical technician license a few months before he volunteered to go to Iraq in April 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Russell, who was one of three siblings, grew up in a military family and followed his father, now deceased, as he served on Army bases around the world. Russell joined the Army as soon as he graduated from high school in Wurzburg, Germany, in 1975. He was married to Veronica, also known as "Rocky," and was the father of two adult



children, Mary Virginia and Wayne, and a nine-year-old boy, Hunter. Russell had a passion for cooking and Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

As a medic, Russell earned the respect of his peers, friends, and fellow Soldiers. "He died doing what he loved and if



he had to die, he would have wanted it this way," said Carolyn Pfaus, talking about an older brother she described as protective. Pastor Tommy Turner remarked how Russell was a real American hero who laid down his life for a friend. He paid the ultimate price doing something he loved and believed in. Russell is greatly missed by his many friends, including Tammy Marshall, who said, "He left a great impression on all who knew him. His funny jokes

and contagious smile stay with you for life." "The measure of life is not its duration, but its donation," Specialist Edward Guadalupe said

at the memorial service in Baghdad, held in front of hundreds of Russell's fellow Soldiers. They recall a man who found his life's purpose in caring for his fellow Soldiers. Russell was faced with the decision all medics know that they may one day make, but hope never to face. "Your job as a medic is to get to that Soldier and get him out of there," said Master Sergeant Kenneth Gillmore. "He was going to get that Soldier to drag him out of harm's way when he died by his side. I don't think you could classify him as anything but a hero." "Sergeant Collier...died serving our country with courage and with honor and has forever forged memories in the souls of each and every Soldier of Task Force Aleutian," said Lieutenant Colonel Keith Klemmer.

For gallantry, Sergeant Collier was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, and during his dedicated service he received the Distinguished Service Medal, Purple Heart, and the Arkansas Distinguished Service Medal. In his memory, the Harrison Arkansas Rotary Foundation has established a scholarship fund for his youngest child.

Russell is survived by his wife, Rocky; his children, Hunter, Mary Virginia, and Wayne; and his sister, Carolyn Pfaus.



EDGAR P. DACLAN, JR.

Died: September 10, 2004

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2002-2004

Specialist Edgar P. Daclan, Jr., an Army medic attached to the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany, was killed on September 10, 2004, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his patrol in the central Iraqi city of Balad, north of Baghdad. His unit had been responding to indirect fire from a covered position where the enemy could not be seen. He was leading the way when the homemade bomb exploded. He was buried with full military honors at the Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, California, on September 24, 2004.

Daclan joined the military in November 2002. After completing basic training and advanced individual training as a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, he was assigned to an infantry unit in Germany. He worked hard in his off-duty hours, taking courses with more senior troops and trying to learn as much as he could to be the best health care professional possible. In February 2004, his unit was deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He enthusiastically assumed the duties of an infantryman to support and ensure mission completion.

Edgar was born on May 14, 1980, in Cebu City, the Philippines. He and his family immigrated to the United States in 1993, living first in Long Beach, California, and then in



the Los Angeles suburb of Torrance. Just shy of completing his degree in electrical engineering at California State University in Long Beach, he surprised his family by joining the Army in November 2002. His sister Iris said, "He was upset about the terrorist attacks. He joined because he wanted to make a difference, do something for our country. He did a brave thing. He's our hero and we're very proud of him."

Edgar's patriotism and pride in the United States flowed into all areas of his life. When relatives moved to the United States, he took care of them, got them into school, and showed them around with pride and exuberance. He wanted them to feel honored to be able to live in such a great country, where they had opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have. Friends and family recall how they never saw Edgar without a smile or in a moment of anger. Iris said, "My family and I are very proud of Edgar's sacrifice—to give one's life for others is the ultimate sacrifice. For now, I can only speak for myself, but I still grieve for his sudden departure. Edgar was my only brother, and to see him go so soon is very painful, especially the fact that he died so tragically."

He was a combat medic in charge of 35 Soldiers, and he took care of the troops to the best of his abilities. His family had the privilege of meeting one of the Soldiers he saved. Daclan was so dedicated to ensuring that the Soldier would survive his injuries that he would come back from a 16-hour mission and stay up all night tending to this Soldier.

After Daclan's death, his superior officer called from Iraq and told the family that he was a "very special Soldier" who was very courageous

and knew his duties. Daclan's fellow Soldiers said he often went beyond what was expected of him as a combat medic. "Patrol after patrol, day in and day out, Doc was always there to take care of his platoon," said First Lieutenant Jon R. Martin, Daclan's platoon leader. "This is what you expect from any medic. But Doc did not just ride along to provide medical support. He lived the life of an infantryman. Boots on the ground, through the brush. And he loved being point man. Doc led the way in the hunt for the enemy, and this is what he was doing when the IED took his life."



Martin said Daclan also frequently tended to Iraqis. "Doc did not just take care of his Soldiers. He often found himself aiding wounded Iraqis who were simply caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. Doc would not discriminate. He came here to help, and he did just that." He is described as a Soldier who loved to help his comrades and his family, and wanted to serve his adopted country.

In recognition of his service, Daclan was posthumously awarded United States citizenship, as well as the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Edgar is survived by his parents, Edgar Sr. and Gertrude; and sisters Cristine, Ira, Sheila, Aileen, and Iris. He also leaves behind a large extended family that includes not only blood relations but grateful citizens from around the country.



NORMAN DARLING

Died: April 29, 2004

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Armored Division

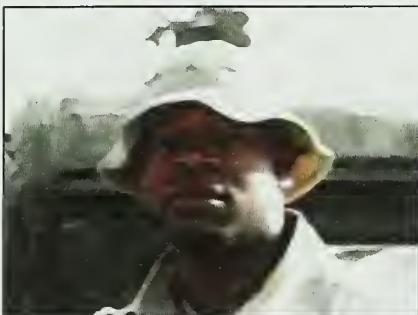
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2004

Private First Class Norman Darling died on April 29, 2004, in Baghdad, Iraq. He was one of eight Soldiers killed by a suicide car bomb as his unit conducted a dismounted patrol sweep for improvised explosive devices. The 29-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Armored Division in Baumholder, Germany. Family and friends said their final farewells on May 10, 2004, when he was buried at the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, Massachusetts.

Norman was born and raised in the Bahamas. Shortly after high school graduation, he moved to the United States and became a legal permanent resident. Before his enlistment, he worked as an account administrator for Boston Financial in Quincy, Massachusetts. He enlisted in the Army in January 2003 as a way to provide a better future for his daughter Camryn. He had tremendous compassion and a drive to help others, so he chose the honorable field of Army medic, hoping to pursue a career in medicine. He deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in January 2004.

Friends remembered Norman as an outgoing, bright, and happy person who charmed everyone he met and who enjoyed the military very much. A family friend, Jeanette Richardson of the Bahamas, described him as "loving and gentle." She said, "Norman has



impacted so many lives, and those of us who got a chance to know him personally would all say that you could not find a more loving, gentle, sincere person who was always so full of life. Norman was like a breath of fresh air when things were going wrong. I will miss his laughter, his sense of humor." Another friend, Diane McCarey of Massachusetts, described a "lovable, gentle, and sincere" man with a "wonderful smile." She said, "He was a very outgoing, bright, happy person. He charmed everyone he met. He enjoyed the military very much. He found himself there." Another friend, Christian, memorialized him this way: "To say that I will miss Norman would be a tremendous understatement.

His huge smile, warm heart, and strong yet gentle presence will live in my mind forever. You were a loving father and a true friend. The world was a better place with you in it."

Darling's comrades recalled him as a man of tremendous energy who always wore a smile. Teammate Robert Floran, noncommissioned officer in charge for the medical section in the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, said Darling was "an honorable Soldier and a high-speed medic who had a commitment to excellence and love for his job and the Soldiers he cared for." Floran said Darling was a great Soldier who believed in what he was doing. He said he was "highly respected and always gave 100 percent in training and treating Soldiers."

Men like Norman Darling are few and far between. With his gentle spirit, warm smile, and contagious laughter, Norman's 29-year presence on this earth blessed and brightened the world and the lives of those around him—a joy and a light that will last forever.

Darling was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, in addition to a certificate of U.S. citizenship.

He leaves behind his wife, Kimberly; adoring daughter, Camryn; proud parents, Sidney and Madlyn; and siblings, Jaye, Christopher, Rodney, Cindy, and Crystal.



MICHAEL A. DIRAIMONDO

Died: January 8, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2001-2004

Sergeant Michael A. DiRaimondo was killed on January 8, 2004, when the UH-60 MEDEVAC helicopter on which he was serving as a flight medic was shot down near Fallujah, Iraq. He was assigned to the 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance), home-stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Also killed were three other crewmembers from the 571st and five Soldiers being transported to a medical facility in Baghdad. A memorial service was held by the 571st Medical Company on January 11, 2004. His body was then flown home to Simi Valley, California, where he was buried in Assumption Cemetery.

The son of a Vietnam War veteran, DiRaimondo joined the Army in August 2001. In response to the events of September 11, he decided to become a medic. After completing Basic Training, he reported to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to train for that job specialty, with the long-term goal of becoming a paramedic. That decision pleased his father, Tony, who said, "The more he learned about being a medic and taking care of people who were wounded, the better he liked it."

Michael was born in Somers Point, New Jersey, and moved with his family to Simi Valley, California, in 1985. He graduated from Simi Valley High School in 1999 and

attended Moorpark College for one year. He was an avid surfer and snowboarder. In early 2001, while visiting Mountain High, where he was taking first aid classes, Michael saw a skier fall and injure himself after taking a slope too fast. While his friends went for help, Michael stayed to assist the victim. According to his father, when the paramedics arrived, they said, "Please don't leave...you can help us with this patient." He believes that Michael's purpose in life began to take shape that day. Michael's family takes great comfort in knowing that he found such a noble purpose in his short life. The last four months of his life were the best. He had found his calling and was living his dream. His family says he had discovered a well of self-confidence within himself.

DiRaimondo was initially assigned to a ground combat unit as a field medic and deployed with his unit to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Occasionally working with MEDEVAC crews, he was very impressed with their operation and volunteered for a transfer to an air ambulance company. After several months, his request was approved and he joined the 571st. He received upgrade training from the unit's medics and impressed them with his desire to learn. They certified him as qualified, and he was soon flying line missions.

His first truly challenging mission came on November 2, 2003, when he and his crew responded with five other helicopters and crews to the crash of a large CH-47 downed near Fallujah. Working quickly with the other medics and crew members, DiRaimondo helped the 42 Soldiers onboard the CH-47, many of whom were still trapped in the smoldering wreckage. His efforts helped save 26 Soldiers. Fellow Soldiers saw DiRaimondo as a breath of fresh air in their platoon. He had a great attitude and such a high level of motivation that they felt energized in his presence. DiRaimondo loved the mission and was on the flying schedule almost every day.

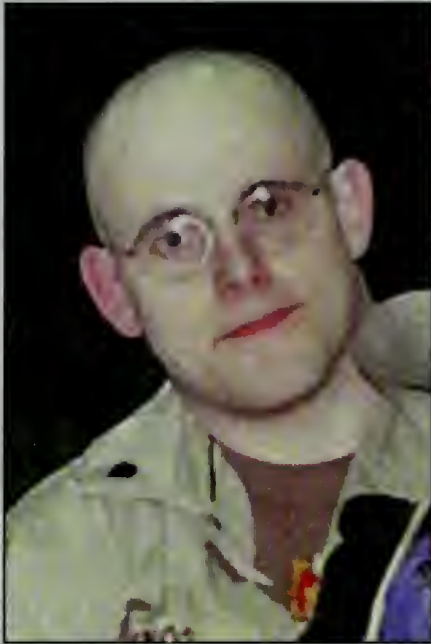
A fellow comrade and friend who served with Michael in Iraq memorialized him in an online memorial page. He fondly recalled that Michael was "a great friend and a great guy, how you made such an impact on my life, and how much you enjoyed life." He continued that Michael would not want tears shed over him—that wasn't his style. He would want his comrades to have a "beer or six" and talk about the good times. The Soldier added that no matter how much time passes, Michael will always be in his heart as a dear friend and "a great person who enjoyed the hell out of life and lived every day to the fullest."

Another comrade, Sergeant First Class Thomas Black, proclaimed, "Never have I seen a soldier that was so passionate about wanting to fly in Blackhawks as a flight medic. He was a breath of fresh air and a pleasure to work with and be around. He took his job very seriously and had a drive for helping people, no matter their background, that was unequalled. Mike ("Dorrito") was an inspiration to me personally and to all whom he worked with."

DiRaimondo was awarded three medals, including the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, and was posthumously promoted to Sergeant. At Fort Carson, Colorado, a clinic was dedicated to him.

To honor his memory, his parents established the Michael A. DiRaimondo Foundation to provide academic aid to young men and women who want to train as paramedics. "That was my son's purpose in life," his father said. "If we can enable one other person to learn how to save lives, then Michael lives on."

Michael is survived by his parents, Tony and Carol, and sisters, Dawn and Danielle.



PETER G. ENOS

Died: April 9, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2000-2004

Sergeant Peter G. Enos lost his life on April 9, 2004, in Bayji, Iraq, while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 24-year-old Army medic was killed when the patrol vehicle he was riding in was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Infantry Division in Schweinfurt, Germany. Family and close friends celebrated his life in a private ceremony before honoring his wishes and laying him in his final resting spot with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

Peter was born April 17, 1979, and graduated from Dartmouth High School in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in 1997, where other students literally marched to his beat—Peter was a bass drummer for the marching band. The band was so talented they were given the honor of performing in the 1996 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California. In November 2000, Peter fulfilled a lifelong goal of serving his country as a Soldier and enlisted in the Army. His ambition was to be an officer in an airborne–air assault unit.

Peter was an exemplary Soldier who, his wife said, “believed in his country and was willing to undertake any mission he was assigned.” She described her husband as “a



kind husband and father," adding, "He was extremely handy and loved to take things apart to see how they worked. He was loved so much and his loss has left an unrepairable hole in my heart and his parents' as well." Deborah Enos, Peter's mother, recalled, "He was a great child; he was a fantastic

person, a wonderful person." Peter's percussion instructor throughout his school years, Bill Kingsland, remembered, "He was one of those students that knew the importance of putting the effort behind everything and worked toward his goal." He recalls that Peter's career goals were to join either law enforcement or the military. Kingsland said Peter played in the school's indoor percussion program as well as the marching band. He said that Peter "liked to have a good time with his friends, but he also made a big commitment to the program here. He was a dependable kid who did all that he was asked to do."

Enos was remembered by his teammates as an outstanding medic. Many comrades honored him in an online memorial page. One, Specialist Freeman, recalled Enos' professionalism and commitment: "Specialist Enos was a special Soldier, a true professional who knew how to be a combat Soldier as well as a medic...well, he was more

like a doctor with all the knowledge he had...he could tell you what was wrong with you and why while naming all these different parts of the body, leaving your head spinning! A true warrior who settled for nothing less than the best."

Another colleague, Captain Nancy McLaughlin of Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, wrote, "I had the honor and privilege of knowing Peter. He was such a good person. I will never forget all the talks that we had about babies. I was pregnant at the same time Shannon was, and Peter and I used to swap milestone stories. He would report to me that the baby was kicking or that Shannon wasn't feeling good. Peter was the ultimate medic...He would always hang out in the ATLS tent trying to learn more medical stuff. It was a pleasure teaching him everything I knew. I was sure that he would someday apply to PA school in the Army. He had unlimited potential...Peter was an ultimate Soldier and father." An outstanding medic and Soldier, Enos was, above all, a devoted husband, father, and son.

Enos was posthumously promoted from Specialist to Sergeant. He was also awarded the Bronze Star for Valor, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Medical Badge for outstanding medical service during battle.

Peter leaves to mourn his loss his beloved wife, Shannon; his son and "Little Man," Marcus; and beloved parents, Joseph and Deborah.



BILLY GOMEZ

Died: October 27, 2004

Rank: Corporal

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division (Light)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1997-2004

Corporal Billy Gomez died on October 27, 2004, at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany. He was fatally wounded on October 20 when the vehicle he was riding in hit an improvised land mine. The 25-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He was serving with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, known as the Wolfhounds, and was in Afghanistan supporting his country in Operation Enduring Freedom. Members of the Wolfhounds gathered to pay their final respects to their fallen comrade on October 30, 2004, at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E in Afghanistan.

Originally from Perris, California, Gomez enlisted in the Army in August 1997. He received his assignment to the 25th Infantry Division in July 2001.

The youngest of triplets, Billy was born on August 11, 1979, along with his brothers, Joey and Mark. The trio joined their older sister, Debbie, and the four siblings were each other's best friend. Billy's mother, Maria Carmen, described her son as "always the funny one, always trying to make everyone laugh, never really one for conflict. But he and his brothers sure did like to mess with their sister!" Both of his brothers are

in the Army as well, having enlisted in the same order as they were born—Joey first, Mark second, and Billy last.

Billy and his brother, Mark, planned to stay in the medical field. The two were stationed in Hawaii together and were sent to Afghanistan together, serving at different bases. Maria Carmen stated that, “Billy was proud to be in the Army; he loved being a medic.”

Doug Adelson, Gomez’s former platoon sergeant, fondly remembered the Soldier. “He was one of my favorite, best Soldiers. He never questioned anything, no matter how crappy the job you asked him to do...it was an honor to have known him.” Captain Daniel Beard, commander of the battalion’s Headquarters Company, spoke of his medic during the Wolfhound memorial and described Billy as “an infantryman’s best friend” and someone who “always had a smile on his face regardless of what the task might be.” He said, “Not once did I hear Corporal Gomez say ‘that’s not my job’ or ‘I can’t,’ because that wasn’t Corporal Gomez. Not only was Gomez proficient as a medic, he was also a Soldier with a can-do attitude.”

Gomez’s best friend and fellow medic, Specialist Visala Tui, spoke about meeting him and how Gomez taught him how to pack his

A-bag and how to tie a square knot. Tui recalled Gomez’s loyalty to the Oakland Raiders football team, “despite their pathetic losing streak.” In a moment of poignant affection, Tui said, “My kids will always remember an Uncle Gomez, a person who helped their dad in the Army, a hero who fought for their freedom. They will hear stories about how brave he was, and how he inspired others to fight on. They will remember Billy Gomez because I will tell them.”

When the family learned of Billy’s fatal accident, they immediately gathered in Germany to join their son and brother during his last moments. His mother recalls, “I was there for the beginning of his life, and I was there in the end. My heart aches for all the things he will not experience, but I truly believe that he is still here with us in our hearts and in spirit. I see his smile in my grandson, Anthony, who was born two months after his passing. Billy would have been an awesome uncle because he was a good son, a good brother, and a good Soldier and friend.”

Billy is survived by his mother, Maria Carmen; his brothers, Joey and Mark; his sister Debbie; and his nephew, Anthony.



MELISSA J. HOBART

Died: June 6, 2004

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: E Company, 215th Forward Support Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2004

Private First Class Melissa J. Hobart lost her life on June 6, 2004, while in Iraq serving her country in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was on guard duty in Baghdad, Iraq, when she collapsed. The 22-year-old combat medic was assigned to E Company, 215th Forward Support Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas. More than 100 family and friends gathered at the Summerville Presbyterian Church in Summerville, South Carolina, on June 10, 2004, to honor her. She was laid to rest in Connecticut, where most of her family resides.

Raised in East Haven, Connecticut, Melissa moved with her family to South Carolina, where she attended Stall High School in North Charleston. She attended the nursing program at Trident Technical College in Charleston for a year and a half before deciding, in 2003, that the Army could offer the opportunity for a better life for her and her young daughter, Alexis. Motivated by the desire to help others, Melissa chose to become a medic and graduated at the top of her class in her healthcare specialist course. Melissa was athletic, playing soccer, basketball, and baseball. She was also involved in dance and played the flute. She loved to listen to music and watch movies with her friends. She was an avid reader who shared with her mother a passion for Stephen King novels. The two would argue over who got first crack at each new release.

Family members describe Melissa as “smart” and “spunky and energetic.” Her mother recalled, “She was always on the go and you couldn’t keep up with her.” Melissa was also described as “personable and caring,” and her brother Gary noted that she was someone who “would be willing to help anybody.” He proudly declared that Melissa was his “hero, even before this.” Gary, too, is an emergency medical technician. Obviously, the vein of service to others runs in the family.

A friend and colleague, Bethany Villavicencio, remarked on Melissa’s commitment to helping others, “She wanted to be a nurse and make a difference.” Another friend commented, “She had more honor and integrity than any of us.” Melissa made many friends during her 14 months in the Army. One of those friends, Dania Chavez Perez, wrote in memory of the comrade that touched her life: “Hobart was

a funny, crazy, very positive Soldier...she was always so positive. I remember she would always talk about her daughter...it was who she was working so hard for.”

Melissa is absolutely a hero for the sacrifice she made in service to her country, yet she was a hero long before she made that ultimate sacrifice. Melissa was born a hero. She had an innate passion for helping others. Alexis will grow up knowing her mother not only sacrificed her life in service to others, but that she sacrificed everything so that her daughter would have a better life, greater opportunities, and the freedom to pursue her dreams.

Melissa leaves behind the joy of her life, her daughter, Alexis; her proud father, Gary; stepfather, Edward; and brothers, Stephen and Gary. Melissa’s mother, Constance, died May 24, 2007.



AARON N. HOLLEYMAN

Died: August 30, 2004

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1996-2004

Staff Sergeant Aaron N. Holleyman lost his life while conducting combat patrols in Khutayiah, Iraq, on August 30, 2004, when the vehicle he was riding in hit a makeshift bomb. Supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 26-year-old Special Forces medical sergeant was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He had been in Iraq on his second tour for less than two months at the time of his death. On September 7, 2004, his funeral took place at the Trinity Baptist Church in Carthage, Mississippi, after which he was buried with full military honors in Monticello Baptist Church Cemetery.

Holleyman joined the Army as an infantryman on June 12, 1996, immediately after his high school graduation. He completed Infantry and Airborne Training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and, in November 1996, he was assigned as a Platoon Armorer to the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In 2000, Holleyman was selected for Special Forces training and was assigned to Fort Bragg's 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) in January 2001. He completed his Medical Sergeant training for Special Forces and was assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group in September 2003. Holleyman's military education includes the Special Forces Qualification Course, the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course,



the Airborne Course, the Combat Life Saver Course, and the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Course. Holleyman deployed on his first tour to Iraq to support his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom in October 2003. On July 12, 2004, he volunteered to return to Iraq, although he had suffered some hearing loss from a roadside bomb explosion during his first tour and was not required to return.

Aaron was born in Rankin County, Mississippi, to Ross and Glenda Holleyman. He attended school in Mississippi until the family moved to Montana in 1993. Aaron graduated from Glasgow High School in Glasgow, Montana, in 1996. He played both basketball and football. Aaron was an avid sports fan, loved Mississippi football, his family, and his job.

Former teachers remember that Aaron's classmates and teachers were fond of him. Teacher Larry Mires from Glasgow High School described Aaron as "an absolute joy and delight to have in class." He affectionately recalled, "He was polite and respectful of his teachers, his school, and his fellow classmates. He had a good sense of humor. He was always upbeat and always positive." Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Glasgow, Bruce Plummer, described Aaron as "a good all-around, small-town American boy, one of those kids that did all the sports."

Aaron's family members recall that his dedication to his job was unquestionable. They said that the Army really was close to his heart and that he felt proud to be doing what he was doing. Aaron's father reflected, "He saw it as a job he was willing to do, that he had put himself in the position and ... answered the call."

Holleyman's former commander, Captain Daniel Diamond, remembered Holleyman affectionately during a memorial service at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He said, "I like to call him a friend. He was a commander's choice because he was intelligent and hardworking. He had a plethora of qualities that I would admire for a lifetime."

Having participated in more than a hundred combat missions in western Iraq, Hollyeman was wounded during one of those missions along with two other Soldiers, but, true to his calling and devotion to his Soldiers, Holleyman treated his injured comrades before treating himself. A comrade who was injured in a separate incident, Staff Sergeant Joe Briscoe, talked about meeting Aaron. He described the trip on a MEDEVAC helicopter where Aaron "...never left my side and stayed with me the whole time. He always had a smile and respect for a fellow team member."

A fellow Soldier memorialized Hollyeman as follows: "Aaron was a friend and comrade. I watched him save the lives of two of our teammates. I wish we could have returned the favor. He was a dedicated father and a friend to the oppressed...We will remember Aaron not as he died, but as he lived."

Sergeant Holleyman's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Medical Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Driver and Mechanic Badge, the Parachutist Badge and the Special Forces Tab.

Aaron is survived by his parents, Ross and Glenda Holleyman; three children, Erin, Shelby, and Zach; sister, Kelly; and brother, Daniel.



PHILIP A. JOHNSON, JR.

Died: January 8, 2004

Rank: Chief Warrant Officer Two

Unit: 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Chief Warrant Officer Two Philip A. Johnson, Jr., was killed on January 8, 2004, when an enemy missile near Fallujah, Iraq, shot down "Witch Doctor 11," a UH-60A MEDEVAC helicopter that he was piloting. He was assigned to the 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance), home-stationed with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Carson, Colorado. Also killed were three other crew members from the 571st and five Soldiers being transported to a medical facility in Baghdad. Johnson is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Born in Davenport, Iowa, in 1972, Philip grew up in Chicago, Illinois. After his family moved to Mobile, Alabama, he attended the University of South Alabama before enlisting in the Marine Corps. He served for four years as a C-130 crew member and then left the Marine Corps to join the Army. There, he became a warrant officer and completed flight training to become an Army Aviator.

Subsequently assigned to the 571st, he deployed for duty in Iraq with the unit in 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For the next several months, he flew daily MEDEVAC missions with the 571st and supported Army combat units as they defeated the foe and began post-combat operations.



Johnson's fellow Soldiers recall him as the man they went to when they wanted a straight answer. They described him as a gifted aviator, a man with legendary wit, and a Soldier committed to success. "I'm torn between grief and pride," Chief Warrant Officer Eric Brodeur said. Johnson is remembered as much for the dozens of lives he protected as for his personal sacrifices and accomplishments. Johnson pulled wounded troops out of

ambush zones where the red crosses of mercy emblazoned on the Black Hawk helicopter didn't deter Iraqi bullets and missiles.

Friends and family have been overwhelmed with the amount of support they are receiving from around the world. Their grief over their loss is accompanied by a sense of great pride. Philip was living the

life of his dreams. He was able to combine his love of flying with the noble act of saving lives. Philip is remembered as a great person with an indomitable spirit. He paid the ultimate price and will be missed by many for as long as his memory lives on. "He was very committed. He was doing what he wanted to do, and he felt he was doing the right thing," said his father.

At graveside, Army Brigadier General Eric Schoomaker, commanding general of the Southeast Regional Medical Command, presented the family with the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, and Air Medal, which Johnson had received for his service. After the presentation, Johnson's father proudly and wistfully said of his son, "He was very committed. He was doing what he wanted to do, and he felt he was doing the right thing."

Philip is survived by his wife, Melissa; his parents, Philip and Barbara; and his brothers, Matthew and Peter.



GUSSIE M. JONES

Died: March 7, 2004

Rank: Captain

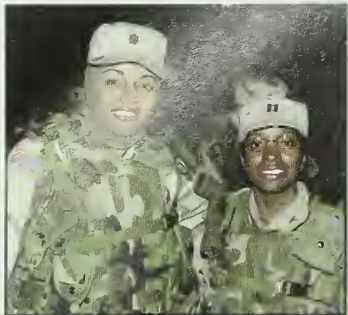
Unit: 31st Combat Support Hospital

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1988-2004

Captain Gussie M. Jones, an Army Nurse Corps officer assigned to the 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad, Iraq, died of cardiac arrest on March 7, 2004, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Even though Jones was exhausted from working a full shift, she immediately answered the call when an urgent request came in for assistance from another unit. After funeral services on March 15, 2004, at Saint Mark Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, Jones was buried in the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery.

Jones had a 15-year Army career, serving as an enlisted Soldier for ten years and an officer for five years. When she enlisted in the Army in 1988, she worked as a personnel specialist, earning the rank of sergeant. In 1996, she entered the Army Enlisted Commissioning Program to obtain a bachelor of science in nursing. Jones graduated from Syracuse University and was commissioned as an Army Nurse Corps officer in 1998. Her first assignment was Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, from 1998 to 2002, where she worked on several medical surgical and ambulatory care units. After training in intensive care, she was moved to the Intensive Care Unit at William Beaumont Army Medical Center, Fort Bliss, Texas, handling a wide range of critically ill trauma, pediatrics, medical, and surgical patients. In January 2004, Jones was deployed to Iraq, where she toiled numerous hours in the intensive



care unit to provide the best care to service members, civilian casualties, and enemy combatant patients. In February 2004, when part of the 31st Combat Support Hospital located in Baghdad was experiencing significant personnel shortages, she volunteered to help out.

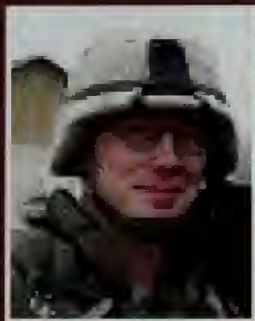
Gussie grew up in Palestine, Arkansas; tragically, both her parents died before she ever left home. Her siblings remember that they all pulled together and helped each other grow up. All through her hardships at such an early age, Gussie found strength and guidance from her strong belief in God and family. Unlike so many young people left in a destitute situation, Gussie saw education as a way out of poverty. She worked hard in high school, graduating as an honor roll student. Using federal grants, she was the first of her family to go to college, obtaining a degree in business administration in 1986. Two years later, she decided to join the military to experience a world quite different from rural Arkansas.

Her family wasn't shocked when she became a nurse or was involved in so many church functions. They knew she always gave more than she received. Her sister, Berdia, said, "Even if she didn't know you, she would help you." Gussie carried her strong faith in God throughout her life and was active in church. In El Paso, despite a busy military nursing career, she became deeply involved in the Abundant Living Faith Center and the East Side Church in El Paso,

Texas. Gussie regularly dedicated her personal time to the church's volunteer program and participated in holiday programs to benefit underprivileged children in the community. "She was a very dedicated person and was always smiling," said a colleague and friend, Captain Susan Gilbert. "If anyone asked her to do something, she would do it. And she was very kind and gentle and patient with the patients." Gussie was maternal and caring to the nurses she worked with at William Beaumont Army Medical Center's Intensive Care Unit. Those she worked with remember her as the glue that held their hospital together. She had a great sense of maturity and compassion for her patients and fellow workers. Captain Westina Tolbert, a USAF Nurse at Robins Air Force Base, was honored to serve with Gussie. She eloquently says to Gussie's memory, "Thank you for your selfless service and undying compassion for others. You are missed but never forgotten."

Gussie Jones was the first African-American Army Nurse to die while assigned duty in a theater of operation. Several memorials have been created to honor her memory. The Intensive Care Unit at William Beaumont Army Medical Center has been renamed in her honor. In Baghdad, Iraq, a building now called Jones Hall was dedicated to her.

Gussie leaves behind not only her loving and devoted family of brothers and sisters and their families but an extended family that goes beyond blood. All the lives she touched will be forever in her debt, and she will live always in their hearts and prayers.



MICHAEL G. KARR, JR.

Died: March 31, 2004

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2002-2004

Specialist Michael G. Karr, Jr., an Army Healthcare Specialist assigned to the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas, was killed in action on March 31, 2004, with four other Soldiers in Habbaniyah, Iraq. His armored personnel carrier ran over a bomb, possibly detonated by remote control. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on April 8, 2004, at the First United Methodist Church, Mt. Vernon, Texas, followed by a military service at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery. In June 2004, a ceremony was held at Arlington National Cemetery, in Arlington, Virginia, honoring Karr and the four other Soldiers who died alongside him. Their common grave is marked by a single gravestone that includes all five names.

Karr enlisted in the Army in May 2002, attending basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and advanced individual training to become a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In January 2003, he was assigned to his first duty station at Fort Riley, deploying with his unit to Iraq in September 2003. Karr loved the medical profession and hoped to continue his education to become a physician's assistant and an officer.

Michael was born in Gainesville, Florida, in 1980. When he was three, his family moved to the Dallas area. His mother, a competitive swimmer, inspired Michael to train in the sport, and for ten years he was an active member of the Mesquite Marlin Swim Team as both a team member and a coach. He was an outstanding student at South Garland High School, Garland, Texas. He was a captain of the school swim team, a member of the Academic Decathlon Team, and a member of the National Honor Society. Michael graduated twenty-third in a class of 376 students. After graduation in 1999, Michael attended the University of Texas for three years.

Michael lived a fun-filled and active life. Family and friends will never forget Michael's lighthearted spirit, easy laugh, and his big smile. "He loved to rock the boat," said Paul Philp, a high school teacher. "He was a redhead, he had a mischievous side—a big smile. Once you met him, you'd never forget him. And he'd get you laughing so hard in the classroom, you had to run out of the room to prevent from dying laughing."

"He said he was doing what he wanted to do and he was proud to be serving his country," said his half-sister, Erin Sine. "He knew what he wanted to do." Greg Karr said his son loved being a medic. "He

was looking at re-upping because he really liked his medic position, so he was looking at getting himself promoted within those ranks and learning more in the medical field," he said.

Staff Sergeant Christopher Gorman trained with Karr during basic training and recalls that he "was alone one of the most dedicated Soldiers I knew, along with one of the most caring. We will all truly miss his comical relief and caring attitude towards everyone." Michael Kwan, M.D., former Battalion Surgeon, 1st Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, remembers Karr's enthusiasm and dedication to his men, his unit, and his mission. Karr's eagerness, can-do attitude, and ability to tackle any problem that came his way, without batting an eye, are some of the wonderful traits that will always be remembered of this great man, Soldier, and medic.

Karr was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for Valor, the Purple Heart, and the Meritorious Service Medal. The Michael G. Karr Jr. Scholarship Fund has been set up to honor his service.

Michael is survived by his mother, Kim Sine; his father and step-mother, Greg and Jill Karr; his sisters, Michele and Erin; and a large extended family from all around the United States.



IAN D. MANUEL

Died: January 8, 2004

Rank: Chief Warrant Officer Two

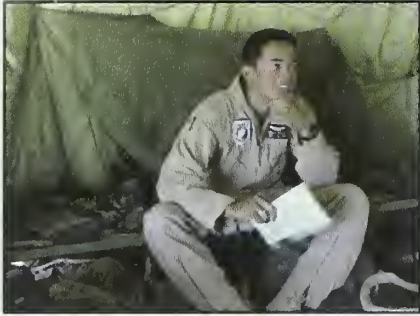
Unit: 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Chief Warrant Officer Two Ian D. Manuel was killed on January 8, 2004, when an enemy missile near Fallujah, Iraq, shot down "Witch Doctor 11," a UH-60A, MEDEVAC helicopter that he was piloting. He was assigned to the 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance) home-stationed with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Carson, Colorado. Also killed were three other crewmembers from the 571st and five Soldiers being transported to a medical facility in Baghdad. Manuel is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Manuel's father served in the Navy and his grandfather flew combat missions in World War II. This legacy of service motivated Manuel to fly in the military. He entered the Army Warrant Officer program and then completed flight training to become an Army Aviator. After receiving his aviator wings, he reported to the 571st Medical Company at Fort Carson.

Ian was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1980. His family moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where he graduated from Clay High School in 1998. Schoolmates and teachers remember him as a hard-working and high-energy person who loved to spend time in the gym playing all manner of sports. One teacher, baseball coach Robby Thomp-



son, received a letter from Ian a month before he was killed. In it, Ian said that, after leaving the Army, he intended to become a physical education teacher, possibly right back at Clay High School. "It's just a travesty to lose a young man like him because he was just such a good person," said Thompson. Ian spoke with his mother, Tita Derrow, on Christmas Day 2003. Ian filled that last phone call with joy, warmth, and excitement. It fills his mother's heart with love and pride knowing her son was so happy. His final words to her were that he loved and missed

her. She was soon to meet his fiancée, Jill Payton. Ian and Jill met at Fort Carson, where they were both assigned to the 571st Medical Company. Their wedding was to be held shortly after they both returned from Iraq, but, instead, Tita and Jill met to make funeral plans for the man they both loved dearly.

Staff Sergeant Don West fondly remembers that Manuel would take his platoon out on helicopter rides. He believed that people in different Army job specialties would work better together if they understood each other's jobs. In turn, West would take Manuel's Black Hawk crew on rides in their tanks, showing them how to operate the M1 Abrams. In his spare time, Manuel would "educate" their unit on the finer points of volleyball, in which he excelled. For these simple acts of friendship and teamwork, Manuel's colleagues are eternally grateful that he was a part of their lives.

As his family, fiancée, and friends gathered to grieve, his body was carried to its final resting place by the traditional horse-drawn caisson and honor guard. He was the 46th Soldier killed in Iraq to be interred in Arlington National Cemetery. His father said, "He died flying, something he loved. And he died defending his country and there is not anything much more noble than that."

Ian is survived by his father, Brice Manuel, and his wife Louise; and by his mother, Tita Derrow, and her husband J.R. Also surviving is his fiancée, Jill Payton, and a large extended family.



FERNANDO A. MENDEZ-ACEVES

Died: April 6, 2004

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: Naval Medical Center San Diego, 1st Marine Division Detachment

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1998-2004

Petty Officer Third Class Fernando A. Mendez-Aceves was shot and killed April 6, 2004, while tending to another Marine who had been shot during combat in Fallujah, Iraq. The 27-year-old Hospital Corpsman was assigned to the Naval Medical Center San Diego, 1st Marine Division Detachment, in San Diego, California. His body was cremated, and his ashes, together with those of his great-grandfather, rest in Chula Vista, California.

Motivated by a desire to receive a college education and someday become a physician, with more recent aspirations of joining the Navy SEALs, Mendez-Aceves enlisted in the Navy in Puerto Rico on July 9, 1998. His first assignment was at the Marine Corps Base in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. In 2001, as part of the UNITAS team (a yearly, multinational naval deployment exercise), he toured the South American countryside. His duties included interpreter, translator, and liaison to the Commanding Officer of the USS *Lamoure*, in addition to his corpsman obligations. He was accepted into the Basic Underwater Demolition School in Coronado, California, in 2002, but was removed from the program owing to health concerns. He then received his assignment to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, California, and was attached to the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, deploying to Iraq on February 16, 2004.



Born in Mexico City, Mexico, on March 6, 1978, Fernando was one of four sons of Sandra Aceves-Zugiaga. The family moved around the globe, living in Africa and Southeast Asia before settling in Puerto Rico. He graduated from a private school in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Fernando's mother described how her son loved to take care of people, particularly his younger brother, Kenneth, of whom he was fiercely protective.

"I know Fernando looked at [his unit's] faces, and he was protecting his baby brother in all of them," she said. After Fernando's death, she received a letter from his platoon leader. In it were words of comfort for a grieving mother: "I could tell he was a good man, and whoever raised him did a good job." According to an obituary, "Plenty of women had crushes on Fernando Mendez-Aceves, who was a friendly, good-looking guy. But when it came time to choose a date for the Navy hospital corpsman's ball last year, he showed up with his mother." Friends describe Fernando as a hard worker who was quick to volunteer for assignments. "He was just a good guy, man, all the way around," said Petty Officer Stagnald Walthour.

Fernando is survived by his mother, Sandra Aceves-Zugiaga, and three beloved brothers, Rodrigo, Enrique, and Kenneth.



HARRISON J. MEYER

Died: November 26, 2004

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 3rd Platoon, D Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2004

Private First Class Harrison J. Meyer, an Army Medical Specialist, was killed in action on November 26, 2004, in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. He and four other Soldiers were wounded by a machine gunner while crossing a street. Meyer was able to find cover despite being shot in the calf and abdomen, yet, with utter disregard for his own safety, he ran into the street to move his wounded comrades to cover. Shot again several times, he died. Meyer served with the 3rd Platoon, D Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, of Camp Howze, Korea, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried with military honors at the Resurrection Cemetery in Columbus, Ohio.

Meyer attended basic training right after high school and subsequently took part in advanced individual training at the Army Medical Department Center and School at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, graduating as a combat medic. He planned to go to medical school when he returned from Iraq. In a haunting premonition the day before he died, Meyer told his good friend, Army enlistee Brandon Brevard, he had already survived several close calls in the chaotic region. He told Brandon, "I don't know if I'm going to make it." Meyer will be remembered as a brave and compassionate man and Soldier, one who gave his all to help those in need.



Harry, as he was known by friends and family, was one of four children, raised in Worthington, Ohio. He graduated from Thomas Worthington High School, where he ran track, in 2003. Harry was known as a team player, bringing in pizza and making cheesecake for pals on the track team. "He was the kid who was trying to make all the other kids relax, feel good about competing," said Andy Cox, Harry's coach. Friends said their high school years were filled with laughs, mostly thanks to Harry. "He always had scams to try and make money, but they never

worked," said Steve Brown fondly. Harry's parents, William and Debra, said their son's kindness and humor touched many. "He exemplifies the true spirit of patriotism and sacrifice by his courageous actions as a combat medic," Debra Meyer proudly recalls.

Fellow Soldiers remember Meyer as a fun-loving, caring person who enjoyed working as a medic. "Meyer was a very focused and bright chap who always managed to get himself into trouble, sometimes, having fun," said Brandon Brevard. Grace Sigunga, who attended advanced individual training with Meyer, recalls, "I will always remember how ridiculously smart the 'clown,' as we used to call him, was." Heath O'Brien, a medic who served alongside Meyer in Korea and Iraq, proudly recalls, "I was learning from him every day about the medical things....He was always liked and loved by everyone." Meyer will always be remembered as a brave and compassionate man and Soldier, one who gave his all to help those in need above his own. Staff Sergeant Patrick Jones speaks to his fellow Soldier and friend: "...you were there when it mattered most, and you are the embodiment of what every American kid should strive to be...selfless, loyal, kindhearted, funny, and an incredible man. Your actions will be recounted for generations as an example of true heroism."

Private First Class Meyer was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart Medals.

Harrison is survived by his parents, William and Debra.



CHARLES E. ODUMS II

Died: May 30, 2004

Rank: Specialist

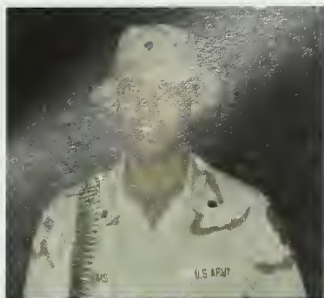
Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Charles E. Odums II, an Army Medical Specialist, died in action on May 30, 2004, when his convoy hit an explosive device in Baghdad, Iraq. Odums was attached to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. His unit was deployed to Iraq in March 2004, to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. On June 9, 2004, funeral services were conducted at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Sandusky, Ohio, after which hundreds of family members, friends, military veterans, townspeople, and service members watched as his casket was carried by a military detail to an open marble pavilion in Oakland Cemetery. Many held flags and some saluted or stood with hand over heart as the Soldier's funeral procession passed.

Born in Sandusky on August 15, 1981, Charles graduated from Sandusky High School in 1999, where he played football and was on the track team. He attended the University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. There he met his wife, whom he married in 2002. Charles enjoyed sports, fishing, and chess, and, after his four-year stint in the Army, planned to become a police officer.

Beloved by everyone, Charles is remembered by family and friends as very outgoing and family-oriented. Charles called his parents frequently, but tried to down-



play the danger he was in. However, he couldn't hide the fear, and told his family that every time he and his comrades went out on reconnaissance, they were fired upon. His mother remembered that Charles told her that it was his job. In fact, just a week before his death, Charles helped to save the life of a comrade struck by shrapnel. She

said, "I'm proud he died for a greater cause." His father also felt great pride, saying, "To know my son gave his life, it's a great honor."

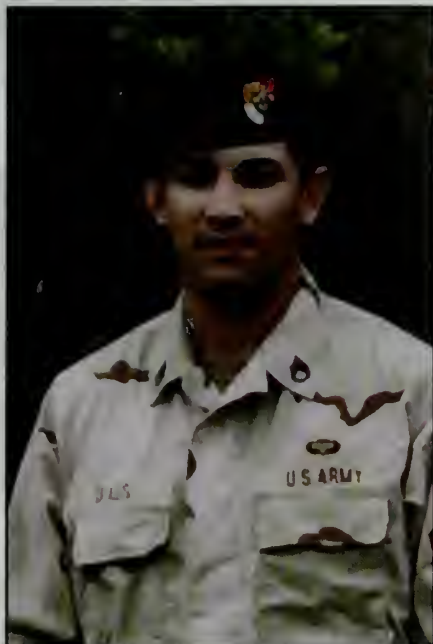
Odums was affectionately nicknamed "Odie" and "Chuck" by his fellow Soldiers, who remembered how well trained he was and how much he enjoyed his job. With this kind of enthusiasm, they knew they were in good hands. "He was always trying to keep people upbeat. He was liked

and loved by the platoon," said Private First Class Taylor Burk, who served with Odums in Iraq. Many of his comrades are still heartbro-

ken over their friend's death. To the members of his platoon, Odums was more than a hero or a Soldier; he was their brother. As his comrade, Cipriano Griego, speaking on behalf of many of Odums' buddies, said, "Things change so much in our lives but one thing that remains the same is the love I have for my brother, from day one in the unit you were like a big brother to me guiding and helping me along the way. You will never be forgotten."

In his honor, the Charles E. Odums II Memorial Scholarship Fund was established; the Ohio's Home of the Brave Project created the Charles Odums Quilt for his family; and flags in the city of Sandusky were flown at half mast for the month following his funeral.

Charles leaves behind to cherish his memory his loving wife, Melanie Odums, who says, "I am very proud of my husband and he will never be forgotten. I love you Charles." He is also survived by his parents, Charles and Annie Odums; a brother, Robert Odums; and sisters, Janel Johnson, Sophia Williams, Camdenisa Stewart, and Tashica Carr.



TONY B. OLAES

Died: September 20, 2004

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1992-2004

Staff Sergeant Tony B. Olaes was killed on September 20, 2004. The 30-year-old Special Forces combat medic was in Shkin, Afghanistan, supporting his country in Operation Enduring Freedom when enemy forces using small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades ambushed his patrol vehicle. Staff Sergeant Olaes was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Family and friends gathered on September 29, 2004, to honor their beloved hero at the Sandifer Funeral Home Chapel in Westminster, South Carolina, followed by burial services with full military honors at Heritage Memorial Gardens.

Staff Sergeant Olaes enlisted in the South Carolina Army National Guard in 1992 and trained to be a man-portable air-defense system crew member. He served until 1998. After a brief respite, he re-joined the Army and went on active duty in 1999. He trained in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, to be a multi-channel transmissions system operator-maintainer and was assigned to the 35th Signal Brigade (Airborne) at Fort Bragg. In 2001, he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course and received his assignment to the 3rd Special Forces Group. He deployed to Afghanistan in May 2004. Olaes' military education includes the Special Forces Qualification Course, Advanced Special Operations Techniques Course, Jumpmaster Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, and the Airborne Course.

Tony was born in Salem, Massachusetts, on November 13, 1973. He was raised in Oconee County in South Carolina and attended Seneca High School. He was a good student and a popular classmate, and he excelled in wrestling, track, and tennis. During his junior year, Tony began his military career, earning his GED while in the Army. He met and married his wife, Tammy, and their family was made complete with the addition of their three children, Maverick, McKenzie, and Alec. Tony was a dedicated and supportive family man and member of his community in Spring Lake, North Carolina. He was an active part of his children's life, coaching soccer and participating in Boy Scouts. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, boxing, and the occasional round of golf, and he was an avid NASCAR and New England Patriots fan.

Family members say Tony dedicated his life to the military and they described him as "a loving and caring father who enjoyed working with children."

In an online memorial, Sergeant First Class Jason Grant honored his friend:

"Tony, I was with you the day you and Stacey were taken from us. Your memory and sacrifice are the reason I wear my uniform with pride. Part of me died that day with you, but it allows me to carry a bit of your spirit in its place. Thank you Brother."

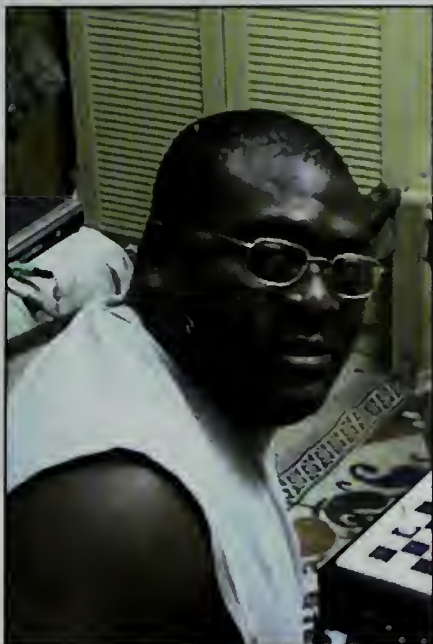
Another comrade, Ryan Altar, "Doc B," of the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, wrote:

"...I want you to know how much I looked up to you and how you gave me the strength through rough times. I was young when we met and even though I only knew you for a short time you took me under your wing, treated me like an equal. I respect you for that and I will never let your memory fade. You are my hero Doc...."

Tony Olaes was a great man all the way around. He was a devoted husband who loved his wife; an adoring father who genuinely enjoyed spending time with his children; and a committed Soldier whose patriotism and courage led him to choose defending the democracy of the United States of America.

Olaes' honorable military career elicited numerous awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Medical Badge, Parachutist Badge and the Special Forces Tab.

Olaes is survived by his wife, Tammy, and his three children, Maverick, McKenzie, and Alec.



JUSTIN B. ONWORDI

Died: August 2, 2004

Rank: Specialist

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2001-2004

Specialist Justin B. Onwordi, an Army medical specialist attached to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, gave his life for his beloved adopted country on August 2, 2004, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near the vehicle in which he was patrolling in Baghdad, Iraq. He had served as a combat medic in Iraq since January 2004, providing lifesaving care to wounded Soldiers and patrolling the dangerous byways of Baghdad. Justin was buried on August 19, 2004, with full military honors, at Montlawn Memorial Park, Raleigh, North Carolina. The funeral had been delayed so that family members from Nigeria could travel to attend the ceremony.

Justin, one of four children, was a native of Lagos, Nigeria. Since childhood, he knew his life's path was with the military. Justin was a cadet in the Nigerian military throughout his high school years. He emigrated from Nigeria to the United States in July 2000, intent on joining the military. Six months later, he enlisted in the Army and trained as a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

Justin met and married his wife, Monique, while both were training as Army Healthcare Specialists. When their son, Jonathan, was born in July 2004, Justin returned from Iraq on leave to celebrate the joyous event with his wife and family. He loved his wife



very much and was so excited to start a family with her.

Known for his sunny disposition, Justin was a happy, loving man who was living his dreams. Justin loved to play soccer and listened to all kinds of music. "He died because he believed in what he was doing, because



he wanted to change lives," said his brother, Uzor. His family and friends will always remember Justin with his usual beaming smile. Justin's mother, Virginia, was always worried about her son, but, although she feared for his safety, she was extremely proud of him. She knew that he touched the lives of others through his compassion, enthusiasm, and devotion to his fellow Soldiers and adopted country.

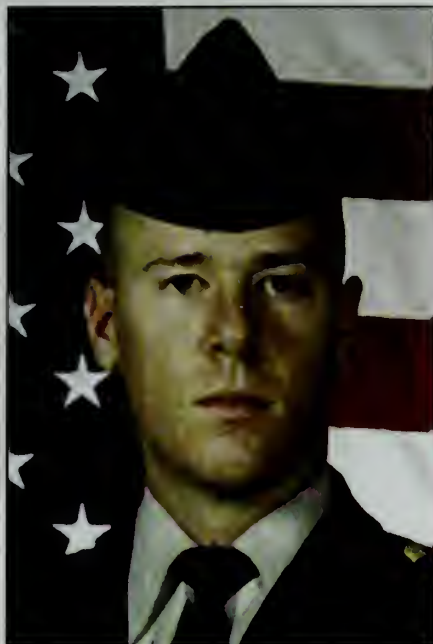
Staff Sergeant Garcia served with Onwordi. He remembers the night his own Humvee was blown up by an IED. Nobody was hurt, but once Garcia returned to the base camp, Onwordi examined him and

gave him some medication for the headache Garcia sustained from the explosion. Garcia recalled, "Justin touched so many lives, during a rough month of intense attacks in April 2004, Justin saved many lives by rendering medical attention to numerous Soldiers from a National Guard unit that got ambushed, several civilian contractors' lives were saved as well. Justin saved lives."

Onwordi will always be in the hearts and thoughts of all the "Thunderhorse" Soldiers. They knew Onwordi as a concerned medic and a good Soldier. A fellow Thunderhorse trooper described Onwordi as "the medic we wanted around when there was trouble, as he could throw three of us on his back and still run. He was a good man, and a hero." He continued, "I know to his family his sacrifice may be hard to understand, but he did his duty and we are forever in his debt. Semper Paratus!"

To honor his service to the nation, Onwordi was posthumously awarded United States citizenship, as well as the prestigious Silver Star and Purple Heart.

Justin is survived by his wife, Monique; his son, Jonathan; his mother, Virginia; and his two sisters, Jacqueline and Martina. His father preceded him in death.



TYLER D. PREWITT

Died: September 28, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Tyler D. Prewitt, an Army medical specialist assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Vilseck, Germany, died at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany on September 28, 2004, from injuries sustained in Baqubah, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. An armor-piercing rocket-propelled grenade cut through the side of his vehicle, piercing Prewitt's right leg and exploding on the other side of the vehicle. As the only medic at the scene, Prewitt calmly instructed other fighters how to treat all the wounded, including his injury, before he lost consciousness. Even after death, Prewitt was still saving lives: his organs were donated to seven terminally ill people in Germany. Funeral services were held for Prewitt on October 7, 2004, at Palmcroft Baptist Church in Phoenix, Arizona. He was buried with military honors at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona.

Prewitt was inspired to join the Army after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Because he was color-blind and unable to read maps, he did not meet the physical requirements to enlist in the infantry; instead, he trained as a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. He served in Kosovo during 2003, and then deployed with a scout unit platoon to Iraq in February 2004. He took soldiering very seriously, sporting a sniper scope on his rifle. He also diligently focused on his medical duties,

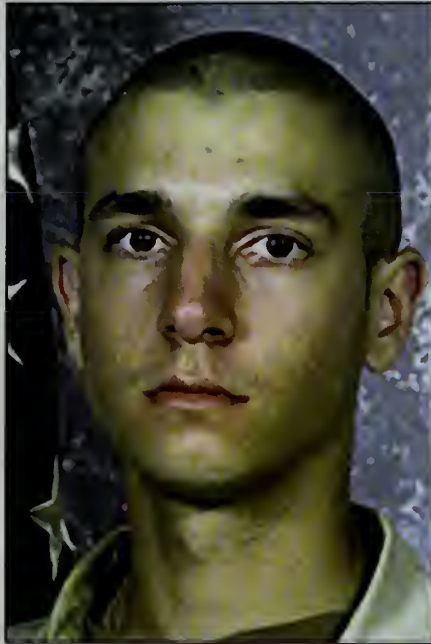
earning the Expert Field Medical Badge. Only 5 percent of all Soldiers who compete for this coveted badge actually earn it. He also received the Combat Medical Badge when he was deployed, demonstrating his expert medical skills in real time, in a war environment.

Tyler was born in Gillette, Wyoming, in 1982 and grew up in northwest Phoenix, Arizona, where he graduated from Greenway High School in 2001. Many of his friends and family fondly remember him as a fun-loving, outgoing person who had a natural athletic ability. Becky Kelley didn't know Tyler the "Doc"—the sergeant, the Soldier, the medic. As she lovingly remembers, "I knew Tyler, the childhood friend that incessantly pulled my hair and teased me, beat me in every race we ever had, and relentlessly harassed me about my love for the UA wildcats. In fact, our teasing was just a way of letting each other know that we cared." Tyler was more than a friend; he was a brother to many of his childhood friends. Jeremy Solem and Tyler grew up together, played together, and as young boys do, got into a lot of mischief. When Jeremy heard his best friend had died, he wasn't sure how he himself would survive. Tyler's family showed him that even though Tyler wasn't going to walk through their door ever again, he continued to live on through their love and their memories.

Many of his fellow Soldiers consider Prewitt to be one of the greatest field medics they had the privilege of serving with. He never feared

any situation, always wanted to be right in the mix, and was always looking out for their well-being. He gave the greatest gift, that no Soldier really wants to give but is proud to be able to. "Sergeant Prewitt was a leader among men," Captain Arron Lummer said in a eulogy, "not because of the rank on his collar, but because of the caliber of his character and the fire and passion in his heart." Chris Rodriguez served alongside Prewitt as a fellow medic in 2-2 Infantry and was his roommate in Germany before they left for Iraq. Not a day goes by that he doesn't think of Prewitt, especially on the anniversary of his death. Rodriguez remembers Prewitt as not only a great medic but also a great Soldier. One strong memory he has is that both young men were privileged to earn their Expert Field Medic Badges in Kosovo and were the only two from their unit to get them. From that day on, they became really good friends. Rodriguez, like many of Prewitt's fellow Soldiers, would have loved to shake the hand of the hero's father and hugged his mother. "I want you to know that we will never forget your son."

Tyler is survived by his parents, Tim and Jonnie Prewitt; and two older brothers, Richie and Chad.



OMEAD H. RAZANI

Died: August 27, 2004

Rank: Specialist

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2004

Specialist Omead H. Razani, an Army medical specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Camp Greaves, South Korea, died on August 27, 2004, in Habbaniyah, Iraq. Razani was shot as he rendered aid to a Soldier injured in a firefight with Iraqi insurgents. He was the first Iranian-American Soldier to fall in Iraq.

Razani enlisted in the Army immediately after high school and trained as a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. His first duty assignment was at Camp Greaves in South Korea.

A native of California, Omead was only 19 years old when he died. His inspiration to seek training in the medical field was his father, a psychiatrist who had emigrated from Iran. His family had hoped that he would continue his education at the end of his tour; however, he was unable to separate from the Army because of stop-loss orders, and he and other Soldiers in his unit were deployed to Iraq.

Omead's sister, Nooshin, fondly remembers a brother with a strong sense of independence who placed a high value on finding his own path in life. "He was a person with his own vision and his own dreams, and he pursued them with vigor." When Omead

decided to enlist in the Army, his family was initially shocked. However, his love of adventure, interest in medicine, eagerness to help people, desire to gain real life experience before college, and steadfast sense of independence convinced them that he was joining for all the right reasons. Omead didn't join the Army for the purpose of going to Iraq, but, when orders came, he remained optimistic. In a telephone conversation with Nooshin, he said that "it would be an opportunity to treat both Americans and Iraqis, since they both were people he cared about." It would be the last time Nooshin would speak to her brother. Omead realized that he was walking a fine line between his love and respect for his family, his desire to serve his country, and his deep personal ambitions. He left the comfort of his devoted family as a boy and went out into the world, where, through his experiences, he became a noble and courageous young man.

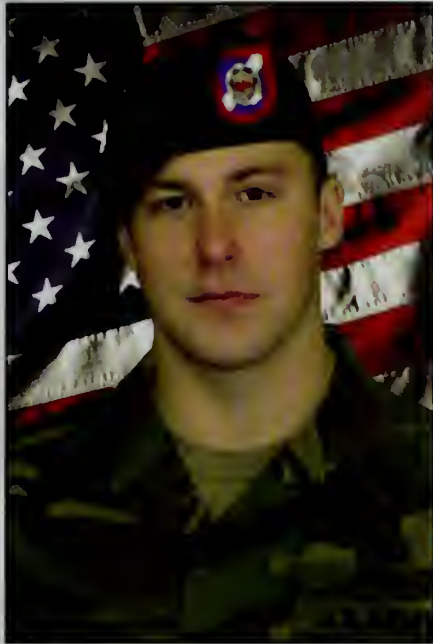
Razani taught the Soldiers in his unit lifesaving techniques, and this simple gesture had far-reaching effects. When a suicide bomber detonated his car beside Staff Sergeant Tracey Koontz's vehicle, that training saved Koontz's life. He said, "That's why I'm able to stand here before you today." If it hadn't been for Razani's commitment to passing on his knowledge and the deep satisfaction he found in

teaching others what he knew, many Soldiers would not be alive today. To his platoon, he was more than just a medic; he was "Doc" and he was their friend. He lives on in their memories, and they strive each day to honor him and all that he did for them.

Razani's accomplishments went beyond his own goals. His dedication and his love of family and country continue to inspire others. Simply by being the person he was—an Iranian Muslim in the U.S. Army—he challenged existing stereotypes regarding patriotism and service. He made the ultimate sacrifice, and he will be remembered as a noble and brave young man who wanted to help others. In the short amount of time he had, he achieved a greatness built on compassion and love—for this, he will be remembered as a true hero.

In his honor, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered flags flown at half-staff at the state Capitol. Razani "was a brave Soldier who will be remembered for his heroic efforts in ensuring our freedom," Governor Schwarzenegger said.

Omead is survived by a loving and devoted family that includes his mother, Shala; his father, Javed; and his sister, Nooshin.



MATTHEW J. SANDRI

Died: March 20, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

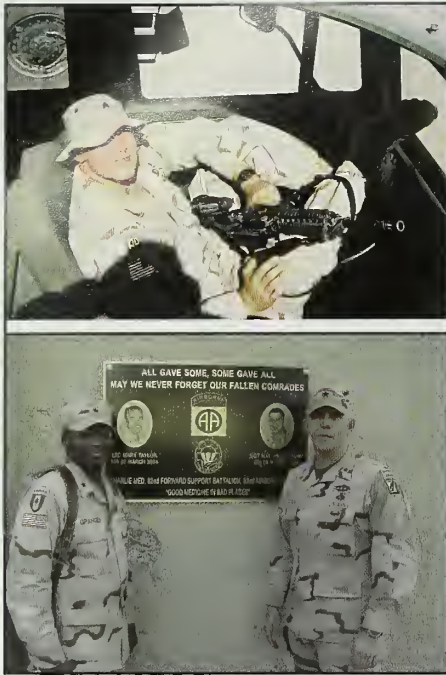
Unit: Charlie Company, 82nd Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1999-2004

Sergeant Matthew J. Sandri, an Army Medical Specialist attached to Charlie Company, 82nd Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was killed in action on March 20, 2004, while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. He died as a result of injuries sustained in a rocket attack on the medical facility where he worked at Forward Operations Base Sainte, near Fallujah, Iraq. The attack also killed Lieutenant Colonel Mark Taylor, a physician with the 82nd Airborne Division, and wounded five Soldiers and one Sailor. Sandri was a paratrooper and medic who had served in Iraq since August 2003. Sandri's memorial service was held in the town's high school gym, the only place large enough to hold the number of mourners who attended, and he was buried in Saint Edwards Cemetery, Shamokin, Pennsylvania.

Sandri served two years in the Army Reserve, graduating as the Honor Graduate for his Food Service Specialist advanced individual training course in 1999. On active duty in April 2002, he graduated from the Army Healthcare Specialist training course, earning an emergency medical technician certification. He also completed airborne school at Fort Benning, Georgia, before reporting to his duty station, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He deployed to Kandahar Airfield and Forward Operations Base



Camp Salerno, near Khost, Afghanistan, from July 2002 to January 2003. Within the first week of arriving in Iraq, Sandri was traveling along in a convoy on a reconnaissance mission when one of the forward vehicles hit a land mine. Quickly assessing that they weren't being ambushed, Sandri and others went about treating the wounded. Sandri saved at least one Soldier's life by sewing up his wounds. Just prior to his death, Sandri had earned his third stripe, working as a Sergeant, and was only waiting for the orders to go through so he could be

promoted. In appreciation for his service and dedication, he was awarded the rank posthumously.

One of four siblings, Matt lived in Shamokin, Pennsylvania, and after he graduated from high school in 1997, he attended college for three years at Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, with a concentration in biology. Family and friends remembered him for his terrific sense of humor and for being a kind, strong, sensitive man. His Uncle John, who sensed how special Matt was even as a youngster, said, "I will spend the rest of my life trying to imitate the person he was. If I accomplish being half the man he was, I will die a fulfilled man. Although his time with us was brief, his impression will affect my children's children." Another uncle, Kenneth, remembered his nephew as a person who exemplified everything an American Soldier should be.

One of Matt's closest friends, Kareen Murray, remembers Matt on the anniversary of his death, recalling his friendship, courage, and loyalty. She said, "I am reminded that you, Matt Sandri, made me proud and honored to be a friend to you....Though memories of this day are disheartening, there are memories of the past that I reflect on...your smile, your kindness, your sense of humor." Fellow Soldier Joseph Brown served alongside Sandri for more than nine months and said, "I came to know him as an outstanding paratrooper and medic. He was very versatile and always willing to learn new things. I appreciate everything he gave to his country and feel it an honor to have served with him." Another of Sandri's fellow Soldiers said that he and the members of the platoon looked up to Sandri every day. "His life has had a dramatic effect on the way I live," he said. "It reminds me to smile, and to not worry."

Sandri was awarded the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Achievement Medal. On March 15, 2005, a plaque dedicated to Sandri and Taylor, who were killed at the same time, was unveiled during a ceremony attended by several of the most senior American military leaders in Iraq. The plaque was placed near where they were killed. In recognition of their selfless dedication to the preservation of their friends and Soldiers, the Division Surgeons Office of the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, dedicated their Division Medical Training Center, which has a reputation as the best medical training facility in the Army, to both these brave men. They honored their memory by naming the building the Taylor/Sandri Medical Training Center. This center trains all medics and combat lifesavers in the division to an extremely high state of proficiency and is the focal point of follow-on medical training for the Division and other medical units on Fort Bragg.

Matt is survived by his parents, Bob and Annette; his sisters and brother; and a large group of extended family and friends.



JEFFREY R. SHAVER

Died: May 12, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, 81st Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1999-2004

Sergeant Jeffrey Ross Shaver, an Army National Guard Healthcare Specialist assigned to the 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, 81st Brigade Combat Team, Army National Guard, Spokane, Washington, was killed when an improvised explosive device struck his vehicle on May 12, 2004, in Baghdad, Iraq. He had been involved in a humanitarian mission at a civilian clinic at the time. On May 29, 2004, a military funeral was held at the Tahoma National Cemetery, Maple Valley, Washington, following his memorial service at the Maple Valley Presbyterian Church. An eternal testament to Shaver's motto of life, engraved on his headstone, is "LOVE AND LIVE LIFE WITH PASSION!"

In 1999, Shaver enlisted in the National Guard and went to basic training with his best friend as a part of the buddy program. He completed basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and was selected as the Distinguished Honor Graduate for his outstanding performance as the number one trainee. He then attended advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to become a combat medic. When Shaver received notification of his deployment in November 2003, he was attached to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, at Geiger Field in Spokane. This unit was activated and trained with other organizations attached to the 81st Brigade Combat Team at Fort Lewis and the National Training Center in California. In April 2004, they



arrived in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Jeff was born in 1977 in Sandpoint, Idaho, and, as a teen, he lived with his father on an Indian reservation, where he loved to hunt and fish. As an adult, Jeff became a keen outdoorsman who enjoyed mountain biking, rock climbing, hiking, snowboarding, speed sledding, and boating. Occasionally, he volunteered along with other rescuers to find campers or backpackers who were lost in the wilderness. After high school, he moved to Spokane, Washington, attended Spokane Falls Community College, and

worked as a fitness instructor. He also volunteered with members of his church to help clean up and rebuild the community of Roatan, Honduras, after a hurricane destroyed much of the island's infrastructure. In 2002, Jeff moved to Green River, Washington, to be closer to his mother and sisters. There, he met his fiancée, Charity Canterbury, and studied helicopter aviation at Green River Community College in Auburn, Washington. Jeff and Charity planned to marry after he returned from his deployment.

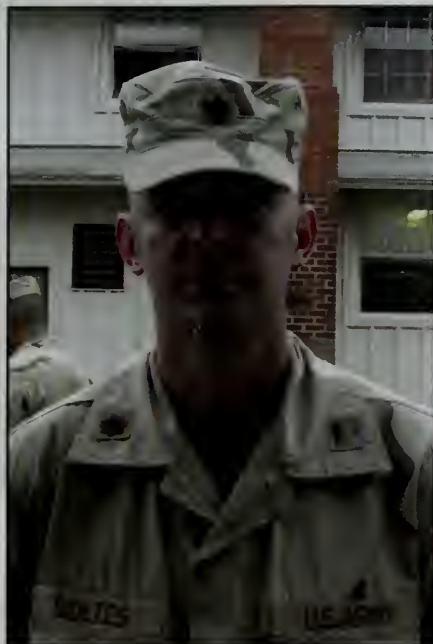
Shaver's fellow Soldiers remembered him as one of the best combat medics they ever met. He was continually looking out for their

well being. During downtime, many would relax in the hot sun and take their shirts off. Shaver would run around giving the Soldiers sun block, trying to get them to cover up, but they wouldn't. Later in the evening, inevitably, they would search him out for relief from their sunburns. A fellow medic echoed the sentiment of many of his fellow Soldiers: "There is a huge hole left in the Battalion, since your life was taken away from us, that can never again be filled. Those of us still here will never forget the sacrifices that you made, not only for the U.S., but for Iraq. You are truly missed."

Throughout his life, this compassionate Soldier reached out to others in need. Whether in far away Iraq, in the wilderness of Washington state, or on a Caribbean island, his direct active caring was the hallmark of his life. At Jeff's memorial service, Governor Gary Locke stated, "As we mourn this tragic loss, we take solace in knowing that Jeff leaves a profoundly rich legacy. A legacy of service, sacrifice, love and honor. A legacy of deep devotion to his family, profound loyalty to his friends, and an endless passion for helping others. Jeff touched and influenced so many, many lives."

Sergeant Shaver was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart Medal and the Combat Medical Badge for his outstanding service to the nation. To honor his memory, the Jeff Shaver Memorial Fund has been established by his family and friends.

Jeff is survived by his mother, Jane Shaver; his father, John Shaver and his wife, Connie; his sisters, Gwen and Sakura; and his fiancée, Charity Canterbury.



CHARLES R. SOLTES, JR.

Died: October 13, 2004

Rank: Major

Unit: 426th Civil Affairs Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1994-2004

Major Charles R. "Rob" Soltes, Jr., was killed on October 13, 2004, in Mosul, Iraq. Soltes was returning from a meeting with Iraqi health officials at a local hospital when a suicide car bomber drove into his vehicle, killing him and another American and wounding five others. Soltes was assigned as a preventive medicine officer to the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion out of Upland, California. He was buried at the Pacific View Memorial Park, Corona del Mar, California.

Soltes began active duty in 1994 at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He then served with the 168th Medical Battalion at Camp Walker, Korea, and was head of optometry at Keller Army Community Hospital at West Point, New York. After five years, he switched from active duty to the Army Reserve and was assigned to the 7214th Medical Support Unit. In February 2004, he was activated and assigned to the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion out of Upland, California, as a company commander working in the public health team to help rebuild Iraq's public health infrastructure. They deployed in August and moved into Iraq in September 2004. He was killed only two months later.

Rob was born in an Army hospital, and took his first breath while the national anthem played over the parade ground. When his father retired after 30 years in the



Army, Rob's family settled in Boonton Township, New Jersey, where he attended Morris Catholic high school. He loved the outdoors and worked as a camp counselor and lifeguard. Rob graduated from the New England College of Optometry and Norwich University, a military academy in Vermont,

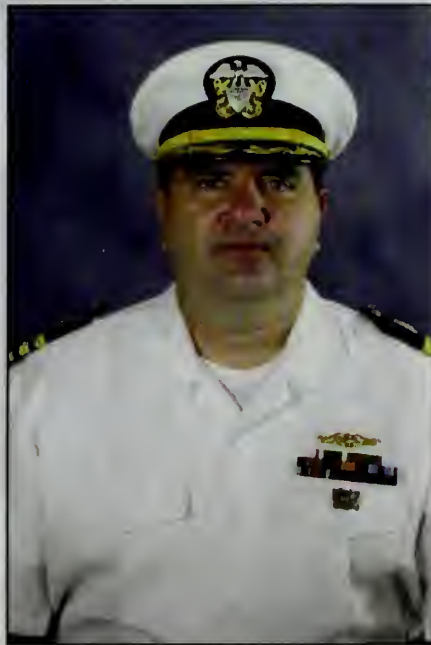
where he was an ROTC cadet (excelling at Ranger Challenge) and biology major. At Norwich, he was class president, played rugby, and was on the Corps of Cadets Honor Committee and other service organizations. On his first day of class at optometry school, Rob met his future wife, Sally Huang Dang. After graduating in 1994, they married in San Juan Capistrano, California.

Their first two sons were born in Army hospitals, at Brooke and Keller. When Rob entered the Reserve, he and Sally established a private optometry practice in Orange County, California, with shops in Westminster and Garden Grove. Rob stayed involved with Norwich, helping with the Class of 1990 reunion efforts, founding a chapter in southern California, and working to found a Corps of Cadets Association.

Rob's father recalled that he was "motivated by his mission to help the Iraqis rebuild," and that he was not seeking glory but to make a difference in the lives of others. "The military was truly the major love of his life; he couldn't get enough of that Army stuff," Rob's dad said. Rob had e-mailed a friend that he was fulfilling a lifelong dream, rebuilding rather than fighting. A friend remarked, "He was there not just to help his own company, his own comrades, but he was there to help the Iraqi people." A childhood friend recalled, "His whole life from the time we were kids was about helping others, and that's what he did as a Soldier." Rob touched many peoples' lives. His sister commented on how many people came to his memorial service, ripples from his life of helping others. Rob was honored at memorial services at his childhood home in New Jersey, at Norwich University (he was the first graduate to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom), and in California.

Soltes' awards and decorations include the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, and Army Service Ribbon. The Norwich University Class of 1990 has established a scholarship fund in his memory.

Charles is survived by his wife, Sally; his sons, Ryan and Brandon; his parents, Charles and Nancy Soltes; his brother, Jeff; and his sister, Carolyn.



ADRIAN B. SZWEC

Died: April 12, 2004

Rank: Commander

Unit: Naval Hospital, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Branch: U.S. Navy

United States Navy Commander Adrian Basil Szwec died on April 12, 2004, as a result of a non-combat-related incident. A Navy physician, he was assigned to the Naval Hospital, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Fellow comrades gathered at the Guantanamo Bay base chapel on April 16, 2004, to remember and honor their fallen Sailor.

Adrian was born January 14, 1961, and, at the time of his passing in Cuba, the 43-year-old physician had 19 years of military service. He began his tour of duty in Guantanamo Bay in September 2002. Prior to his assignment there, the Chicago, Illinois, native was a member of the Anesthesiology Department at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, California.

Friends and comrades describe Adrian as a person not preoccupied by self-importance, but a humble and personable man who socialized with his lower-ranked comrades in a warm and friendly manner. Fellow Sailors, named only as Flo and Eze, served with Commander Szwec and recall: "My wife and I were fortunate enough to have served with Dr. Szwec. We were enlisted Navy corpsmen, yet he made us feel as equals even though he was an officer and a physician. He was an all-around great guy. We have many fond memories of him."

Commander Szwec's commitment to service and compassion for people is exemplified in his admirable 19-year military career. The Navy has not only lost an outstanding Sailor and physician, but this nation has lost a hero who was dedicated to serving his country.



MARK D. TAYLOR

Died: March 20, 2004

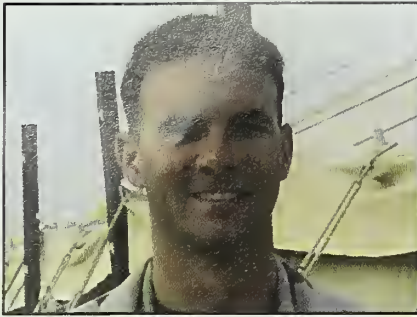
Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

Unit: 782nd Main Support Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Lieutenant Colonel Mark D. Taylor died from wounds received during a rocket attack on March 20, 2004, in Fallujah, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As a physician assigned to a forward surgical team of the 782nd Main Support Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, he was retrieving wounded Soldiers near his base when the attack occurred. Mark was buried at Cherokee Memorial Cemetery in Lodi, California.

Born in Stockton, California, on November 17, 1962, Mark volunteered as a youth with a Masonic group in a local hospital. He attended San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, California, for two years, then graduated from the University of California (UC), Davis, in 1982 with a degree in biochemistry. While at UC Davis, Mark joined the Reserve Officers Training Corps, following in his father's footsteps, who served in the Army National Guard for 36 years. Mark spent 18 years in the National Guard and the Army Reserve. In 1991, he earned a pharmaceutical degree from the University of California, San Francisco, and then earned his medical degree in 1996 at George Washington University Medical School in Washington, DC. Mark interned at Madigan Army Medical Center, Fort Lewis, Washington, and while on deferment from the Army, did a five-year surgery residency at the University of California, Irvine Medical



Center, during which time he married and had his son, Connor. Mark returned to active duty in June 2001, when he was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division and worked at Womack Army Medical Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was serving in his first tour in the Persian Gulf in Kuwait at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Friends remembered Mark as intelligent and driven, having a strong sense of humor and much compassion. His father observed that Mark died doing what he loved. At one point, he wrote his parents, insisting,

“I can’t think of anything I’d rather be doing more than taking care of our Soldiers.” His mother recalled that Mark profoundly loved his son, Connor. Before he deployed, he gifted him with a set of his dog tags, telling him, “Wear them until Daddy comes home.” Connor never took them off. Mark had written home when his clinic was under fire, reassuring his family that the structure’s walls were thick and he felt secure, even if the attacks represented a “wake-up call that the Iraqis have not forgotten about us.” Just prior to his death, Mark had been dialing the phone to talk with his parents, but before the call went through, he ran out to help others find shelter. He was killed instantly. Later, his colleagues noticed that his parent’s number remained in glowing numbers on the phone’s caller ID display.

Major Sean Montgomery, who served alongside Taylor in Iraq, remembered his friend as “a great and noble man, very committed to caring for the sick and wounded. He was also a great person. He had an easy manner and an infectious laugh.” Another comrade, Sergeant First Class Kerry Brenstuhl, remembered the passage from the Bible when he learned of Taylor’s death. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends....That was Doc Taylor.”

Taylor was posthumously promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. His family bequeathed his professional papers to the Medical Library at Womack Hospital, where they are on permanent display. The Annual Mark Taylor Lecture in Trauma, a keynote presentation, was established in his name at the annual Gary P. Wratten Surgical Symposium. A memorial plaque was dedicated at Forward Operating Base, Sainte Mere Iglise, near Fallujah, Iraq, on the exact location where Taylor and Sergeant Matt Sandri died during the attack. The 82nd Airborne Division Medical Training Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, also carries the two patriots’ names. Posthumously, Taylor was awarded the Bronze Star Medal 1st oak leaf cluster and the Purple Heart. His other decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Combat Medical Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge and the German Parachute Wings.

Mark is survived by his parents, Doug and Roberta Taylor, and his son, Connor Taylor.



LEE D. TODACHEENE

Died: April 6, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 1st Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1997-2004

Sergeant Lee D. Todacheene, an Army medical specialist attached to the 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany, was killed on April 6, 2004, while on guard duty in Balad, Iraq. After a funeral mass was celebrated at Saint Isabel Church in Lukachukai, Arizona, Todacheene was buried in the Saint Isabelle Community Cemetery on April 12, 2004. He was the first Navajo tribe member to be killed in the Iraq war.

After enlisting in the Army in 1997, Todacheene completed basic training and advanced individual training as a combat medic. He served tours in Kuwait, Fort Benning, Fort Campbell, and Germany. In February 2004, he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lee was born in 1974, one of three siblings. He grew up in Lukachukai, Arizona, north of Canyon de Chelly. He married his high school sweetheart, Jacqueline, and was the proud father of two boys. Earl Crisp was Lee's high school wrestling coach. When he saw the report that his former student and member of the wrestling team had been killed in Iraq, it felt to him as if something inside him died that day too. "He had such a tremendous attitude about life," Earl fondly recalls. "He always carried a smile



on his face. He was a tremendously hard worker. No matter how hard the workout was, he never complained."

Lee was a quiet, strong, hard-working individual who loved his family and was dedicated to his military career. Lee saw the Army as a way to serve his

country and better himself and make a life for his family. "There were many great qualities about my brother. He was proud to be in the U.S. Army and a medic. He was proud to be a Navajo," Rydell, Lee's brother, said. "He was a quiet man, he was a strong man, a gentleman. He respected himself and everybody. He was generous and kind, and he loved his family above everything else." Jackie speaks from a heart that bears grief over the loss of her husband: "Though his smile is gone forever and his hand I cannot touch, I still have so many memories of the one I loved so much. His memory is my keepsake with which I'll never part. God has him in his keeping, I have him in my heart. Sadly missed but not forgotten! We love you and miss you so much!" Lee's dedication to his calling kept him prepared for life as an Army combat medic. In every house he occupied, he kept a packed bag in the closet nearest the front door in case his unit was called out. He also tried to teach his sons responsibility and duty. His son Cody wants his dad to know, "You always told me to take care of

my family. You taught me many things that I wouldn't have learned anywhere else. I wish that I could see you one more time. But some day, we will see you again! I love you, dad!"

Fellow Soldier, Staff Sergeant Gordon Garrett, credits Todacheene's support and brotherhood to the fact that Garrett received his Expert Infantry Badge in 2003, and he will never forget the courage that Todacheene, his brother-in-arms, always showed. The officers, the NCOs, and the Soldiers of Task Force 1-77 Armor "Steel Tigers" of Germany want everyone to know that "Sergeant Lee Duane Todacheene is a true medic, hero, and angel of the battlefield, and he will be missed."

To honor his memory, Sergeant Lee Todacheene's name has been added to the Navajo Nation Veteran's Memorial Park list of military service members who died during the Iraq war—a list located beneath the monumental Window Rock formation. The Navajo Nation dedicated this memorial park to honor its warriors of all eras of war and peace.

Lee is survived by his wife, Jacqueline, and his sons, Cody Lane and Dylan Lee; his devoted parents Melvin and Alberta Todacheene; his brother, Rydell, and his sister, Donna. Lee also leaves behind a large extended family who proudly call Lee Todacheene a true American hero and member of the Navajo Nation.



ROY A. WOOD

Died: January 9, 2004

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: C Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, Florida Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Roy Alvin Wood died on January 9, 2004, when the vehicle he was traveling in near Kabul, Afghanistan, hit another vehicle as it was returning in convoy from Qalat to Bagram Air Base. He was evacuated to a combat support hospital at Bagram Air Base, where he succumbed to his wounds. Wood was assigned to C Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, Army National Guard, based in Starke, Florida in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was buried in the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Milledgeville, Georgia, on January 20, 2004.

Wood's 24-year service with the Army Reserve and National Guard was distinguished and unique. He initially was commissioned as a Quartermaster second lieutenant in the Army Reserve with an assignment to Fort Valley, Georgia. He later resigned his commission as a major to serve as a sergeant on a Special Forces team deploying to Afghanistan. At the time of his death, Wood was pending appointment as a Special Forces warrant officer.

Roy was born on November 8, 1956. He graduated from Dixie County High School in Cross City, Florida. He earned a medical degree from the University of Miami and was board certified as an emergency medicine physician. The Alva, Florida, na-



tive served in civilian life as an emergency room physician at Lee Memorial Hospital in Fort Myers, Florida.

The 47-year-old's former college roommate and friend of several decades, Brightman Logan, described Wood as "self-effacing, loyal, and compassionate." Mark Muniz, who served with him in Afghanistan, affirmed that "Roy not only had a passion about his military mission but his medical mission as well." He added that frequently Wood paid for medical supplies and often provided the only health care some Afghans had ever received. Wood's

comrades reported that local residents revealed the hidden locations of improvised explosive devices to them as a tangible expression of their gratitude for Wood's medical assistance. In a further manifestation of generosity, Wood had his friends in the States send toys to Afghanistan for the native children. He wanted to help in any way he could to bring stability to that war-ravaged country. John Fiorino also served with Wood in Afghanistan. He summarized, "In a unit of the élite, Roy stuck out above the rest." The Wood family released the following statement after his death: "There are no words to describe the loss we have experienced. Roy was a great father, husband, Sol-

dier, and friend. He deeply loved his wife and two children. He was one of those rare people in life who truly has a passion for what they do. He had a calling and that calling was to help other people. Whether working as a Special Forces medic in Afghanistan or as a civilian doctor in Fort Myers, Roy was a dedicated person. He was a true patriot and Soldier who loved working with the men in his Special Forces team. In fact, last year he resigned as a major and became a sergeant in order to continue working as a Special Forces medic. As a doctor, he not only touched the lives of his patients but his coworkers too. He believed in what the United States was doing in Afghanistan. So much, in fact, that on his own time he helped build a clinic in Afghanistan for people he would never meet. He was that type of person—he cared. We love him and he will truly be missed."

Sergeants Wood's awards and decorations bear witness to the fact that he was a dedicated Soldier. They included the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Reserve Achievement Medal with Silver Hourglass device, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Basic Parachutist badge, the Parachute Rigger badge, the Ranger tab and the Special Forces tab. At his funeral, Army officials presented Roy's family with the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Florida Cross. A memorial trust fund was established to provide future support for Roy's children.

Survivors include his wife, Hana; his son, Roy and his daughter, Caroline; his parents, Julia and Calvin Wood; and his two brothers and two sisters.



JULIAN WOODS

Died: November 10, 2004

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 3rd Marine Division Detachment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii

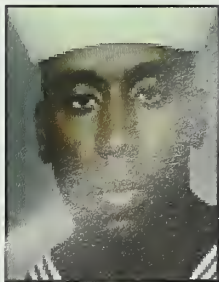
Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2000-2004

Petty Officer Third Class Julian Woods sacrificed his life for his country while fighting beside the Marines he was committed to saving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He died as a result of hostile fire on November 10, 2004, in Fallujah, Iraq. The 22-year-old was assigned to the 3rd Marine Division Detachment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Several hundred friends and relatives gathered to honor their fallen hero on November 22, 2004, at the Second Missionary Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. He was laid to rest with full military honors in Riverside Memorial Park.

Serving in his fourth year of a six-year enlistment, Woods followed in his father's and older brother's footsteps when he joined the Navy shortly after graduating from high school. He graduated from the Navy Hospital Corpsman School and completed the Field Medical Service School at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in 2000. He received assignments in Portsmouth, Virginia, and Hawaii.

Julian was born in Jacksonville, Florida, on December 23, 1981, to proud parents Julius and Carolyn. Since Julian's father was in the Navy, the family moved around the country during his childhood, living in Lexington, Kentucky, and Elgin, Illinois, before moving back to Jacksonville. In 2000, Julian graduated from Edward H. White High School, in Jacksonville, Florida, where he had played basketball and was a star football



player. Julian's mother, Carolyn, recalled how proud she was of her son. She remembered a telephone conversation where she told him that he was her hero. Julian replied, "No mom, you're my hero. I get my strength from you." Carolyn went on to say, "He didn't die for nothing. He died a hero's death. He was doing a job he didn't mind doing." Julius Woods, Julian's father, described his son as "bright and energetic,

and loved people everywhere." He proudly proclaimed of his son, "He was serving his country." Octavius "OJ" Woods affectionately said of his brother, "We got a lot of good memories. That's all I got now are good memories of my brother. I'm going to miss him a lot." He continued, "I think he's a hero. He's my hero. At least he went for a good reason."

Indicating how the Marines felt about their Navy Corpsman counterpart, former Marine Staff Sergeant Joe Cavella described Julian

as "a part of our family" and said that he and other Marines considered him an honorary Marine. Many friends and shipmates have posted memorials of Woods online; most of them refer to Woods, or "Snoop" as they nicknamed him, as a "best friend," and recall his smile and laid-back demeanor. Cameron Begbie said that Woods "was a friend that everyone should have." Petty Officer Third Class Marc Pilapil stated that "Snoop...dedicated himself to his Marines and to his country." Clearly, Woods was the sort of person everybody wanted to know. He adored his family; he stood beside his friends; and he fought for his country. Woods's family lost a devoted father, son, and brother; while his shipmates lost their best friend, and his country lost a hero.

In addition to his parents, Carolyn and Julius, Julian is survived by his daughter, Israel; his brothers, Octavius, Julius, David, and Alexis; and many extended family members and friends.

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CESAR O. BAEZ

Died: June 15, 2005

Rank: Petty Officer Second Class

Unit: 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)

Branch: U.S. Navy

U.S. Navy Petty Officer Second Class Cesar O. Baez perished from wounds incurred from enemy small arms fire on June 15, 2005, near Ramadi in Iraq. The 37-year-old was a Hospital Corpsman assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), based at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. His younger brother, Marine Staff Sergeant Roger Baez, who was stationed in Germany, escorted Cesar's remains from Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, home to California.

Baez committed many years of his life to service on behalf of his country. Originally, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served in that capacity for four years. After finishing his stint with the Marines, Baez enlisted in the United States Navy and actively served in that branch for ten years, up to the time of his death.

Cesar was part of a loving, supportive family. He hailed from Pomona, California, where he attended Garey High School and later graduated from Pomona Adult School. Cesar met and married his wife, Rosanna, when both were in training at Great Lakes Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, Illinois. The couple had three daughters, Isabel, Sydney, and Suzy. Only a short while before Cesar's death, Rosanna discovered she was expecting a long-awaited first son, due to be born in September 2005. She used a



novel approach to inform Cesar of the fact that their new baby was to be a boy. Rosanna mailed a care package to Iraq with a surprise message glued to the top of the package's contents—a blue baby bootie. He was ecstatic! Cesar's father, also named Cesar, shared that his son "really wanted a baby boy." His mother revealed that he "called everybody in the family," adding that Cesar "was so happy."



Cesar loved Navy life and was deriving great pleasure from his tour of duty in Iraq. Rosanna recalled that, try as she might, she couldn't discourage him from seeking the deployment, explaining that he "wasn't scared of anything. He was

happy going over there...it was exciting for him." Doubtless, Cesar's family derived some consolation from the knowledge that he was happy in his military calling, and from the awareness that his pa-

triotic contributions were so heroic. His father observed that Cesar "was a real patriot," explaining that "he loved, served his country, died for his country, but I wish I had him back....The pain of losing my son is unexplainable." Cesar's mother, Bernardina, declared, "My son will live on through his son...and we will never forget him." Corporal Christopher Holm, a Marine in Cesar's unit, recalled what an extraordinary person, parent, husband, warrior, and friend Cesar was. He affirmed the positive impact Cesar exerted on his life, citing Cesar's tales "about his life experiences, the humor he brought to [the] platoon, as well as many other great moments with 'Bones'," as his buddies called Cesar. He concluded with a benediction: "God bless his soul. Rest in peace, brother."

On June 23, 2005, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger publicly expressed his sympathy to Cesar's family. On that day, the California Capitol flags flew at half-staff in silent honor.

Cesar is survived by his wife Rosanna; his children Isabel, Sydney, Suzy, and a newborn son; his parents Cesar and Bernardina Baez; and his brother, Marine Staff Sergeant Roger Baez. Cesar also leaves behind a large extended family of Sailors and Marines stationed around the world.



TAYLOR J. BURK

Died: January 26, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Taylor Burk died January 26, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee in Baghdad, Iraq. Specialist Burk was serving his second tour in Iraq and was assigned to the U.S. Army's 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas. The 21-year-old medic, hit in the neck by shrapnel, died clutching his commander's hand and surrounded by his friends. He is buried at Memorial Park Cemetery in Amarillo, Texas.

Nine months earlier, in April of 2004, Specialist Burk was hit in the foot by gunfire during a nighttime patrol. Another soldier, Private Joseph Bridges, was hit in the face and thigh, almost severing his leg. During that incident, Burk worked to save Bridges' life, even as enemy gunfire continued, striking the vehicle and Bridges once again. Burk continued to hover over him, screaming in Bridges' ear that he wasn't going to die. Bridges was then rushed to a nearby medical facility. Burk's quick action, and insistence on driving the wounded Soldier to a surgical hospital in an unfamiliar part of Baghdad, earned him the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Combat Medical Badge in recognition of his bravery and heroic actions. Burk also received a letter of commendation from his commander. It was the letter that made Burk swell with pride.



Specialist Burk struggled through eight months of rehabilitation from his earlier wounding. Although he had earned the right to stay home, camaraderie and a sense of duty led him to return to his unit in Iraq. "He believed he was the guy who was supposed to patch up his buddies," his father said. His comrades remember him as doing far more than that—he touched their lives.

As a boy, Taylor was friendly, calm, and soft-spoken—the family peacemaker, according to his stepmother. Taylor, a Randall High School graduate,

from Amarillo, Texas, enjoyed listening to hard rock music, watching football and basketball games, and going to movies. His friends will always remember his sense of humor and his wonderful smile.

Taylor's family finds solace and pride in knowing that he touched so many lives so immensely. Taylor belonged to many families—his family, his military family, and the families of those he helped. Major General George Weightman, Commanding General of the Army Medical Department Center and School at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, spoke at Burk's funeral. Private Joseph Bridges, whose life Burk saved, also attended.

Taylor is survived by his mother and stepfather, Tracy and Larry Pred- dy; his father and stepmother, Tim and Kimberly Burk; a sister, Julie Burk; a half-brother, Wheeler Pred- dy; a half-brother, Matthew Burk; and two half-sisters, Heidi Aucoin and Heather Falconer.



DAMION G.O. CAMPBELL

Died: August 26, 2005

Rank: Staff Sergeant

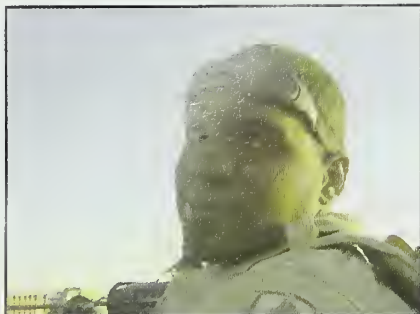
Unit: 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2000-2005

Staff Sergeant Damion Campbell was killed on August 26, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee during a combat patrol in Khayr Kot, Afghanistan. The 23-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team based in Vicenza, Italy, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Campbell was buried in Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery in Owings Mills, Maryland.

Campbell enlisted in the Army in 2000, completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and spent most of his time stationed in Italy and Germany before being sent to Afghanistan. Campbell also participated in Operation Rapid Guardian in Kosovo in 2001. He first went to Iraq in March 2003, but became ill and returned to Germany for hospitalization. After recovery, he returned to Iraq and then was sent to Afghanistan to finish his tour of duty. Campbell became staff sergeant only two months before his death. His fellow Soldiers remembered him for always being willing to step up and fill any gaps. As a result, "Doc" received a number of Army Achievement Medals (AAMs). When encouraging members of his platoon, Campbell's favorite comment was, "Don't make me get another AAM."



Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Damion grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and had gone through Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) at Forest Park Senior High School in Baltimore. While in high school, he was a star lacrosse player. He earned a reputation as an indefatigable overachiever who

would do anything for the sake of the team. In 1999, his junior year, the Foresters won nine of ten games. Teachers remember the tall, lanky young man who led the school's ROTC armed exhibition team to several local and regional wins in his junior and senior years. Family and friends related that he could not wait to join the Army. Damion's mother and much of his family lived in Baltimore, while his father was a policeman in

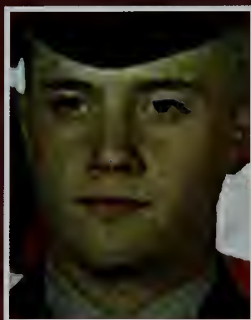
Jamaica. His family recalled that the Army was his "passion," and he was "outgoing, fun-loving, and joyful." Damion's 11-year-old brother, Nicholas Buaku, says of his big brother, "He enjoyed having fun. We'd go to the mall and play video games at home. He risked his life for his country, and I'm so proud of him." Although Damion's family grieves over their loss, they know how proud he was of his chosen path. His mother Donna said, "He loved the Army. He loved it. He knew what it brings, but he wasn't scared of anything." He touched the life of each and every person he met in a very special way. As a youngster, Damion and his lacrosse stick were inseparable. He would be seen walking all around town with his stick: to the library,

to the store, and even to bed. He took his love of lacrosse overseas with him. When the Army returned his belongings to his family, they found a lacrosse stick tucked in. Campbell's comrades in Afghanistan recalled that he often wished there was a team on base. However, even his Army buddies did not know where the lacrosse stick came from. The sergeant's younger brother, Nicholas Buaku, took possession of the stick immediately.

First Sergeant Mason Bryant served alongside Campbell for more than two years. Bryant was platoon sergeant and Campbell was the platoon medic. In Army terms, they were battle buddies, closer than friends—brothers. "I would dare to say that there was no better line medic in the brigade than Doc. Doc would not shy away from doing anything that needed to be done—no matter the circumstances—in order to take care of or treat one of the Soldiers of my platoon or the company—even with tasks that would make most grown men shudder. I have seen Doc do everything from foot checks to treat gaping gunshot wounds without ever missing a beat." Bryant was honored to tell Campbell's family and friends what a great Soldier and person he was. "Sergeant Damion Campbell will always hold a special place in my heart. He will be gone but never forgotten."

Campbell was awarded numerous Army Achievement Medals for his skills as a medic, as well as one for finding an ammunition cache during Operation Rapid Guardian in Kosovo in 2001.

Damion leaves behind his mother, Donna Robinson; father, Yandell Campbell; brothers, Paul Campbell and Nicholas Buaku; sisters, Yandeen Campbell and Racheal Campbell; as well as extended family in both the United States and Jamaica.



RICHARD M. CRANE

Died: February 8, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 325th Field Hospital, U.S. Army Reserve

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Richard M. Crane died in his sleep on February 8, 2005, while serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Specialist Crane served as a surgical technician and combat medic in the Army Reserve and was assigned to the 325th Field Hospital, Independence, Missouri. The 25-year-old husband and father of three was just a month shy of returning to the United States. Family and friends said their farewells on February 18, 2005, at the Broadview Christian Church in Kansas City, after which he was laid to rest in Mound Grove Cemetery in Independence, Missouri.

A native of Independence, Missouri, Richard was born August 7, 1979, and attended Raymore-Peculiar High School in Peculiar, Missouri. As a teenager there, he became an Eagle Scout. His family and friends remember Richard warmly. His family described him as a friend to everyone and a man who was unable to hold a grudge. His wife, Liana, called him a sweet man. "He had a passion for life that you don't find every day. He is and always will be my hero. Richard was a wonderful husband, father, son, and brother, and was adored by his family." A former high school classmate remembers Richard as being "very sweet, kind, and funny. He was a good friend to have around."

Prior to being deployed, Crane worked at Kansas University Medical Center, Kansas City, Kansas. Crane was called to active duty in January 2004 while in the Army Reserve. Having become an Army medic to make a difference in this world, Crane earned the respect of his fellow Soldiers who served with him in Kandahar. They recalled his talent playing the guitar, his love of literature, and his compassion. As Captain José Acosta recalls, "We worked very long hours mending the injured when possible and consoling those too sick to save. He loved his country but his family much more. It was an honor serving with him." Another Soldier recalls how Richard was always the first to help out when something needed to be done. "I'm honored to have known him and to have served with him," he said.

Specialist Crane was a first responder on the battlefield, a hero who served his country with strength, dedication, and courage. Crane gave his life while serving the cause of freedom and this country salutes him and honors him with gratitude, admiration, and commemoration of his sacrifice.

In addition to his beloved wife, Liana, Richard leaves three adoring sons, Mateo, Michael, and Ricky; his proud parents, Mike and Susan; a loving sister, Madison; and many extended family and friends.



ALLAN M. CUNDANGAN ESPIRITU

Died: November 1, 2005

Rank: Petty Officer Second Class

Unit: 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Force Support Group (Forward),
II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)

Branch: U.S. Navy

Petty Officer Second Class Allan M. Cundangan Espiritu was killed on November 1, 2005, by an improvised explosive device in the vicinity of Ar Ramadi, Iraq. Espiritu was a hospital corpsman assigned to 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Force Support Group (Forward) of the II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), based at Camp Pendleton, California. He was on his second tour of duty in Iraq and had volunteered for service with an explosive ordnance disposal unit, passing up safer duties so he could be where he was needed. He was buried at the Ivy Lawn Memorial Park in Ventura, California.

Allan was born in the Philippines but immigrated to California with his parents in 1981. He played football at Channel Islands High School in Oxnard, California, and graduated in 1995. Tom Ito, his high school coach, said Allan had heart and dedication and commitment—just what coaches want from their players. Allan attended Oxnard College in Oxnard, California, for a year, and then joined the Navy.

Allan was very involved in his daughters' lives, helping with schoolwork and teaching them to ride bicycles. He made time to attend all their award ceremonies, no matter what was going on at work. His wife Erika recalled how he would treat them like



his Sailors. "I thought that was very noble," she said.

At his military memorial service, which was attended by both Marines and Sailors, Erika spoke: "I'm in a position where I've seen human tragedy throughout my career, but this is especially difficult for me; this is family. He presented himself so professionally, so confidently, and with such pride and respect. He flashed his smile and a light went on in the room."

Comrades recalled his great sense of humor—"the ability to lighten up the worst situations"—and their confidence in Espiritu's skill and dedication. Those who knew him and had worked with him

spoke of his passion for helping others and of his professionalism. "There is no doubt in my mind that Allan loved being a corpsman," said Gunnery Sergeant Jose Soto, explosive ordnance disposal tech-

nician with 7th Engineer Support Battalion. "And there was no doubt in my mind that I was going to be all right, because I had the best and most skilled corpsman the Navy had to offer."

To his Marines and Sailors, Espiritu was a hero. Master Gunnery Sergeant Alan Higgins said, "The 'hero word' may be used a lot, but in Doc's case it is certainly warranted. He was loved by his explosive ordnance disposal team because of his loyalty, courage, drive, and enthusiasm. His death was truly a tragedy. Fellow Sailors are saddened by the ultimate sacrifice that their friend and corpsman made. There are no words that adequately describe their grief over losing such a compassionate and caring man. It's hard to express the gratitude and deep sorrow they feel at losing one of their own. Each one vows to remember Doc—their corpsman, their friend, their brother—for all their days." In the face of any difficulty, Espiritu would always say, "It'll be all right." Many Marines and Sailors hold his memory close and honor him with these same words: "It'll be all right." As Lance Corporal Inez Arrey said, "Remember the laughs."

Espiritu's awards and decorations included Naval Parachutist Wings, the Naval Force Deployment Ribbon, the Naval Sea Service Ribbon, the Navy Good Conduct Medal, and numerous unit commendations and awards.

Allan is survived by his wife, Erika (also a Navy corpsman); his daughters, Alissa, Melanie and Alexy; and his parents and two brothers.



RAY M. FUHRMANN II

Died: August 18, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2002-2005

Specialist Ray M. Fuhrmann II died on August 18, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee in Samarra, Iraq, while he was serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Fuhrmann was helping to escort explosive ordnance disposal Soldiers from the site of another improvised explosive device. Three other Soldiers died with him. Specialist Fuhrmann, 28 years old, was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Georgia. A private memorial service was held in Hawaii and at Warriors' Walk at Fort Stewart, which has a long path of Eastern red bud trees. Each tree represents a Soldier from the 3rd Infantry Division who has died since 2003. A red bud tree now stands for Specialist Fuhrmann.

Fuhrmann served with the Army Rangers during the initial invasion of Iraq. He told relatives that he had been involved in ten of the eleven major battles during that invasion. At the time of his death, he was on his second tour in Iraq. The medic who cared for him the day Fuhrmann was killed especially remembers his bravery. He recalls that Fuhrmann was more concerned for the other medic than for himself.

Ray attended community colleges in Sonoma and Alameda counties in California. The year 2002 was a busy one for him: he married his high school sweetheart, Tylea, enlist-

ed in the Army, and shipped out for Iraq. Family and friends remember fondly how Ray was a wonderful person who finally found his calling in life. A medic in the Army, Ray hoped to go to medical school and become a trauma surgeon when his service was finished.

Even off the battlefield, Ray's desire to help others was evident to those that knew him. This was confirmed by his close friend, Denilson Dias, who witnessed firsthand one of Fuhrmann's selfless acts of humanity and bravery. He recalls that when they were traveling down the highway and a truck flipped over in front of them, Fuhrmann, ignoring oncoming traffic, jumped out of the car to help the driver. Not too many people would have done the same, but that was the way Fuhrmann did things. He wanted to help people under any circumstances, every minute of his life. His colleagues credited him with saving more lives in Iraq over the previous three years than most emergency room doctors. "Ray saved everybody—Iraqis, Soldiers, anybody. He didn't care," said his wife, Tylea. "He even tried to go to the Iraqi hospitals to help people who were wounded." Ray would volunteer for the most dangerous missions so that no one else would be hurt. "He was very calm when others were not," said Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wald, his commander in Iraq. His Scout Platoon knew Doc was always ready to roll. He was also always ready to crack a joke or laugh at someone else's.

Fuhrmann was dedicated to doing his job and he enjoyed being a medic. Sergeant Anthony McLeod considered Fuhrmann an excep-

tional person and excellent Soldier. Fuhrmann touched the lives of everyone he came in contact with, on and off the battlefield. Fuhrmann is remembered as a great man, medic, and friend. More importantly, his fellow comrades know him to be a true American hero and will hold him in their thoughts and hearts forever. Christopher Caulk was Fuhrmann's medical platoon sergeant and close friend. He was with Fuhrmann on the day of his death and "tried everything I could to save him. I comforted him and held him in my arms and talked to him and told him 'It's me, I will take care of you.' He was so brave and strong. I cried while I treated him because I knew his injuries were going to take him, but he remained so damn calm and strong.... He was more worried about me than himself!"

Posthumously, Fuhrmann received a Silver Star—the third-highest military honor the Army bestows—for an incident that occurred five months before his death. The combat medic saved the lives of six Iraqi commandos when they ran into an ambush. While providing aid to the wounded, he fired all the ammunition in both of his guns. When he ran out of ammunition, he grabbed an Iraqi AK-47 and fired that.

Ray is survived by his wife, Tylea; his father, Michael Ray Fuhrmann; his stepfather, Eric Gold; his half-sister, Layla Rogers; his half-brother, Tyler Gold; and his grandfather, Ray Fuhrmann.



SEAN P. GRIMES

Died: March 4, 2005

Rank: Captain

Unit: 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team,
2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Captain Sean P. Grimes was killed on March 4, 2005, in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device exploded near his vehicle, killing him and three other Soldiers. He was a physician assistant assigned as the assistant battalion surgeon to the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Grimes was the first Army physician assistant to be killed in action in Iraq. He was buried in Saint Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York.

Grimes joined the Army Reserve after high school, at least partly out of family tradition, as both his father and an elder brother had served. After four years in the Reserves as a medic with an aviation unit, he obtained an ROTC scholarship and attended Michigan State University, becoming the Distinguished Military Graduate and receiving a nursing degree. He served three years in Germany, at Landstuhl and Miesau, and then had a six-month rotation to Kosovo. He had also served in Korea with the 6th Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, volunteering to deploy from there to Iraq with the infantry. He attended the Army's physician assistant training course at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, graduating in 2003.



Sean loved foreign travel, taking advantage of his postings to Germany and Korea. His family said Sean “loved the Army and the military and was devoted to his mission of providing the best possible medical care to Soldiers. He was a Soldier because he firmly believed that was the best way he could make a difference in the world.” Family, friends, and fellow Soldiers remember Sean as someone who was always upbeat and positive; one could never leave a conversation with him without feeling happier. “He was very devoted to the Soldiers who served under

him and never wanted to leave them. He died fighting for what he believed in, and our entire family is extremely proud of his service. Sean will always be a hero to us.” His sister said he had a strong desire to serve.

Colonel Bill Tozier, the Army’s senior physician assistant, said of the day Grimes died, “On that day, he was doing what he believed in most: traveling up front with his Soldiers and medics.” Grimes had volunteered to accompany the patrol to better assist if any of his troops were wounded; he had participated in more than 80 such patrols and raids. He had treated more than 25 American Soldiers as well as Iraqi Soldiers and civilians. In an e-mail to his parents, he remarked that he’d taken guard duty on Thanksgiving so his men

could have time off, and that he stayed on duty after hurting his knee: “I’m not going to leave my men.” As a testament to Grimes’s character, he went into the line of fire—even though for a captain it was not a requirement. He did so because it gave encouragement to the Soldiers to have an officer and a skilled healer among them. His fellow Soldiers remember him as a smart, sweet, tough young man who ran out into mortar attacks in search of wounded Soldiers, who put the welfare of “his men” before anything else. Sergeant Jason Tully served alongside Grimes at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for two years. He was a new Soldier then and credits Grimes with teaching him more about field medicine than any book ever could and showing him what it meant to take care of Soldiers. Another Soldier says that Grimes was one of his best friends and served with him in the 6th Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment out of Camp Stanley, Korea. His memories of Grimes are always humorous; there was never a day that a smile didn’t break on his face. He was truly compassionate about his work, serving our nation, and being a role model for all Soldiers. Grimes is remembered as a great man, a brother, and is truly missed.

For his service, Grimes was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Morris County (New Jersey) Distinguished Service Medal posthumously. Other awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, Combat Medical Badge, Air Assault Badge, Aviation Crewmember Wings, and Parachutist Badge. The Society of Army Physician Assistants established the Captain Sean P. Grimes Physician Assistant Educational Scholarship Award in his memory.

Sean is survived by his parents, Donald and Mary; two siblings, Mary and Donald Jr.; his girlfriend whom he met in Korea, Young Du Moon; and numerous other family members.



GARY R. HARPER, JR.

Died: October 9, 2005

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1993-2005

Staff Sergeant Gary Ray Harper, Jr., died on October 9, 2005, in Baghdad, Iraq, from wounds he sustained when Islamic insurgents attacked his reconnaissance mission while he was supporting his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 29-year-old was serving as a Special Forces medic with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, garrisoned at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. A memorial service in Harper's honor was held at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, on October 14, 2005. He was then buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia. Several months later, on December 10, 2005, 200 mourners attended a second ceremony held in his hometown of Virden, Illinois.

From his earliest years, Harper aspired to wear the elite Green Beret. He enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard as an artilleryman in May 1993, during the summer of his junior year in high school. After graduating from high school in 1994, he entered active duty with his initial assignment at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In January 2001, he received orders to Uijongbu, South Korea, and he served there until January 2003. In July 2003, Harper began a rigorous two-year period of training to prepare him as a Green Beret. Part of that training involved a stint at Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg, Florida. That experience focused on developing skills in handling trauma for Special

Operations medics, and Harper's participation there was featured in an article in the *St. Petersburg Times*. He signed in to his new unit, the 5th Special Forces Group, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in February 2005. He deployed to Iraq, his final mission, in June 2005.

Gary was born in Rockford, Illinois; he attended elementary school there and later in Amboy, Illinois. He subsequently moved with his family to Virden, in central Illinois, where he graduated from Virden High School. While a student there, Gary ran the 3,200-meter relay for the track team and played football. Gary's positive attitude impressed his football coach, Brad Paisley, who remarked, "He'd take the rough job, the dirty job. He was a great, hard-working kid."

Gary's thoughts, his interests, and his tendencies were dominated by two major focal points—his family and his orientation to a Soldierly life. When orders came assigning him to Iraq, he sat down with his three small children and explained in simple terms that he was going overseas to defend their future survival and their rights as Americans. He dearly loved his wife and children. After Gary's death, a close comrade wrote, "I had the honor to place the flag over him, the same flag his wife holds so precious today. I did so with great pride; he was a true warrior, great friend, loving husband and father."

On April 29, 2006, a park bench was dedicated as a lasting tribute to Gary's service and sacrifice. Inscribed with his name, the commemorative seat exists as a tranquil spot for all who seek a moment's

peace. It remains in the Virden Illinois City Park as a permanent memorial to Gary, the city's first fatality in the Global War on Terrorism. In another tribute, the Let Them Rest in Peace Act became Illinois law in April 2006 through the intervention of Gary's family. The legislation, which prohibits disrespectful, disruptive protests at funerals, was inspired by an incident that occurred at Gary's memorial service. Such demonstrations will not lawfully take place in Illinois in the future.

Staff Sergeant Harper was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Meritorious Service Medal. Other military awards and decorations received include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Service Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Multinational Force and Observers and Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachute Badge, Driver and Mechanic badges, and the Special Forces Tab.

Gary's survivors include his wife, Danielle; his daughter, Madison; two sons, Tristen and Gabrian; his mother and stepfather, Linda Mae and Joe Morrison; and two brothers and a sister.



MATTHEW J. HOLLEY

Died: November 15, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Matthew J. Holley was one of four Soldiers who died on November 15, 2005, in a bomb blast during combat operations in Taji, Iraq. The 21-year-old was supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Holley was buried at Glen Abbey Memorial Park in Bonita, California.

After graduating from Air Assault School, Holley chose the specialty of combat medic to emulate his father, John Holley, who had been both a paramedic and professional firefighter. Both of Holley's parents were veterans of the 101st Airborne, so it was only natural for him to follow in their footsteps and join the Screaming Eagles in 2004. In fact, the extended Holley family has collectively served more than 150 years in uniform since World War II.

Matthew was a three-time Amateur Athletic Union national champion in karate. Shannon McCarthy trained with Matthew on his karate team. She says, "He was an awesome guy, and was always there to talk to me. I know it may not have seemed like much, but he meant a lot to me. He always made me feel included and he was so fun to be around....He was so full of spirit and determination and I always used

him as a role model.” He is remembered as an incredibly bright, talented, and patriotic man. Matthew’s charming personality usually made him one of the most popular guys anywhere he went. He had a goofy sense of humor and was always cheerful and sensitive to others. Matthew’s parents, John and Stacey, are extremely proud of their son. He was smart, creative, and filled with purpose. He was also a talented artist. Just a few days before his death, he had asked his parents to send him crayons so he could teach Iraqi children how to draw.

Holley was known as “Doc” to his fellow Soldiers. To all those who knew Holley, he was compassionate and considered a great Soldier and man. He served selflessly with dedication and devotion to both his comrades and civilians alike. He found his path early in life and was enthusiastic to follow its course. Matthew Holley will be remembered forever as a true American hero. Specialist Kevin Keating put it admirably when he said of his friend, “What kind of Soldier would I be to run, when you, my friend, gave the ultimate sacrifice. I owe it to you to serve. I’ll be there. I’ll fight for you.”

The “Holley Provision” governing transport of military remains is named after the medic. At the time of his death, the Pentagon transported the remains of the fallen in the cargo holds of commercial planes. John Holley found that unacceptable, and enlisted Representative Duncan Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and Senator Barbara Boxer to change the process. As a result, beginning in January 2007, the Pentagon switched to a charter plane service. Bodies of the fallen are flown to an airport close to their families, escorted by at least one uniformed service member. “For those who make our freedom possible, this final honor is certainly reasonable and justified by their sacrifice,” Representative Hunter said. John and Stacey Holley have received an outpouring of gratitude and support from other military families who have lost sons and daughters, and who are eternally grateful for all that the Holleys have done. Specialist Matthew Holley’s name and ultimate sacrifice will live on forever.

Matthew is survived by his parents, John and Stacey Holley.



JOHN D. HOUSE

Died: January 26, 2005

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: C Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1998-2005

Petty Officer Third Class John D. House, a devoted Navy corpsman assigned to the Naval Medical Clinic Hawaii, Marine Corps Units Detachment in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, lost his life on January 26, 2005, when a Marine Corps transport helicopter crashed during a sandstorm near Rutbah, Iraq, killing him and 30 other Marines. The 28-year-old was attached to C Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, and was serving on his second mission to Iraq. Although originally scheduled to return to the United States in July 2004, he chose to remain in Iraq because of a shortage of corpsman and was set to return to Hawaii 19 days after his death. House was laid to rest in Simi Valley, California.

House's honorable Hospital Corpsman career began in 1998 when he enlisted in the Navy after deciding he wanted a stable career. He also planned to take advantage of the education benefits offered by the military. According to his family, he later decided to become a corpsman because he wanted to help people. In 2002, while stationed at Camp Pendleton, California, House spent six months in Kuwait and Bahrain during his first Iraqi deployment. He was stationed at Pearl Harbor and serving his second tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom at the time of his death.



Born to Larry and Susan House, John graduated from Moorpark High School, Moorpark, California, in 1994, and called Ventura, California, home. He married his high school sweetheart, Melanie, in September 2001, and on Christmas Eve 2004, just 33 days before his death, Melanie

gave birth to a son, James Cash House. Sadly, John never got to hold his son, but he did get to see and speak to him via video and satellite telephone. Family members affectionately recalled John's commitment to his family, his comrades, and his career. Melanie recounted how John slept with a stuffed toy under his shirt for two weeks and recorded himself reading *Goodnight Moon* so that his

son would know his scent and his voice. During the memorial service for John, Melanie said, "John also was a wonderful husband and I know he loved our son. Although the two never had a chance to meet, I know John will be with him every day of his life." John's father Larry proudly recounted meeting with a Marine who told him

that his son had taken care of and stayed with him after he was injured during combat action in Fallujah, Iraq. The Marine told Larry, "Doc House took care of me." John was unquestionably devoted to his family, his friends, and his country. He was a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and a friend. He loved his guitar, country music, riding motorcycles, and Johnny Cash. But John was also a Sailor who served with honor and sacrificed his life for the country he loved, and for that his country is eternally grateful.

House mentioned in one of his many letters to his family that he worried constantly about his comrades. His wife said that "as a corpsman, he loved his Marines and knew it was his duty to protect them." Speaking during House's memorial service, Captain Charlie Barker, commander of the Naval Health Clinic Hawaii, painted an enlightening portrait of the person House was: "Despite the image House may have projected with his many tattoos and shaved head, he was a caring and dedicated corpsman. He exemplified honor, courage, and duty."

A memorial service was held February 3, 2005, at the Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel, with 500 people in attendance, including ranking Navy and Marine Corps officials. John is survived by his wife, Melanie; his son, James; and his parents, Susan and Larry House.



TRICIA L. JAMESON

Died: July 14, 2005

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 313th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), Nebraska Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant First Class Tricia Jameson died July 14, 2005, when a roadside explosive detonated near her ambulance near Trebil, Iraq. As her ambulance approached to aid wounded Marines who had been attacked by a roadside bomb, another explosive detonated, killing Jameson. Jameson was stationed at a 313th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance) remote site for the Lincoln, Nebraska, National Guard in western Iraq, where she and fellow Soldiers were supporting convoy missions moving throughout the area in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Jameson was buried with full military honors at Bohemian National Cemetery in Omaha, Nebraska, with Major General Roger Lempke, Nebraska's adjutant general, in attendance. Colleagues held a memorial service in her honor in north-central Iraq with Soldiers from the 36th Medical Evacuation Battalion at Forward Operating Base Speicher and another at Al Asad Air Base in western Iraq.

Tricia was a 1989 graduate of Millard South High School in Omaha, Nebraska, and attended Central Community College in Columbus, Nebraska. Before she volunteered to serve in Iraq, Tricia worked as a health care specialist at the Nebraska National Guard air base clinic in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Friends remember Tricia as an upbeat woman with spirit, spunk, and a desire to help others. She volunteered to help developmentally disabled children in her free time and kept a full first aid kit in her car in case she passed anyone in need. Holly Freeman, a friend, described her as an incredibly caring woman who thought of others' needs first. Holly recalls, "She would call me and say, 'I almost got to help someone but someone beat me there.'" Holly said her friend thrived on adventure. The two of them would push themselves to the limit when they went skiing, "getting up early, wearing yourself out, then going out and doing it again the next day." Tricia applied this same dedication and sense of adventure to all she did, especially being an Army medic.

Staff Sergeant John Stange told the 450 people who were in attendance at Jameson's memorial service that he watched her dig a trench in the rain at Fort Carson, Colorado; mingle with children in Nicaragua; and take a late-night call at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, from a friend in need. Jameson took care of others selflessly, never expecting anything in return. "That was the kind of person she was. That is the legacy she leaves behind for others to carry on in her memory and honor." Sergeant First Class Richard Wortman, who

served with Jameson, says, "To one hell of a Soldier and person. Always caring about others more than herself. She set the example for others to follow and gave 100 percent in all she did. She was always dependable and there for you when you needed her, just a great person to work with." Major Rachel Blake, who served alongside Jameson and was deployed to Iraq the month after she was killed, said she heard over and over what a dedicated and hardworking Soldier Jameson was. "The memory of her strength helped me get through my own deployment to Iraq." To honor her dear friend and fellow medic, Blake gave the middle name "Jameson" to her daughter. Blake wanted her little girl to have all the strengths that Jameson had. The baby was born November 29, 2006—on Tricia Jameson's birthday. Pat Mounce is the mother of one of the Marines that Jameson died rushing to help. She says, "To the family of Staff Sergeant Tricia Jameson: My son, Corporal Blake Mounce, was one of the Marines killed July 14. I understand that Staff Sergeant Jameson tried to help them. She is an American hero. She is a hero for her bravery, compassion, and call of duty to help her fellow man. She is a hero to me and my family because she unselfishly put her life in danger to help my child.... I try to remember their bravery, and I try to be brave. We can't give up because our children didn't. Our family is so grateful for your loved one."

Posthumously, Tricia Jameson was promoted to sergeant first class. During life, Jameson taught the combat lifesaver course to hundreds of Soldiers. Thus, it is fitting that the training center located at Logistical Support Anaconda in Iraq was renamed the Jameson Combat Medic Training Center in her honor.

Tricia is survived by her mother, Patricia Marsh; her brother, Robert; and her fiancé, Mike Coldewey.



ALLEN C. JOHNSON

Died: April 26, 2005

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1991-2005

Sergeant First Class Allen C. Johnson died on April 26, 2005, in Khanaqin, Afghanistan, while conducting a combat patrol. His unit came under small arms fire and Johnson managed to flank Taliban forces in order to free his Operational Detachment A Team, which was pinned down by enemy fire. He drew concentrated fire from the enemy and his team was able to maneuver from the ambush. Johnson was hit and subsequently died of his wounds. The 31-year-old Special Forces medical sergeant was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. His funeral was held on May 4, 2005, at the New Life Church Assembly of God in Corning, California, after which he was laid to rest in Los Molinos Cemetery in Los Molinos, California.

Johnson joined the Army in October 1991 as an infantryman. After completing his infantry and airborne training in Fort Benning, Georgia, in February 1992, he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, in Fort Lewis, Washington. In 1994, he received an assignment to the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and later served there with the 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment. In 1996, Johnson changed his occupational specialty from infantryman to corrections specialist and was assigned to the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, as

team leader. He was reassigned in 1998 to the 704th Military Police Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington, as a squad leader. After two years he was accepted into the Special Forces training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He arrived at the 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) in April 2000 and trained for two years before becoming a Special Forces medical sergeant in July 2002. He deployed to Afghanistan in November 2004. In addition to Afghanistan, Johnson completed tours in Colombia and Nicaragua.

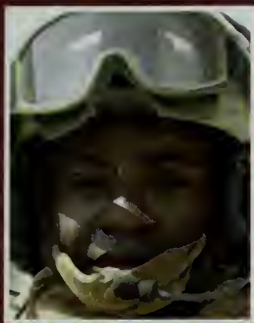
Allen was born on July 5, 1973, in Sun Valley, California. He excelled as a student and enjoyed riding horses and drawing. He wanted to become a veterinarian. Allen graduated from Los Molinos High School in Los Molinos, California, in 1991, where he was a member of the Future Farmers of America and enjoyed baseball, football, and track. Allen was accepted at California Polytechnic State University, but chose to enlist in the Army instead. While serving his country, Allen attended and graduated from Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina, with a bachelor's degree in natural sciences. He planned to attend Duke University after his second tour to pursue a career as a reconstructive surgeon in the Army. Allen loved nature and the outdoors and was especially fond of camping. He also enjoyed four-wheeling, hiking, fishing, swimming, working out, jumping out of planes, and the Washington Redskins. Allen's mother, Adriaantje, described her son as "a very respectful and moral man" who would go out of his way to help anybody. She said, "Allen was the best he could be and lived life all the way. He died for the love of his country and to keep freedom alive." Allen's wife, Vanessa, said of her husband, "I will teach his kids what an awesome man he was,

what an awesome Soldier he was, and what he gave to the United States and to the American people."

Hundreds of mourners filled the John F. Kennedy Memorial Chapel at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to honor him on May 12, 2005. Among them was Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel James E. Kraft, who said, "Allen was a beloved teammate, father, and husband. He knew his duty to the mission and to his teammates on his left and right." One of Johnson's comrades, Sergeant Amos Salas, said of his friend, "A.J., you taught me a lot. I can't believe it was you that has left. I can tell you I will never forget you as one of my role models."

Johnson was posthumously promoted to sergeant first class and awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal with V for Valor, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, and the Combat Medical Badge (2nd award). His service garnered him numerous awards and decorations, including the Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal (Bronze Star), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Parachutist Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Combat Medical Badge, and the Special Forces Tab.

Allen is survived by his mother and stepfather, Adriaantje and Ray; his father, Gary; his wife, Vanessa; and three children, Stacy, Joshua, and Naomi.



JUDE R. JONAUS

Died: September 6, 2005

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: Brigade Troops Battalion, Division Support Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Staff Sergeant Jude R. Jonaus was killed September 6, 2005, when a roadside explosion caused his Humvee to roll over. At the time of the incident, Jonaus and another Soldier were performing duties as the brigade headquarters' personal security team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Jonaus was a pharmacy technician assigned to the Brigade Troops Battalion, Division Support Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Georgia. He was laid to rest in Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida.

Family members recalled that Jude (known as Ralpho to family and friends) dreamed of joining the Army even as a child. He was in the Army for nine years and, when he was being deployed, he told family members who worried about his safety, "I'm nowhere near danger. What am I going to do? Slip on a pill?" Only hours before the event that took young Ralpho's life, he had called his sister Sharen to wish her a happy birthday. That was the last time any of his family spoke with Ralpho.

Ralpho was born in Haiti and his family moved to Miami, Florida, when he was a teen. He was extremely generous with his family, helping his father buy a new taxi, helping a brother pay for college tuition, and sending other siblings plane tickets to visit him when he was stationed at Fort Meade. The legacy of love and devotion that Ralpho

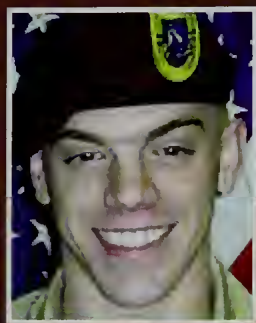


left behind continues through his family. He is remembered as a man of honor and compassion, who thought more of his country and his family than of himself. Although his family is deeply saddened by the loss of this fine young man, his death has made them realize how precious each life is. They have learned to celebrate his life more than grieve for his death, just as he would have wanted it. A strong athlete, Ralpho placed sixth in a bench-press contest in Camp Taji the previous April when, weighing 176 pounds, he lifted 260 pounds. He also played soccer and loved jazz.

Sergeant Thomas Ritter served alongside Jonaus at Fort Meade. As many who did, he speaks fondly of his friend and fellow Soldier:

"He was a man of character and integrity. He brought laughter and a positive spirit to our place of work. He was missed when he left for Georgia and he will be forever missed by me and my family." They remember Jonaus as a quiet young man, with a great dignity that was beyond his years. He had a wonderful, calming presence and was among the most professional of Soldier warriors. Days before his death, Jonaus called his Kimbrough Fort Meade family to say "hi" and catch up. It was an opportunity of which they are eternally grateful. Sergeant Tyrone Simmons wants Jonaus' family to know how he touched the lives of those he served with in Iraq: "I must say that Jude was an outstanding friend and made me laugh many days while here in Iraq. I would like to thank you for allowing me to know such a wonderful friend and Soldier. Jude, you will always be in my heart and memories. I know that you will be watching over us as we watched over each other."

Jude "Ralpho" Jonaus is survived by his loving and devoted parents, Gernessoit and Ameniah Jonaus; his six siblings; and an extended family from around the world that will cherish his memory as a brave and compassionate hero.



CHRISTOPHER M. KATZENBERGER

Died: August 9, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: C Company, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Christopher Katzenberger died August 9, 2005, of injuries received when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee near Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, located in the Khowst Province near the Pakistan border. He was assigned to C Company, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. After being evacuated for treatment, Katzenberger subsequently died of his wounds. He was buried with full military honors in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri.

In addition to his service in Afghanistan, Katzenberger served his country in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. A combat medic, Katzenberger was considering pursuing additional medical training in the civilian sector to become a physician's assistant.

Although he surprised his family when he joined the Army, Christopher quickly became the consummate Soldier. His father, Michael, recalled that the medic's self-esteem grew in the service. He developed an interest in running and working out and zoomed from 130 to 165 pounds on a 5' 10" frame. "He really seemed to find a sense of purpose," his father said. "He was a medic, and he felt that he was doing something



important and people relied on him." Comrades recalled that Katz, as they fondly called him, loved children. Shortly after arriving in Afghanistan, he asked neighbors back home to send pens and pencils to distribute to the children. In addition, among other actions, he saved a woman's life in Kabul. Michael



Webb was there that day and recalls, "Katz was one of a kind. I worked with him on his first patient in Afghanistan, a lady in Kabul. I remember he was so nervous! Thanks to Katz we were able to save that young lady. She will never forget your son...nor

shall I." He will forever be remembered as a great and noble man and Soldier.

Katzenberger truly found his niche in life. In the Army, he excelled at being a medic and Soldier. This dedication showed itself in the

fact that he was loved by many, and will be carried in their hearts forever. His passion for life and for helping others was exemplified through his love for his job and helping those in need. His fellow Soldiers remember his lively personality and motivating smile. Captain Jody Shouse, his company commander, said Katzenberger had "died doing what he wanted to do, fight for his country and help people." Specialist Justin Morency, who was the medic with Katzenberger, was overcome with shock and grief on that sad day. Morency couldn't believe that the guy he went through medic school with, deployed to Iraq with, was now lying at his feet wounded beyond help. He knows that Katzenberger was in no pain when the rescue helicopter came to get him. Those around him said Katzenberger continued to thank everyone for the help they were giving him while waiting for the helicopter. He was a great medic, a great paratrooper, and an amazing young man. Captain Matt Rogers, a commander whose company was attached to Katzenberger's platoon, says, "We carry the memories of Chris every time we go out on a mission. He will forever be with us as we drive on with our mission. There is not a day that goes by when he is not in our thoughts and you all are not in our prayers."

Posthumously, Christopher Katzenberger received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Good Conduct Medal. His company held a memorial service in Afghanistan two days after his death.

Christopher is survived by his loving parents, Michael and Kathleen Katzenberger; his sister, Amanda Katzenberger; and his grandparents, Al and Minnie Katzenberger.



AARON A. KENT

Died: April 23, 2005

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2002-2005

Navy Hospital Corpsman Aaron A. Kent was killed on April 23, 2005, when a roadside bomb exploded near his Humvee during combat operations near Fallujah, Iraq. Kent was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Funeral services were held May 4, 2005, at the New Hope Community Church in Portland, Oregon, and Kent was laid to rest at the Williamette National Cemetery.

Kent's military career began in 2002 when, motivated by a yearning to broaden his knowledge of medicine and a desire to pursue a medical career in radiology, he joined the Navy. He attended basic training in 2002 and, in 2004, completed his first tour in Afghanistan with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment. After his tour in Afghanistan, followed by a brief leave at home in Portland, Kent shipped out to Camp Baharia, near Fallujah, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As a Navy corpsman, Kent served as an emergency medical technician, accompanying Marines in their missions on the battlefield.

Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Aaron graduated from Roosevelt High School, where he played football and wrestled. Aaron was best known for his sense of humor

and his uncanny ability to make people laugh. High school pal Chad Leverich said about Aaron, "I kept telling him he needed to start his own comedy club. He made a party start." After high school, Aaron worked for the Portland Red Cross as a lab assistant, where he developed skills in medicine and a compassion for people, one of the reasons behind his decision to join the Navy.

Aaron's father, Gary, described Aaron as "my best friend." He said, "Everybody who came into Aaron's life came away with a real positive feeling." Gary recalled that Aaron never complained about serving in a war zone. He said that Aaron felt he "had to be there for his Marines." Aaron's mother, Lara, recalled how Aaron was distressed because of the poverty he witnessed in Afghanistan and Iraq, and described how he often went out of his way to treat the village children who had no access to health care. She said Aaron was "very moral." Oregon's governor, Ted Kulongoski, referred to Aaron and other Navy chaplains and corpsmen as "angels of the battlefield." Aaron's heartbroken family and friends ache to see his smile and hear his laughter one more time, but are comforted by the thought that his loving, jovial spirit will always be with them.

Aaron is survived by his proud parents, Gary Kent and Lara Byrns, along with a sister, Mikaela Kent, and a brother, Mitchell Kent; nephews Eric, Jacob, and Michael; niece Mya, and many friends scattered across the United States.



JAMES C. KESINGER

Died: December 13, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

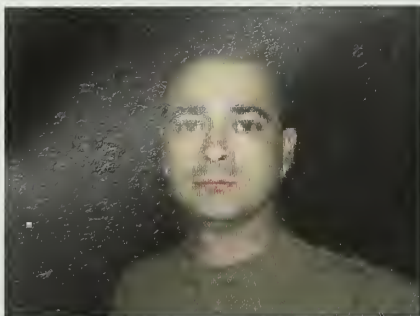
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2001-2005

Specialist James C. Kesinger was killed on December 13, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee in Taji, Iraq, while he was conducting combat operations. Kesinger was 32 years old and on his second tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Riley, Kansas. During his memorial service, Kesinger's father, Cliff, who served in the Vietnam War, saluted not only his son but all servicemen: "You are all my heroes." He was laid to rest in Memory Gardens in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Kesinger served one year in the National Guard before enlisting in the Reserve in 2002. His first deployment to Iraq was in January 2003. In 2004, he became active duty. He had volunteered to leave his company for a second tour in Iraq to join another company in desperate need of medics.

Friends and family remember a man small in stature, but great of heart. James was a caring and devoted family man with a bright smile and a winning sense of humor. He always tried to ease the fears of others and bring enjoyment to those around him. In high school in Zapata, Texas, James ran track, played football, and was in the school band.



He was also one of two male cheerleaders. In addition, he participated in 4-H and trained to become a black belt in Taekwondo. Friends from school remember his sense of humor and witty remarks. Javier Manzano recalls that James “always kept the class laughing during study hall and government.”



James met his wife, Sanjuana Zuniga, online. They developed a relationship while he was stationed in Iraq on his first tour in 2003. The comforting words on the screen sent thousands of miles went straight to their hearts. On his two-week leave, James and Sanjuana met in person for the first time. When he looked into her eyes, he knew she was the one. By the end of his leave, they were married. Their love, however, was not confined to just the two of

them. While on his second tour in Iraq, in the summer of 2005, he came home on leave for 15 days and they welcomed their first child. Although James was able to meet his son before he returned to Iraq, Jared will never know his father except through pictures and stories told by loving family members and friends. Sanjuana says, “Thank you to everyone for their support. James gave me the greatest gift

of life—our son—and I will always love him for that. My son will always know that his Dad is a hero. We miss him every day and will always love him.”

Before deploying on his second tour, James had a heart-to-heart conversation with his father, Cliff. Cliff told his son to be careful over there and to take care of himself. James replied, “Dad, I feel it’s my duty to do my best and help take care of the other men and women. They’re all my family—like you, Mom, Tanya, and Tina. I’m doing this to help keep us free as a nation, and if I can help just one person, then being there is worth anything. I believe one person can make a difference.”

Fellow comrade Sergeant Gary Gonzalez says Kesinger will live forever in the hearts and minds of the 2nd Battalion of the 70th Ghost Riders. “We miss him terribly. He was an awesome doc and Soldier. Our memories of him will live on because of the great impact he had on us. We are all very proud of him.” Kesinger’s mission in the Army was to take care of his men, no matter where, no matter when. He showed great bravery when others were in desperate need. He did not think of his own safety, but of helping others, and he made the ultimate sacrifice. For this, his fellow Soldiers and friends will honor his memory as a true American hero.

Specialist Kesinger’s admirable service and valiant sacrifice garnered him the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

James is survived by his wife, Sanjuana, and their son, Jared; five children, Justice, Christian, Brianna, Meredith, and Megan; two step-daughters, Melody and Maelynn; parents, Clifford and Deanna Kesinger; and his sisters, Tanya Flores and Tina Garcia.



BRYAN W. LARGE

Died: October 3, 2005

Rank: Sergeant

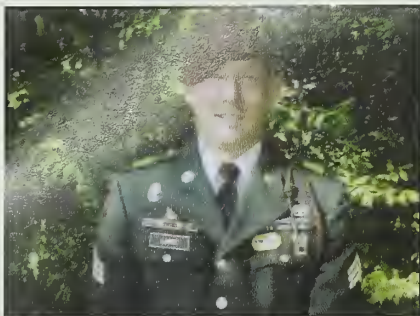
Unit: D Company, 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Bryan W. Large was killed during combat operations in Haglaniyah, Iraq, on October 3, 2005. The 31-year-old Soldier was lead medic of D Company, 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was in the vanguard of a major offensive called Operation River Gate when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee. Two other Soldiers also died. He was buried with full military honors at Chestnut Hill Memorial Park in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

Large joined the Army Reserve after the 9/11 attacks and became a paratrooper and a medic. He was on his second tour of Iraq, having served his first tour in 2004. He also served in Afghanistan in 2003. Large planned to become a firefighter and paramedic after serving in the Army.

Bryan was from Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. He graduated from Cuyahoga Falls High School in 1992. He was an avid hunter and fisherman, liked working on cars, and enjoyed collecting the nation's symbol, the American eagle. He also liked to listen to Celtic and country music.



"Bryan was my hero," said his mother, Linda. "He's been my hero since he was a baby. Now he's everybody's hero." His sister Michelle remembers the little blond, curly-haired boy she grew up with, who followed her everywhere. "And as the years go by, pride that you see of your brother turning into the most amazing man."

As much as Bryan loved his hobbies, he was even more devoted to his daughters, Kylie Large and Devan Brandy. Kylie tells her father, "I love dreaming about you, because it makes me feel like you're still here. I love feeling that. I miss

you, daddy. I'm sure you know that. I will always miss you, even if I dream of you every night. I love you even more." Devan remembers how "he would write letters to us and at the end of every letter he would write, 'I love you—don't ever forget that.' I never understood why he did that until now." Devan hopes that her dad knows that she thought the world of him and loves him very much. Both of his beautiful daughters love him and are very thankful to have had him as their father.

Bryan touched the lives of those he met, and even some that he had not. His father said, "You sacrificed your life and future for all of us here in America, and for the people of Iraq. You gave of yourself unselfishly for the greater good of the world. Some people may not understand this, but your family does. We know it was your choice to be exactly where you wanted to be, with your men. I, as your father, am extremely proud of you and how you dedicated yourself to your

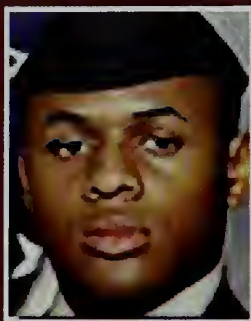
girls Kylie and Devan, your sister Michelle, your mother and father, and your country.... Your fellow Soldiers' and friends' lives have been changed by your loss. I know you know how much we all love you Bryan, but I just wanted to tell you again. I love you and miss you so much. There is a special place in heaven for corpsman and medics—men who put the welfare of others ahead of their own, always."

Staff Sergeant Joe Armenta, Jr., and Staff Sergeant Daniel Vennero both served alongside Large as Soldiers and friends. Armenta credited Large with helping him through some difficult times that many face thousands of miles from their homes and loved ones. Vennero recalled that Large truly was an upstanding Soldier, man, and father—someone you could look up to and respect. He was there when Large died. It pains him greatly to have lost such a good friend, and he vows to keep him in his heart.

Colonel Bryan Owens, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment commander, in a statement issued by the 82nd Airborne Division about the Soldiers killed that day, said, "The three paratroopers tragically killed during combat operations in Iraq served honorably and faithfully prior to this cowardly act by insurgents. They were proud of what they were doing and rendered the ultimate sacrifice for our nation." Among other recognitions, Large received the Expert Field Medic Badge.

On the day of Bryan's funeral, residents of Cuyahoga Falls lined the streets and waved American flags. They consider him a true American hero. Cuyahoga Falls also passed a resolution urging the Ohio Senate to approve legislation to rename a portion of State Route 8 in Bryan's honor.

Bryan is survived by his daughters Kylie and Devan; his parents, Linda Large and Larry and Jane Large; sister and brother-in-law Michelle and Chris Lever; nephew and nieces, Parker, Paige, and Jenna; grandparents Agnes Kirkpatrick and Barbara and Gus Ellerkamp; stepbrothers and stepsister Rich Smith, Chad Smith, and Erin Sylvester.



LEE A. LEWIS, JR.

Died: March 18, 2005

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2005

Private First Class Lee A. Lewis, Jr., was killed March 18, 2005, when his patrol came under attack in Sadr City, Iraq. The 28-year-old medic served with the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Georgia, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was the 125th fatality of Operation Iraqi Freedom to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

Lewis joined the Army in 2003 and trained at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He came from a proud military tradition. His father was a retired Army lieutenant colonel, having served 20 years in active duty and another 24 years as a civilian employee. Of his eight siblings, one brother was in the Navy and two sisters served in the Marines. It didn't surprise anyone that Lewis became an Army medic. He was the sort of man hard enough to roll through Baghdad and humane enough to do it as a medic. He wanted to be there for anyone in need and found great joy in knowing he brought comfort to those in pain. His fellow Soldiers are proud to call this compassionate and brave man "Doc."

Lee grew up in Hampton, Virginia. He graduated in 1994 from Hampton's Kecoughtan High School, where he ran track and played basketball, soccer, and football. Lee was



the type of person who would help another player up after knocking him down during a game. He attended Old Dominion University and Virginia State University, planning eventually to study physical therapy, where he could fuse his interests in sports and medicine. Lee met Telia Jackson

in 1999 and they were married in 2003. He planned to adopt her daughter, Justina, whom he was raising as his own. Schoolmates from high school and college remember Lee for his generosity and willingness to help whenever and wherever needed, as well as his deep faith in God. "Everything he did, he did with vigor and a lot of laughter," said Ross Kearney, mayor of Hampton, and the former youth director at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, where Lee sang in the choir, was confirmed, and remained actively involved through high school. Lee especially enjoyed preparing dinner at the church for disabled veterans in the community.

Retired Lieutenant Colonel John James, a longtime family friend, said that "Lee was an awesome guy. ... Lee was a people's person, he was

an athlete. Oh, man. He was an ultimate Soldier. But most of all, he was a model husband." Many of his fellow Soldiers are proud to call this compassionate and brave man "Doc." He was a great influence on everyone he worked with and is remembered as a great man and Soldier. Sergeant Nathan Watts, the gunner on Lewis's truck, recalls, "He was a model Soldier and even more so of a man. He and I often would talk about our daughters on those long convoys from Kuwait to Iraq. He would often talk about his daughter's singing voice, you could hear the pride in his voice...I have had no greater honor than to say that I served with such an outstanding man and I am very lucky to call him a friend." His presence is greatly missed in his platoon and they vow to always remember Lewis as Soldier and brother.

For his service, Lewis received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Good Conduct Medal.

Lee is survived by his wife, Telia, and his daughter, Justina; as well as his parents, Lee A. Lewis, Sr., and Elvena B. Lewis; and his two brothers and six sisters.



ROBERT N. MARTENS

Died: September 6, 2005

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2004-2005

Hospital Corpsman Robert “Nathan” Martens of Queen Creek, Arizona, lost his life due to injuries he received when the Humvee he was riding in during a night patrol rolled over in Al Qaim, Iraq, on September 6, 2005, just 10 days after arriving in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Martens was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The 20-year-old corpsman is buried at City of Mesa Cemetery in Mesa, Arizona.

Martens wholeheartedly supported his country and was proud to fight for what he believed in. He joined the Navy in 2004 and completed boot camp at Great Lakes Naval Station in Great Lakes, Illinois, after which he attended Corps School there. He went on to Field Medical Service School at Camp Johnson, North Carolina, and was assigned to India Company, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. His unit deployed to Iraq on August 25, 2005, and was stationed at Camp Wolf in Al Qaim, Iraq.

Nathan was born on February 1, 1985, in Cody, Wyoming, to Rob and Maria Martens. The family moved to Queen Creek, Arizona, while Nathan was a young boy, and there he received his education, graduating from high school in 2003. He was actively in-



involved in the Thunderbird 4-H club for several years as well as other 4-H clubs including beef, swine, horse, shooting sports, and veterinary science. Nathan was club president his last year in 4-H. He was also involved in FFA (Future Farmers of America) throughout high school, winning many awards. He was an officer in the Queen Creek FFA chapter for two years and attended the national FFA convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Active in sports, Nathan was a four-year letterman in football and played starting center for three years. He also lettered in baseball for three years, playing

catcher and first base, and was an all-star his senior year. In 2004, Nathan married Erin and they were soon joined by daughter Riley Jo, whom Nathan nicknamed "Baby Bird." He dreamed of becoming a pediatrician after his military duties were completed. In May 2005, Nathan wrote a poem to his beloved, Erin. "A part of you has grown in me. And so you see it's you and me together forever and never

apart. Maybe in distance but NEVER in HEART!!! I love you. Can I keep you?"

Nathan was remembered by many in the community as a very good kid, and family members describe him as "a wonderful son, a good brother, a wonderful husband, and a great and loving father. He was a fine, respectful and respected young man." Family members also recalled, "He would do anything for anybody. His attitude was contagious; he just made you want to smile along with him." Family friend Lorna Nevitt recalled, "He was so respectful and loving toward everybody. I think that's why everyone just loved him." Denise Brooks, another family friend, said, "The only thing I can say about Nathan is that my life is better for having known him." Nathan's English teacher, Marsha Savery, called Nathan "bright, witty, and genuinely nice."

Fellow Sailors will always remember Martens as a great person, a gifted poet, and a true Sailor. The Marines who called him "Doc" are grateful for his service and ultimate sacrifice and will remember him as a true American hero and brother for all time.

For his heroic service, Martens was awarded the Fleet Marine Force Pin. In addition to his parents, Rob and Maria, his wife Erin, and daughter Riley Jo, Nathan leaves behind his sister, Bobbie Ann; his brother, Matthew; and many other family members and friends.



STEPHEN M. MCGOWAN

Died: March 4, 2005

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2002-2005

Corporal Stephen M. McGowan was killed on March 4, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his patrol in Ramadi, Iraq. The 26-year-old was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, out of Camp Hovey, Korea to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. He had volunteered to go to Iraq so that a fellow medic with children would not have to go. McGowan was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Steve was a native of Newark, Delaware. He played in a rugby league and enjoyed going caving with his father. "He was a physical guy," his father said, "but he always had that sense of protecting others, of justice, of enforcing the rules." Father Greg Corrigan, who had known Steve since he was a curly-haired boy with a cherubic smile and a devilish wit, said, "He was very well loved." He had watched with pride as Steve grew up to become a burly Army medic with a gentle heart.

Steve studied criminal justice at the University of Delaware and Wilmington College before joining the Army in 2002. His devotion to being a paratrooper medic and being with those who needed him most led him to refuse two promotions that would have taken him away from his platoon. "Steve had a very good heart," his mother



Bobbie said. "Even in Iraq, he saw beauty there; he took pictures of sunrises. But most important, he reached out to the children. If he had to leave this world in an honorable way—helping others—that would absolutely have been his choice."

From the beginning of his tour, McGowan saw needs among his fellow Soldiers and the Iraqi civilians, and he asked for help from home. He asked his family and friends to send letters to his fellow Soldiers as a show of support and caring. On patrol, McGowan and his squad carried athletic equipment and toys for Iraqi children,

who were enthralled by them. Instead of Christmas gifts for himself, McGowan asked for more toys for Iraqi children. In response, his mother organized a massive Beanie Baby drive. Thus, McGowan came to be known after his death as the "Beanie Baby Soldier." By the end of 2006, more than 55,000 Beanie Babies had been collected for distribution to Iraqi children as a goodwill gesture. This was a fitting legacy for a man who always tried to make others feel comfortable and secure.

Steve saw his path in life as ordinary in an extraordinary circumstance. Bobbie's heart swells with pride and love thinking of the impact her son had on this world. He was extremely kindhearted and seemed to have a natural ability to comfort people in times of worry or stress. His one regret was that, when he was leaving for Kuwait, he didn't give his mother one more hug before walking away. At Steve's memorial service, Father Greg said, "Now we must embrace each other for him. We must love one another and reach out to those who are hurting. We must be his

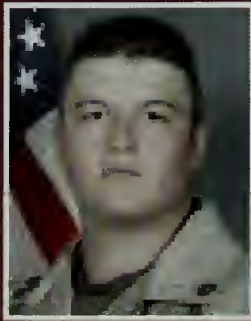
arms and his heart in a world that is in need of one more hug."

His sister Michaela was very close to him and felt as though a part of her died with him. But the passage of time has helped his mother and sister realize that, although he can no longer be with them in body, he will always be with them in spirit. His dedication and compassion reached to the farthest points and made strangers into family. Through the stories they hear from his friends and fellow Soldiers, they are able to heal and carry on his legacy of simple acts of kindness to those in need.

Many of McGowan's comrades took the lessons he taught them to heart. James Uehlein, a fellow medic, became friends with McGowan when they were stationed together in Korea. He said, "We served as line medics together and became fast friends while enduring the rain and cold. Mac was one of the most well-spoken, well-traveled, stand-up guys I've ever had the pleasure to be associated with. I've done my best to carry on his legacy of helping others. I've passed out countless Beanie Babies and shoes to the local children." Sergeant First Class Steven Cruze, one of McGowan's instructors at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, told the McGowan family, "McGowan made a lasting impression on all of the cadre here because of his true passion to be a combat medic. In memory of your son, we have added his name to a memorial displayed at C Company, 232nd Medical Battalion. His name will be a constant reminder to all future combat medics of the ultimate sacrifice he made for this great nation."

On the one-year anniversary of Steve's death, many of his fellow Soldiers gathered at his grave with Bobbie to honor their fallen friend, the combat medic they called "Big Mac." They came to tell stories, to cry and laugh, to find other friends' headstones, and to say goodbye again. Bobbie says that even though her son is gone, many more remain to care for.

McGowan's honors and decorations include the Combat Medical Badge. He is survived by his mother, Bobbie Ann McGowan; his father, Fran DiDomenicis; and his sister, Michaela McGowan.



JAMES H. MILLER IV

Died: January 30, 2005

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Private First Class James H. Miller IV died on January 30, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle while he was guarding a polling place in Ramadi during the Iraqi elections. The 22-year-old medic was assigned to the Army's 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division out of Camp Casey, South Korea.

Miller completed his basic training in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, before training as a medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He deployed for South Korea and served there for several months before receiving his assignment to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

At Anderson High School in Anderson Township, Ohio, James played football and took creative writing courses, music history, music theory, and digital imaging. His principal described him as a "very creative and energetic young man, very mature." After graduating in 2001, James attended Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, for a year and a half before enlisting in the Army. He was passionate about music and enjoyed playing the guitar and drums. James loved his work as an Army medic and planned to pursue a career in trauma medicine upon completion of his military service. James was vehemently committed to the mission in Iraq. His father reflected

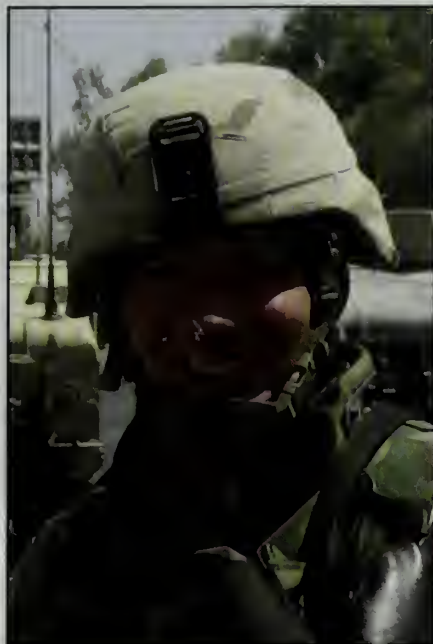


on his son's devotion to his assignment: "He loved what he was doing over there. He really believed in the mission we have over there." James's father recalled how his son had gotten to know many Iraqi citizens and believed many of them genuinely appreciated what the Americans were doing for them. John Hayden, James's Pee-Wee football coach,

said after seeing footage of Iraqi children accompanying their parents to the polling places, "Those kids will never know who Jimmy Miller was, but their lives will be infinitely better for the sacrifices he and others like him have made." Anderson High School football coach Vince Suriano fondly recalled the kind and compassionate football player: "He was always trying to help people and I think this was a way he thought he could help people and serve his country."

As tragic as losing a loving son and devoted brother is, and as terribly unfortunate as it is to lose a dedicated and brave Soldier, Miller did not die in vain. James died for something he believed in—freedom and democracy. Early estimated turnout at the polls during the Iraqi election that Miller was protecting was approximately 57% of eligible voters, according to the *New York Times*—higher than most American elections—and much of that success is due to the heroic actions of James Miller.

James leaves behind his proud father, James Miller III; his stepmother; two brothers; and many extended family members and friends.



LAWRENCE E. MORRISON

Died: September 19, 2005

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1979-2005

Sergeant First Class Lawrence E. Morrison died on September 19, 2005, in Taji, Iraq, of injuries he sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. The 45-year-old medic was a reservist supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, assigned to the Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and serving with a Marine Corps unit at the time of his death. Friends and family paid their respects on September 30, 2005, at the Keith and Keith Terrace Heights Chapel in Yakima, Washington, with Morrison's burial following in the Terrace Heights Memorial Park.

Morrison enlisted in the Army May 16, 1979, soon after graduating from high school. After completing basic combat training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and advanced individual training as a medical specialist at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, his first duty station was at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he served with the 47th Field Hospital until 1983. During this period, he was promoted to specialist while serving with the 560th Medical Company in Korea. In February 1984, Morrison was promoted to sergeant and served as both an air ambulance attendant and a flight medic. He earned his aircraft crewman badge and trained as a qualified ammunitions specialist as a secondary skill identifier. After departing Korea, Morrison was stationed at Fort Ord, California,

as a medical supply noncommissioned officer, emergency medical technician, and aid evacuation noncommissioned officer with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment. In 1988, he completed Air Assault School before transferring to the 25th Medical Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii. There he served as platoon sergeant in a medical company for a light infantry battalion. Morrison was promoted to staff sergeant in 1989 and served as a battalion plans noncommissioned officer and ambulance platoon sergeant with the 325th Forward Support Battalion, 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. He graduated from the Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, at the age of 30 and served as a clinic noncommissioned officer in charge at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington. In February 1994, he was promoted to sergeant first class and served as clinic noncommissioned officer in charge of the Army Health Clinic at the Yakima Training Center. Morrison retired from active duty in 1995. In April 2005 he was recalled to duty as an inactive reservist assigned to the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion and received his orders to support Operation Iraqi Freedom shortly thereafter.

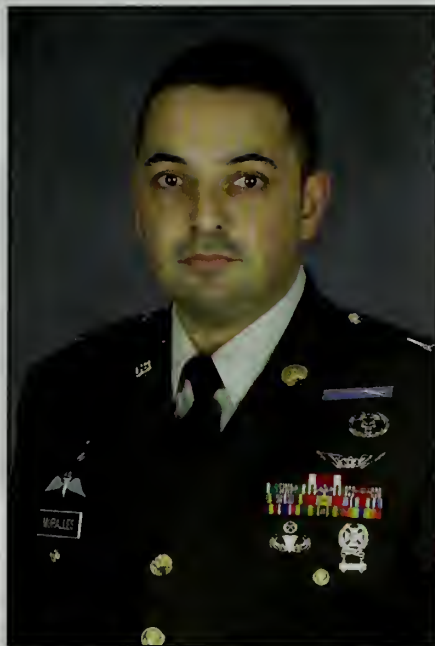
Lawrence was born March 28, 1960, in Middletown, Ohio. He later moved to Kentucky and graduated from Frenchburg High School in Frenchburg, Kentucky. He attended Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky, before joining the Army. After a long and honorable military career, Lawrence retired from the Army and worked for the United States Postal Service as a dockworker. His family described him as a “football fanatic.” Lawrence’s son, Larry, was an Army policeman when his father died, and both father and

son had earned their jump wings. Larry would call his father after every jump.

Kenneth Morrison described his son as an “all-American boy” and said he was not surprised when he heard Lawrence had volunteered for his last mission. He stated, “I’m sure his right arm was the first one up. He was a hero.” Major General Herbert Altshuler affectionately said that Lawrence “represented everything that is good and kind and caring in this world.”

Lawrence Morrison’s career resulted in numerous awards, including the Soldier’s Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, three Army Commendation Medals, six Army Achievement Medals, Humanitarian Service Medal, five awards of the Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral 2, Army Service Ribbon, three Overseas Service Ribbons, Expert Marksmanship Qualification Badge with Grenade Bar, Expert Field Medical Badge, Aircraft Crewman Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Driver and Mechanic Badge with Driver-W Bar. Posthumously, Morrison received the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, the Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Action Badge, and the Iraq Campaign Medal.

Lawrence leaves behind a loving and devoted family that includes his wife, Becky; a son, Lawrence; a stepson, Zach; and his father, Kenneth, in addition to many extended family members, friends, and fellow Soldiers.



MARCUS V. MURALLES

Died: June 28, 2005

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1994-2005

Sergeant First Class Marcus V. Muralles, a flight medic assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), was killed in combat in Afghanistan on June 28, 2005, when his helicopter was shot down near Asadabad, Afghanistan. Muralles was part of a task force attempting to rescue a team of four U.S. Navy SEALs trapped deep in enemy-controlled territory. Seven other crewmembers and eight SEALs were also killed in the disaster. Muralles was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, with full military honors.

Muralles enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1994, served as a combat medic, and qualified as a Ranger. He left active duty when his tour was completed and went inactive Ready Reserve before going active again in 1998. He requalified as a medic and was assigned to the elite 75th Ranger Regiment. Subsequently, he qualified as a Special Forces medic, serving with the regiment until 2003, and performing duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Muralles was then accepted into the 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR, as an aerial flight medic, and, in 2005, was again deployed to Afghanistan to support operations against anti-government forces.

Marcus was born in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, in 1971. In the mid-1980s, he moved to Shelbyville, Indiana, with his mother when his parents divorced. He loved medi-



cine and planned to obtain medical training in the Army. Family members tried to persuade Marcus to enter medical school as a civilian, but Marcus was too attached to the Army. "We said it's real dangerous in the Army and that he could do as much good in civilian life as he could there," Marcus's stepfather, Bob Dill, said. "But he wouldn't hear of it. He wanted to be an Army physician." The same argument failed after Marcus underwent six months of training with paramedics in San Antonio, Texas. Marcus was proud of where he was, and he loved fighting for his

country. He wanted to help those who were willing to sacrifice their own lives for love of their families and their country. He loved to help everyone.

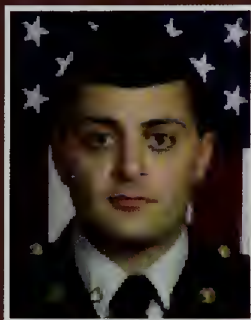
The military was first in Marcus's life until his kids were born. They were his pride and joy. He had wanted to buy a larger house for his family upon his return so they had room to grow and play. They say a life is measured by the legacy you leave behind—Marcus has touched so many lives in his short time here. The fondness with which people speak and write of him is the measure of a life well led. His family is overwhelmed with the love and support they have received from friends and strangers from around the world. Their

grief is only lessened with the knowledge of his impact on others and their pride of his dedication to his family and his fellow Soldiers.

Captain Bill Soliz, who served with Muralles, remembered how he always made sure everything was perfect and then checked it again just to make sure. His dedication and selfless service were admirable; he gave it his all. Muralles is remembered by his fellow Soldiers as a true American hero. Muralles and the other Soldiers killed in the incident were honored at a memorial service held at Hunter Army Airfield near Savannah, Georgia, the home base of the 3rd Infantry Division. Hunter Army Airfield also named a medical aid station after Muralles. After Muralles's burial, his family said, "As a Special Operations Medic, Marcus dedicated his life to helping others and was proud to do so for more than 10 years. He truly loved being a Soldier and was always eager to serve his country."

Muralles was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with Valor, and the Combat Action Badge. His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. His badges include the Ranger Tab, Combat Medical Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, Expert Field Medical Badge, Aviation Badge, and Master Parachutist Badge with two combat jumps.

Marcus is survived by his wife, Diana; his daughter, Anna Elise; his son, Marcus Dominic; his mother and stepfather, Rosemarie and Bob Dill; his father, Arturo Muralles; and his sister, Cynthia.



RUSSELL H. NAHVI

Died: October 19, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

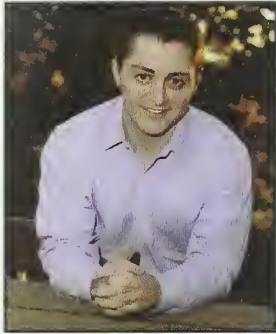
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2005

Specialist Russell H. Nahvi lost his life on October 19, 2005, when the patrol he had volunteered for was ambushed in Balad, Iraq. The 24-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Georgia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Nahvi's friends and family said their final farewells to him on October 29, 2005, at the Emerald Hills Memorial Chapel, after which he was laid to rest at Emerald Hills Memorial Park in Kennedale, Texas.

Motivated by a hunger for adventure and a longing to fulfill his sense of purpose, in addition to the lure of education benefits, Nahvi joined the Army in 2003. Following in the footsteps of his mother, a nurse, and after seeing the HBO series *Band of Brothers*, which developed in him a love for the military and the fellowship of soldiers, Nahvi was inspired to become an Army combat medic.

Russell graduated from high school in 1999 and went on to further his education at the University of Texas, Arlington, Texas, and at Texas Tech University and Texas Christian University before finally deciding to answer the call of his country and join the Army. He loved to ride motorcycles and was fond of music and traveling.



When asked by family members how much it would take for him to reconsider his decision to join the Army, Russell replied, "Millions, it would take millions." Russell's sister, Nina, said that the Army seemed to fill a void in her brother. She said of Russell, "He grew in the military." Long before he

sacrificed his life in Iraq, Russell hoped to someday save the world. He wrote of his yearnings in a notebook: "I PRAY one day I can make the world proud of me. I hope I can restore an unknown peace to war-torn nations, peoples, families, friends." Russell, your prayer has been answered. Your family, your friends, and your country are very proud of you. The achievement of peace that you fought so hard to restore is that

much closer, thanks to your compassionate service and your honorable, heroic sacrifice.

Russell's proud family includes his father, Sam; his mother, Nancy; a sister, Nina; and many adoring extended family and friends.



TIMOTHY R. OSBEY

Died: February 16, 2005

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Timothy R. Osbey lost his life on February 16, 2005, when the vehicle he was riding in rolled into a canal after a section of the road collapsed in Iskandariyah, Iraq. The 29-year-old emergency medical technician was assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment out of McComb, Mississippi. A military honor guard accompanied Osbey back to the United States, where 500 of his family, friends, and community honored their fallen Soldier on February 26, 2005, at the Sherman Missionary Baptist Church in Magnolia, Mississippi, the same church at which he used to sing in the choir. He was laid to rest with military honors in Cook's Cemetery in Pike County, Mississippi.

Sergeant Osbey entered the Mississippi National Guard when he was 18 years old and served for 11 years. He deployed to support his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom in January 2005, just a month after being married.

Timothy was born September 25, 1975, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to proud parents Sherry and Eugene. He grew up near Sherman, Mississippi, and graduated from Amite County High School. He attended Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he was a star on the track team, earning himself a track scholarship. He



graduated from Southern with a degree in political science. In December 2004, Timothy married his longtime girlfriend, Willie Marie Dickerson. He loved children and encouraged every child he came into contact with to go to college. He briefly taught middle school in McComb, Mississippi, and had a deep desire to help young people better their lives. Before he deployed for Iraq, Timothy worked as a veterinary technician.

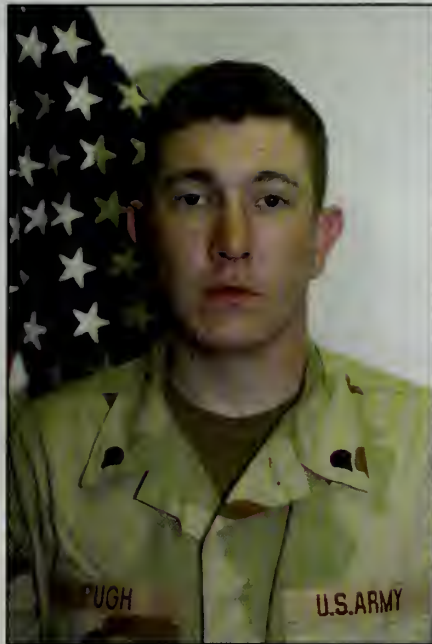
He was an animal lover and would help find homes for them. He, himself, adopted a three-legged hound dog that he named Blue.

Friends and family remember Timothy as a role model and an inspiration to others. His mother described him as “very loving, very understanding.” Reverend Alphonse Patterson praised Timothy’s athletic and academic achievements, saying, “The young man stood out in his neighborhood and his schools. Everywhere he went he touched somebody’s life.” Reverend Patterson went on to encourage young people to emulate Timothy.

Clearly, Timothy Osbey was a man with a heart of gold. He loved his family, his friends, kids, animals, and his country. Timothy sacrificed his life doing what he was called to do—exemplify integrity, honor, and valor. Those who knew Timothy and were fortunate enough to share in the blessing of his life will carry him close in their hearts forever.

Major General Harold A. Cross, Mississippi’s adjutant general, posthumously presented Sergeant Osbey with a Bronze Star for meritorious service and a Mississippi Medal of Valor. In his presentation, Major Cross noted that Osbey was “the type of Soldier who would go the extra mile.” In addition to his posthumous awards, the National Guard paid tribute to Osbey on May 18, 2008, when the McComb Army National Guard Readiness Center was renamed in his honor.

Timothy is survived by his parents, Sherry and Eugene; his wife, Willie Marie; his daughter, Saderia; his sister Michelle; his brother Tonio; and numerous extended family and friends.



ROBERT S. PUGH

Died: March 2, 2005

Rank: Specialist

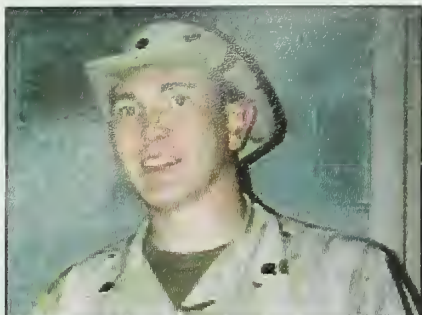
Unit: 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Robert "Shane" Pugh was killed on March 2, 2005, when his vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device outside of Iskandariyah, Iraq. Though mortally wounded himself, Pugh instructed a group of Soldiers on how to stop another Soldier's bleeding enough to stabilize him. Pugh's heroic and selfless act saved the wounded Soldier's life. The 25-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, out of McComb, Mississippi, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Pugh was laid to rest at Forest Lawn Memory Gardens in Marion, Mississippi.

Pugh was a licensed paramedic and worked as a phlebotomist for the United Blood Services in Meridian, Mississippi, in addition to providing medical coverage for his Army Guard unit. Colleagues say Pugh was eager to learn about new technology in the field of phlebotomy and that he "had a unique way of touching the lives of those around him." He and his wife, Amanda, would have celebrated their first anniversary on March 25, just 23 days after his tragic death.

Shane was remembered by colleagues in and out of the Army as a personable man who had a positive impact on the world around him. Colleague Chris Coffin fondly



recalled Shane: "He was a great guy. He would just light up a room and he could lighten the spirit." During Shane's memorial service, he was aptly portrayed as a hero. Said Reverend Calvin Farmer: "I remember Shane as being one of the most spiritual kids in my church. He was an example to other

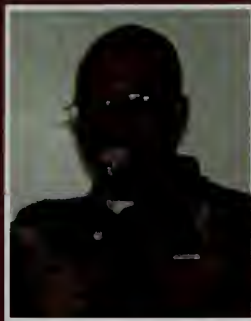
youth. Shane Pugh did not die without purpose. Shane is a hero." Brigadier General Ben Gastron noted, "Shane was a beloved son, a devoted husband, a friend of his community, and a citizen Soldier."

A hero is a person of distinguished courage or ability who is admired for his or her brave deeds and noble qualities. Robert Shane Pugh

is the embodiment of a hero. He demonstrated tremendous courage and expert ability that fatal day in March, and he will forever be remembered and admired.

Specialist Pugh was awarded the Silver Star posthumously. Other awards received include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Mississippi Medal of Valor. The Morton Army National Guard Readiness Center was dedicated to Specialist Pugh's memory. Further, Pugh was one of the initial Soldiers commemorated on the Stonewall, Mississippi, Iraq War memorial dedicated in May 2008.

Shane is survived by his wife, Amanda; his mother, Wilma, and her husband, Gary; his father, Glen; his sisters, Jennifer, Tiffany, and April; his brothers, Dale and Scotty; and numerous extended family members and friends.



MICHAEL T. ROBERTSON

Died: October 25, 2005

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

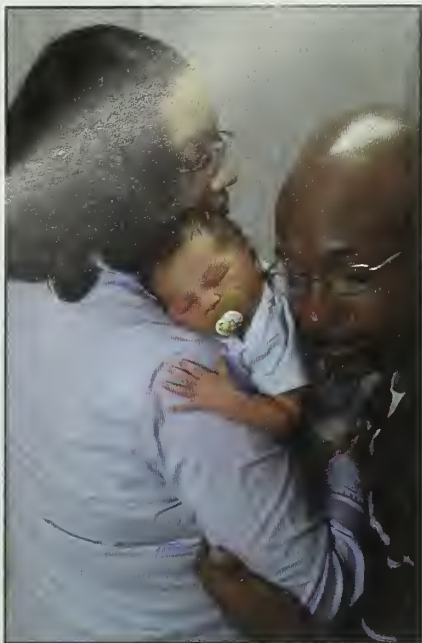
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1996-2005

Sergeant Michael "Tremain" Robertson died on October 25, 2005, at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. He succumbed to injuries he received when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle on October 17, 2005, in Samarra, Iraq. The 28-year-old medic was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division garrisoned at Fort Benning, Georgia. Mourners gathered at the Williams Temple Church of God, in Houston, Texas, to say their final farewells. He was buried at Houston National Cemetery.

Robertson joined the Army in October 1996. Motivated by a desire to help others, he chose to become a combat medic. He served a tour of duty in Bosnia and, at the time of his death, he was deployed on his second tour in Iraq. Robertson took his duties very seriously and was passionate about caring for his comrades. He was also committed to maintaining and upgrading his soldierly skills. He volunteered for extra patrols to ensure that none of his fellow Soldiers would be denied medical attention if they needed it.

Tremain was born September 29, 1977, in Houston, Texas. He graduated from Mira-beau B. Lamar Senior High School in 1996. In December 2004, he and his wife,



Tanya, also an Army medic, married. They were blessed with a son, Xavier, who was born just a few short months before his father's untimely death. Tremain left a large constellation of family and friends to mourn his loss and honor his memory. He was described as a quiet and contemplative man who corresponded frequently with his family. His aunt, Alma Newsom, described her nephew as "a thinker. He always seemed to be older than his age." She said that people typically looked up to Tremain and often sought his counsel.

Fellow Soldiers remembered "Doc Rob" as "a medic who cared." Captain Timothy Hite, his former platoon leader, affectionately recalled, "He taught me more than I could ever teach him. I always looked forward to seeing Sergeant Rob every day to see what he had to say." Staff Sergeant James D. Elmer, Robertson's noncommissioned officer in charge in Iraq, wrote an online memorial that included these words: "He wasn't just my Soldier, he was my friend and a damn good man. He was the best medic those infantry guys could ever ask for." Sergeant First Class Jef-

frey States also remembered Robertson fondly: "Doc Robertson was my medic during OIF [Operation Iraqi Freedom] I. He was a great Soldier, a fine medic, and a genuine and honest man who cared about his fellow troops. I will never forget him. I grieve his loss."

Tremain's wife, Tanya, shared her own feelings: "Michael Tremain Robertson was my husband and Xavier's father. He was a wonderful friend, and the impact he had on my life as well as countless others is no accident or surprise. Tremain had this quirky sense of humor; a tremendous love of music, art, tattoos, and drawing. No matter the length of time that he knew someone, he had a way of making everyone feel safe. He may have left this earth physically, but his legacy lives on in Xavier and all that he touched. I cannot say that this journey without him has been easy, but he left me with some of the best gifts in the world, and for that I am grateful and truly blessed. I live today to the fullest because I know he would expect nothing less of me. I see his love, beauty, and smile in our son, and that is my reason for living."

Tremain Robertson may have been a calm, unassuming man, but his service to his country was anything but docile and ordinary. He served his unit with dedication and courage, with proficiency and commitment to his job and his fellow troopers. He leaves a legacy of bravery, honor, and heroism.

Tremain is survived by his wife, Tanya; his son, Xavier; his parents, Barbara and Michael; several half- and step-brothers and sisters; and his grandparents.



STEVEN F. SIRKO

Died: April 17, 2005

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Private First Class Steven F. Sirko lost his life on April 17, 2005, in Muqdadiyah, Iraq, in a non-combat-related incident. The 20-year-old combat medic was supporting his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom and was serving with the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Benning, Georgia. He had been in Iraq for only three months at the time of his death. Friends and family said their final farewells to their beloved hero during a funeral Mass held April 23, 2005, at St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in Statesville, North Carolina. He was laid to rest with military honors in the Oakwood Cemetery in Statesville.

Determined to join his country in the fight against terrorism, Sirko enlisted in the Army shortly after 9/11. After excelling in basic training and advanced individual training, Sirko graduated in the top 6 percent of his medic training class and became a medic before he turned 19. While in the Army, Sirko felt he was making a difference and told his family he wanted to make the Army his career. "Steven was very patriotic," his father, Rick, recalled. Sirko had been offered a chance to join the Army's Special Forces and remain stateside; however, he chose to be deployed to be near his wife, Virginia Downs Sirko, whom he met in combat medic training. They were married on October 16, 2004. He deployed in January 2005. While in Iraq, Sirko worked 12-



to 16-hour shifts at an emergency aid station, tending to wounded Americans and Iraqis until they could get to a hospital. He was also assigned to an infantry unit as a medic. Shortly before his death, in keeping with his medical training, Sirko performed an emergency tracheotomy while in a helicopter—just another day at the office for this brave Soldier.



Steven was born in Portage, Indiana, on August 11, 1984, to proud parents Rick and Summer. He spent his childhood in both Indiana and North Carolina and as a teenager moved back to Portage, where he attended high school. Steven was an active athlete in high school, involved with football, wrestling, and swimming. He loved the outdoors and learned to hunt and fish while growing up in the South.

Family members recall that Steven always had a knack for helping others. He often brought home stray animals and gave an elderly neighbor Christmas presents. When Steven left for Iraq, he told his family and friends it was his duty. His mother recalled, "He wanted to go. He wanted to do what he needed to do. He wanted to do it

right." Steven's father, Rick, described his son as "very popular. The girls were crazy about him and the guys respected him. Steven had the type of personality where, when you met him, you fell in love with him." His mother added that Steven was a "jokester" with "bags of personality."

Comrades fondly remember him for his ability to make those around him laugh. Sergeant Gregg Campbell recalls, "Steve was never without a smile. You could always count on him to lighten the mood." Sirko's former platoon sergeant, Sergeant First Class Lovingood, memorialized Steven: "I'll never forget his huge smile....He had a great attitude about everything and was always the comedian....I made him my driver just prior to coming over here because I enjoyed his company." He went on to describe a time he and Sirko got into a wrestling match and Sirko accidentally cut Lovingood's eye, saying, "I now have a scar to always remember you by, Steven." Another comrade, Specialist Maika Thompson, remembered, "To this day I can't recall a time when Steven wasn't laughing or had a smile on his face. He's the type of person people like to be around."

Steven leaves behind to cherish his memory his adoring wife, Virginia Downs Sirko; his parents, Steve and Summer Lipford; Rick and Rose Sirko; his sisters, Bridget Gentle and Laura Sirko; and brother, Michael John Godbey.



JEFFREY S. TAYLOR

Died: June 28, 2005

Rank: Petty Officer First Class

Unit: SEAL Team TEN

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1994-2005

Petty Officer First Class Jeffrey S. Taylor, U.S. Navy, a Hospital Corpsman assigned to SEAL Team TEN, was killed in combat on June 28, 2005, when the MH-47D helicopter on which he was riding was shot down near Asadabad, Afghanistan. Taylor was part of a task force attempting to rescue a team of four U.S. Navy SEALs trapped deep in enemy-controlled territory while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Eight U.S. Army crewmembers and seven other SEALs were also killed in the crash. Taylor was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, with full military honors.

Taylor was from Coal City, West Virginia. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1994, and initially qualified as a Hospital Corpsman. In 2000, he graduated from Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training and qualified as a SEAL. He then joined SEAL Team EIGHT. He served later tours aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), at the John F. Kennedy Warfare Center, and then with SEAL Team TEN, based at Virginia Beach, Virginia. Taylor deployed with Team TEN to Afghanistan in 2005 to conduct counterinsurgency operations against Taliban forces trying to overthrow the government of Afghanistan.

Family, friends, and fellow comrades remember Jeff as an incredible young man. It is no surprise to any of them that he touched so many hearts and gave his life for such a righteous cause. His wife, Erin, recalls that “[He was] honest, compassionate, and giving to a fault. He knew his place was fighting side by side with his best friends to bring peace and avoid future attacks on American soil. Jeff knew his calling.” Brandon Cox says, “My brother, Jeff Taylor, is not only a hero to this country, Jeff was my hero. There was not one pro athlete or a celebrity that inspired me as much as my brother did. He always worked hard and aimed high to achieve his goals.” He was part of a team of brothers that gladly put their own lives on the line for each other. Family members and comrades are honored and proud that their loved ones were surrounded by such great and loyal friends, like Jeff.

Hospital Corpsman Second Class (FMF) David A. Saunders served under Taylor, a senior corpsman, at the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth, Virginia. He remembers Taylor’s smile, enthusiasm, dedication, and concern for others. He was always running, cycling, or doing something outdoors and always talked about being a SEAL. “He was a wonderful and inspiring person.” Lieutenant Commander (FMF) Sean Hussey carries the lessons Taylor taught him years ago on being a Sailor and working with Marines. When he reminisces about those days, it’s Taylor’s face and voice that come to his mind. To all those who served with Taylor, he was their corpsman and friend. Hospital Corpsman First Class (SW) Gabriel Bocanegra will never forget Taylor’s kindness and willingness to help out his shipmate. Bocanegra strives to emulate Taylor’s motivation and to follow in the footsteps of a great man and great Sailor.

Eleven SEALs were killed on that day in the Global War on Terrorism. Daniel and Maureen Murphy are the proud parents of Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy, one of the SEALs Taylor’s team was attempting to rescue. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy want all to know, “These men—true blue Navy SEALs—will never be forgotten in our hearts, minds, or prayers. We salute the sacrifice of Jeffrey Taylor and his teammates in SEAL Team TEN in their attempt to come to the aid of our Mike and his men. You are all true American heroes. These are men who will live on in the memories of those who follow in the fight for freedom and justice. Know that you are in our hearts and prayers.”

Taylor received two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals (with Combat “V” for Valor), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, two Navy Unit Commendations, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy “E” Ribbon, four Good Conduct Ribbons, Navy Fleet Marine Force Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, two National Defense Service Medals, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and three Sea Service Deployment Ribbons. He also received the Bronze Star with Combat “V” for Valor, Purple Heart Combat Action Ribbon, and Afghanistan Campaign Medal, posthumously.

He is survived by his wife, Erin; his mother and stepfather, Gail and Jim Bowman; his father and stepmother, John and Cheryl Gwinn Taylor; a brother, Brandon Cox; four stepbrothers, James Bowman, Jay Bowman, Kelly Bowman and Carl Bowman; his half brothers, Justin Taylor and Josh Taylor; his maternal grandmother, Manda Elizabeth Birchfield; and a paternal grandmother, Lucille Taylor Smith.



CHRISTOPHER W. THOMPSON

Died: October 21, 2005

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Petty Officer Third Class Christopher W. Thompson was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq when an improvised explosive device killed him on October 21, 2005. The 25-year-old North Carolina native, who was assigned to Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, was conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Family and friends honored their beloved son and brother at the Peace Haven Baptist Church in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina; he is buried at Mountlawn Memorial Park.

Thompson was involved in the North Wilkes High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program in Hays, North Carolina, for a year before volunteering to serve his country at 21 years old. He finished Basic Training just three days after terrorists attacked the nation on September 11, 2001. He was then sent to the USS *Austin*, and 18 months later he began his corpsman training. He deployed for Iraq in March 2004 and served there in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom until October of that year. He left for his second tour in Iraq in July 2005.

Christopher was born in 1980 in Wilkes County, North Carolina, to delighted parents Larry and Geraldine Reid Thompson. He was raised in Millers Creek and gradu-



ated from North Wilkes High School, where he played both baseball and football. He went on to further his education at Wilkes Community College and was a Yellow Jackets football player and a Babe Ruth baseball player. He was also a counselor for two years at the Elk Camp. He had aspirations of becoming a teacher and a coach when his military duty ended, and hoped to study at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina. Chris's mother, Geraldine, fondly remembers Chris as a funny boy who would sneak her car and take his friends joyriding. She

never let him know that she was aware of his antics. Both parents continue to wear the yellow "Support Our Troops" bracelets Chris gave to them when he shipped off to Iraq in July. "We promised him we wouldn't take them off until he got back, and they haven't been off," Chris's father said. "Mine neither," his mother concurred.

Christopher was an all-American boy, but the one thing that set him apart from many others was his longing to help people. While most boys only dream of being a hero, Chris was an American hero who lived his dream. He was a dedicated corpsman who served with commitment and bravery. Chris's father, Larry, recalled a conversation he had with his son before Chris deployed to Iraq on his second

tour. Chris told his father, "I can't let my Marines go without me. I take care of them."

On August 22, 2004, while Thompson was in Iraq on his first tour, an explosion hit the Humvee in front of his vehicle, wounding four Marines. Thompson selflessly and without regard to his own safety tended to those Marines in the midst of a gunfight. A fifth Marine in the Humvee, Thompson's best friend, died in his arms. Afterwards, two bullets were found inside Thompson's medical pack. That valiant conduct earned Thompson the Navy Commendation Medal with Valor. Marine Lance Corporal Michael Jernigan recounted how Thompson saved his life after an explosion and firefight left him blind and bleeding. "He was one of the best men I've ever met. I'm standing here because of him." Thompson selflessly and repeatedly put himself in harm's way for his men, and for this his fellow Sailors and Marines vow to remember Thompson as a true American hero. To remember is to honor and with that honor comes the responsibility to inspire others with stories of a noble man, a brother, a friend, a hero.

In addition to the Navy Commendation Medal, Thompson was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon 3rd Award, Good Conduct Award, Combat Action Ribbon Operation Iraqi Freedom, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Marine Commendation with Valor, and the Purple Heart.

Chris is survived by his parents, Larry and Geraldine; his two brothers and their wives, Jimmy and Krista, and David and Melissa; and his grandmother, Statia.



BRIAN A. VAUGHN

Died: June 21, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2005

Specialist Brian A. "Alex" Vaughn died on June 21, 2005, when his unit was attacked by enemy small arms fire in Ramadi, Iraq. The 23-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colorado. Vaughn's family and friends said their final farewells on June 29, 2005, at the First Baptist Church in Trussville, Alabama, after which Vaughn was buried in Jefferson Memorial Gardens in Birmingham, Alabama.

Vaughn enlisted in the Army in April 2003. After graduating from basic combat training and combat medic training, he was sent to Korea, where he served with distinction for eight months. After Korea, Vaughn deployed to Iraq. At the time of his death, Vaughn was just two months away from returning to the States. He then planned to leave the Army and return to his home in Alabama.

Alex was born May 10, 1982, to Terry and James Vaughn. Even as a child, Alex had an unusual capacity for caring for others, as exemplified by his earning a first aid certificate when he was only ten. From that age on, his family remembers that Alex was always ready to save lives and any time he saw a person in need, he stepped right in to help. Alex graduated from St. Clair County High School in Pell City, Alabama,



in 2000. A devout Christian, he was an active congregant at the Leeds First Assembly of God. Alex's family described him as a young man who "knew no fear." Alex had not visited his family in the two years before his death because he did not want to abandon his comrades or his unit. He explained to his mother, "I can't leave my guys because if something happens to them I have to be there to take care of them." Alex wrote to his mother assuring her that he knew "exactly where I'm supposed to be and I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to do with my life." Alex's Aunt

Cheryl was aware of her nephew's total devotion to his calling as a medic and said, "If he knew how it was going to end up, I think he still would have gone over there."

Vaughn's commander, Major Raj Butani, described Vaughn as a "standout" medic, both professionally and personally. "His jovial and kind soul was evident, and he was a shining light for those around

him, always brightening up even the most otherwise mundane or gloomy situation with his antics and humor." Another fellow Soldier, Sergeant McMillen, remembered Vaughn as a great Soldier, medic, and person. "I was a fellow Manchu with him in Korea and Iraq. He was one of the medics that everybody wanted on patrol because he was that good. He will never be forgotten," he said.

In a final farewell to his dearly loved family in case of his death, Alex wrote describing how deeply he cared for them and how he appreciated their love for him. His note confirmed: "I have been your son, your brother, your cousin, your nephew, your grandson, your friend, your Best friend, your comedian, your nuisance and lastly, your Soldier. I do not regret anything I have done, even the mistakes make you who you are. Just know that if I die, that I did it trying to bring back as many people to their families as I could. I am sorry if I don't make it home to you. I love you ALL."

Alex was born with a zealous commitment to help and heal, and he exercised his gift to the fullest extent. This American hero chose to serve his country and use his talents on behalf of Soldiers in need of his care, a job well done!

Alex is survived by his mother, Terry Savage; stepfather, Derrall Crain; father, James Vaughn; brothers, Adam and Anthony; and sisters, Monica, Justine, Felicia, Crystal, and Candy.



JAVIER A. VILLANUEVA

Died: November 24, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2005

Specialist Javier A. Villanueva died on November 24, 2005, in Al Asad, Iraq, of wounds he received when a makeshift bomb exploded near his foot patrol in Hit, Iraq, on November 23. Villanueva was assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment out of Fort Irwin, California. Friends and family gathered to honor his life on December 3, 2005. He was laid to rest in Waco Memorial Park South in Waco, Texas.

Villanueva joined the Army in September 2003. After completing basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, he reported to Fort Sam Houston in Texas for advanced individual training as a 91W health care specialist. His first duty station was at Fort Irwin, California. He was assigned to Iraq in January 2005 as a combat medic.

Javier—Javi to family and friends—was born and raised in Waco, Texas. He graduated in 1998 from La Vega High School, then attended Texas State Technical College in Waco for two years. He worked for Taco Bell and Albertsons before moving to Temple, Texas. In Temple, Javier worked at a Ross clothing store, where he met Felicia Owens. They were married on May 15, 2003. Javier was a warm, loving man who valued family and friends and was known for making others laugh.



Javier's friends and family remember him with love, and it is obvious how many lives he touched. Fellow Soldiers from his unit in Iraq consistently refer to him as the bravest and the best man they knew. He is remembered for his courage, his optimism, and his dedication to his profession. Those whose lives he saved while carrying out his duties will never forget him. His death created a void in his unit and especially in his family that cannot be filled. He is sorely missed.

Villanueva received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart posthumously. Other

awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal (one oak leaf cluster), the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Combat Medical Badge. In honor of his sacrifice, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered the State Capitol flags to be flown at half-staff.

Javier is survived by his wife Felicia; his daughter Taliyah Ann; his parents Cristine and Wilfredo; his brothers David, Carlos, and Wilfredo; and a large circle of family and friends.



KENNETH G. VON RONN

Died: January 6, 2005

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2005

Sergeant Kenneth G. von Ronn died on January 6, 2005, when a roadside bomb exploded under his Bradley fighting vehicle in the village of Awad al-Hussein, north of Baghdad, Iraq. von Ronn was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry Division, Army National Guard out of Newburgh, New York. Six Soldiers from the Louisiana National Guard serving with the 69th Infantry Regiment died in the same incident. Von Ronn was buried on January 15, 2005, with full military honors at Sullivan County Veterans Cemetery in Liberty, New York.

Von Ronn joined the National Guard following high school graduation in 2003. He trained as a combat medic and was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 101st Cavalry Regiment. He was later attached to Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 101st Cavalry Regiment, Newburgh, New York, as the company medic. On April 6, 2004, von Ronn was transferred to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment to support the mobilization of the 1st of the 69th Infantry Regiment and Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 101st Cavalry Regiment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Ken was born in West Palm Beach, Florida, but grew up in Walker Valley, Pine Bush, and Bloomingburg, New York. His childhood was filled with hiking, model making, shooting, and practical jokes. He was skinny, but strong, and would shrug off pain. He graduated from Pine Bush High School and married his sixth grade sweetheart, Kira Conklin. When he first enlisted in the National Guard, he hid his enlistment from Kira because he did not want her to worry about him. Even when faced with difficult situations, Ken would joke to keep others from worrying. He often kept an action figure stuck in his flak jacket. In 2004, when he was hit by shrapnel, he downplayed the incident, joking to his family that Batman was hurt more than he was.

Ken was only 20 years old when he was killed, but he touched many people in his short life through his good spirits, his sense of humor, and his compassion for others. Both his wife and his mother consider

him a hero who died for his country. His wife, Kira, reflects, "Kenney knew that what he was doing made a difference over there. Whether we get a democracy there or not, Kenney did not die in vain." His mother, Debra, says, "He died doing what he wanted to do: Serving his country." Although Ken's sisters remember that he was not happy to be stationed in Iraq, Kira says he was proud of the real progress his unit was making in finding weapons and in helping to facilitate peace. Von Ronn was dedicated to his country and touched the lives of many as a combat medic, but he was looking forward to a life after war. His best friend, Dan Boen, says, "Ken wanted to finish school, settle down, and have a normal life that didn't involve war." Von Ronn hoped to complete his studies to become a registered nurse and, eventually, a pediatrician.

Von Ronn was posthumously promoted to sergeant in recognition of his service and the sacrifice he made.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Kira; his parents, Debra and Raymond; his sisters, Gina, Courtney, and Samantha; and a wide circle of friends and family.



THOMAS A. WALLSMITH

Died: October 26, 2005

Rank: Master Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Forward Support Battalion, Division Support Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division

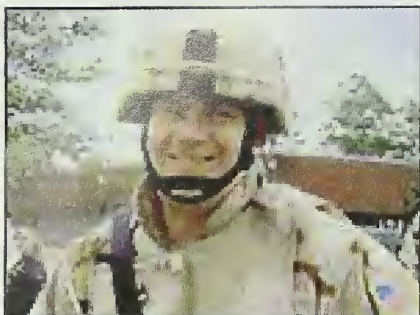
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1987-2005

Master Sergeant Thomas A. Wallsmith died on October 26, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee in Rustamiyah, Iraq. In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 38-year-old was assigned to the 3rd Forward Support Battalion, Division Support Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, based in Fort Stewart, Georgia. Wallsmith's memorial service was held at the Pederson Funeral Home in Rockford, Michigan, after which the Soldier was buried in the Fort Custer National Cemetery in Augusta, Michigan.

Wallsmith entered the Army in 1987. He graduated from the Army's respiratory therapy program in 1992, and served in that specialty role at the Brooke Army Medical Center's Institute of Surgical Research in San Antonio, Texas. He also practiced as a respiratory therapist at William Beaumont Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, and Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Born on January 7, 1967, in Carthage, Missouri, Thomas spent the majority of his youth in that southwest Missouri town situated on the original Route 66. After graduating from high school in 1985, he worked for several years at a local grocery store before enlisting in the Army. In September 2005, one month before he died, Thomas came



home to his wife and children on leave. He then finally got the opportunity to see the treasured Harley-Davidson motorcycle he had ordered while he was in Iraq and was eagerly anticipating taking it out on the road. He and his family took great delight in the thrilling experience. Thomas's mother

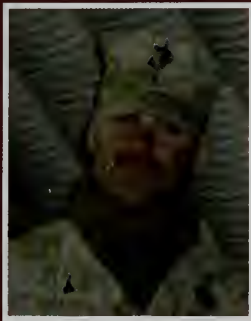


encapsulated his personality and life in a few succinct words: "You couldn't help but like him. He was a good Soldier, and he was a good person." She pledged, "I will miss him forever."

As a respiratory therapist assigned to Iraq, Wallsmith was not required to participate in missions or to go forward with convoys. Nonetheless, he volunteered to take part in these and other similar outreach activities. While serving at Camp Taji in Iraq, Wallsmith built a podium inside a nearby church. He also indulged in his favorite pastime of freshwater fishing at a lake in the vicinity. After his death, Wallsmith's colleagues renamed the body of water "Lake Wallsmith" in his memory. A true leader, Wallsmith was described as a perpetually optimistic individual who served as a model for other

less experienced Soldiers serving with him. Maria L. Smedegaard, director of respiratory care services at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, worked with Thomas in a prior assignment. She recalled that he "was an excellent clinician with vast experience in critical care and pulmonary function testing." Smedegaard added that Wallsmith "mentored and taught many new graduates the essentials of respiratory care. He was a great and wonderful man who bravely served this country. He will be missed by many for a long time." Cecy Flores-Wiltout, lead technologist in the Pulmonary Function Testing lab at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, also worked previously with Wallsmith. She vowed that she would forever remember him as one of the profession's fallen heroes, stating that Wallsmith "was a really neat guy, great family man, and an extremely dedicated Soldier with an infectious smile!" She noted that Wallsmith "will never be forgotten by the many friends he left behind at William Beaumont Army Medical Center." Cathy Dease, another comrade and coworker at that institution, said she would never forget "how he would make me laugh, even when I thought things were bad. He always tried to see the good side in any situation, making him a great mentor and an awesome friend."

Thomas's survivors include his wife, Brenda; his daughter, Lauren; his son, Nathaniel; his parents, David and Carol Wallsmith, and Patricia and Bennie Vento; and his brother, Joel.



JEFFREY L. WIENER

Died: May 7, 2005

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2002-2005

Petty Officer Third Class Jeffrey L. Wiener was killed during a firefight with insurgents on May 7, 2005, in western Iraq. The 32-year-old Hospital Corpsman was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force. Grieving family and friends gathered on May 16, 2005 to bid their final farewells to their fallen husband, father, son, and brother at the Calverton National Cemetery in New York.

As a paramedic in New York City, Wiener lost many friends and colleagues during the September 11 terrorist attacks. He volunteered for the Navy in 2002, choosing to train as a Hospital Corpsman in order to satisfy his yearning to help people and serve where medical personnel were in demand. Prior to his deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he completed the Special Operations Medic class at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The instructor of the class, an ex-RECON and Navy SEAL corpsman, was so impressed with Wiener that he offered him a job on the spot.

Jeff was raised in Lynbrook, New York, and graduated from Lynbrook Senior High School. He married his best friend, Mariateresa, and they had two beautiful daugh-



ters, Mikayla Lynn and Theadora Rose. He became an emergency medical technician and worked for the County of Nassau, New York, where he earned the Red Cross Life Saving Award. He also worked at the Patchogue, New York, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Squad and the Jefferson County, Kentucky, EMS Squad. Jeff was a former Captain of Tally-Ho Engine Company #3, Lynbrook Fire Department, and an emergency medical technician—critical care for the Lynbrook Medical Company #1. He became a certified cardiopulmonary resuscitation

instructor and volunteered for numerous organizations, including the Jefferson County, Kentucky, Explorers Program as an EMS instructor for teenagers. Jeff's community involvement is evidence that his life was devoted to helping people. Captain Keith Vincent, Jeff's former EMS supervisor, described Jeff as "a hard charger" who "got along well with his coworkers." Keith added that Jeff "loved paramedic work and helping people, which also helped push him into the military. The Iraqi people lost a valuable asset."

Wiener's best friend, Petty Officer Second Class George T. Cleveland, fondly eulogized his fallen comrade, "Anyone who met him for

just a few minutes was immediately struck by his strength of character....You see, Jeff was proud of who he was, of every aspect of his life, from his family, to his name, to his heritage. But what he was most fiercely proud of was his service with the United States Marine Corps." Even though Wiener was a member of the Navy, he served proudly and bravely alongside the Marines, joining them in combat and tending to their wounds when injured. Cleveland recalls his best friend, "Jeff was more of a Marine than most Marines I know. That is the highest compliment any Marine can ever give to his doc, and one that is handed out only sparingly. Wiener earned that status among his Marines, and only a handful of corpsmen in this battalion can say the same. He died a warrior's death; he is a true American hero." Recalling Wiener's commitment to his country and his duty, Cleveland stated, "Jeff had an unwavering sense of purpose. He knew why he was here. He was here to make the world just a little safer for his daughters to grow up in. He was here because his country called him."

Petty Officer Third Class Jeffrey Wiener was an accomplished Sailor with many achievements. In addition to the Purple Heart, he was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Iraqi Campaign with FMF Combat Operations Insignia, the National Defense Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M (for Mobilization), the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, and the Fleet Marine Force Warfare Designation.

Jeff leaves behind to cherish his memory, his wife, Mariateresa; and children, Mikayla Lynn and Theadora Rose; his parents, Diana and Wayne; his sisters, Wendi, Jessica, and Delayne; and his brothers, Joshua and David.



JEFFREY A. WILLIAMS

Died: September 5, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: Support Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment

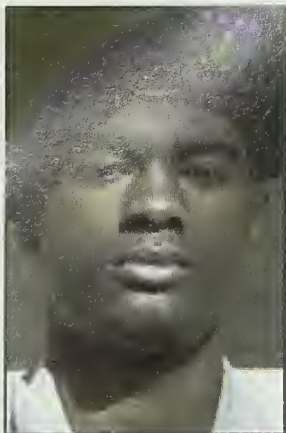
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2005

Specialist Jeffrey A. Williams was killed on September 5, 2005, when a hidden bomb detonated near his combat vehicle in Tal Afar, Iraq, while he was serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Specialist Williams was a combat medic assigned to the Support Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, out of Fort Carson, Colorado. He was buried in Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Williams went through basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. While at Fort Carson in 2004, he took medical classes through a correspondence course at Texas Central University. He hoped to become a cardiologist, and had begun taking courses toward that goal. Williams came from a long military tradition. His mother worked as a civilian nurse at military hospitals, and several members of his family served in the military. During his weekly calls home to his mother, he would share stories of what medical procedures he had performed, including the time he inserted his first chest tube in a wounded patient.

Jeff was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and was a 2003 graduate of Wheaton Warrenville South High School in Wheaton, Illinois. The oldest of four boys, he enlisted in the Army just days after graduating from high school, said his mother, Sandra Smith.



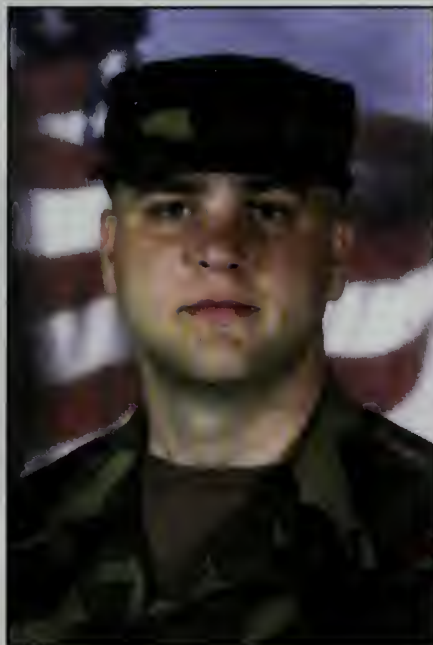
She knows that Jeff has left behind a legacy of compassion and devotion that had a great impact on the lives of many people all around the world. She says, "I am so proud of you for the things that you have achieved before and after your life ended on this earth." A family friend recalls meeting Jeff when he was just a little boy. "This little boy grew up into an honorable man who valued everyone in his life, no matter who they were. He had a place in his heart for everyone." Stacey Kuhn, who was engaged to Jeff, recalls, "Jeff was my future.

We argued like we were already married. He was my first true love, and the one who made me believe in heroes."

Ernesto Bojorquez, who served alongside Williams in Iraq, speaks of his friend: "To lose such a great friend is probably one of the hardest things that I have dealt with ever. J-Will was my best friend and my boxing partner. I know that you always got my back and in return I will be with your family and look after them till the day." Sergeant Joshua Peters speaks from his heart and the hearts of many of Williams's fellow soldiers: "Words can't express the loss of a brother on the field of battle. I find myself struggling to adequately define

my appreciation for Will and everything that he did for this troop. I remember speaking to Will the night of 4 September. He asked me to go over medical evacuation procedures one last time before he rolled out on his mission. He wanted to be the best and he knew the importance of being a medic on the battlefield. He was one to put his heart and soul into everything he did....To Jeffrey's parents, I thank you for raising such a dedicated and selfless man." Williams was one of Derek VanBuskirk's first subordinates, and VanBuskirk fondly remembers him as someone who was a joy to work with. "First of all, he had a great sense of humor. Next would have to be his ability to keep his head up even in the worst of times... I visualize him smiling and dancing as we all saw him do at times when he was in his element. I personally will never forget you, Will." Sergeant Adrian Taylor and Williams served together from almost the beginning, becoming more brothers than soldiers. Taylor recalls the man behind the uniform, the man who loved his family beyond words. Taylor says, "The reason that is significant is because before every mission we went on, he would always say, 'SGT Taylor, it's time to go save the world.'"

Jeff is survived by his fiancée, Stacey Kuhn; his parents, Aron and Sandra Smith and Elbert and Diane Martin; six brothers, Jermaine, Jerren, LeSean, CJ, Jalen, and Dennis; his sister, Madyson; and his grandparents, Tim and Eatha Williams.



ERIC P. WOODS

Died: July 9, 2005

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2005

Private First Class Eric P. Woods was killed July 9, 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle outside Tal Afair, Iraq. Woods, who was assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, out of Fort Carson, Colorado, died heroically while performing the duties of a combat medic—attempting to save a comrade's life. Shortly before the explosion, Woods had aided a wounded Soldier, stabilizing him and loading him onto a vehicle for transportation. As they drove to the landing zone, Woods's vehicle was struck by the bomb, which killed both Woods and another Soldier. The Soldier initially aided by Woods, Sergeant Wolfsteller, survived. Woods was buried with full military honors in McDivitt Grove Cemetery in Urbandale, Iowa.

Woods joined the Army in April 2004 and attended basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In November 2004, he reported to Fort Carson, Colorado, where he was assigned to G Troop, 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. Woods was deployed to Iraq in March 2005. He served as a combat medic, but he planned to become a physician's assistant.

Eric grew up in Urbandale, Iowa, and graduated from Urbandale High School in 1997, where he wrestled and played football and baseball. He attended Iowa State Universi-



ty in Ames, Iowa. Growing up, Eric was active with his youth group at Westchester Evangelical Free Church and participated in Little League sports. Eric was an avid golfer and enjoyed spending time with his friends playing poker and, most of all, playing with his son, Eric Scott.



While he was in Iraq, he asked his family to send toys, candy, and soccer balls for the Iraqi children. He also asked for items that would help other Soldiers, such as foot powder, moist towelettes, and lip balm. An avid reader of Stephen King novels, Woods also enjoyed crossword puzzles and playing Texas hold 'em poker with troopers of his platoon. "PFC Woods was always happy to play poker and was even more excited when

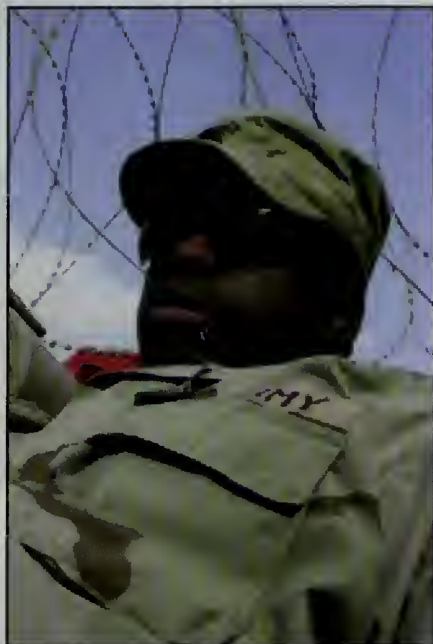
he would win," said Specialist Steven Riggs. Riggs also described Woods' love of the men he provided medical care for on the battlefield. "He made sure that he knew all of the guys in the platoon, and the positions that they held," Riggs said. "He took personal care to ensure that their VLSK and ILSK bags were always stocked, and restocked them as needed. He loved the Soldiers of 3rd Platoon and Grim Troop."

Shortly before he died, Woods was offered a chance to move away from the front lines. He turned down that opportunity, believing he

could do more to help his fellow Soldiers from where he was, he told his father the morning he died. Later, when Sergeant Wolfsteller was healed, he wrote a touching letter to the man who saved his life and to another fellow Soldier, Specialist Hoby Bradfield, who was killed in action that same day while participating in a mission that destroyed a terrorist suicide bombing cell. "Eric, I know you're reading this and can understand why I feel the way I do for you and your family. I never was able to repay you for your sacrifice and for keeping me alive on that cold day on June 25th in Talafar. You and Hoby give me the determination to be the best I can be and not to quit. When I'm feeling down, I will think of you and Hoby; you both bring the best out of me. I get tearful sometimes thinking back to that day....I just wish I could of told you thank you for being there for me that day and that you are my and my family's HERO forever! :) I will continue to pray for your family and help them at anytime. I miss you and I'm always thinking of you and your selfless service to keep me alive to be with my family. I love you man...FOREVER." Woods was a true hero and an example to those who follow in his footsteps as combat medics.

Woods' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Combat Medical Badge. He had also earned the National Defense Service Medal, Combat Action Badge, Army Service Ribbon, Iraqi Campaign Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Eric is survived by his wife, Jamie, and son, Eric; his parents, Charles and Janis Woods; and three siblings.



BENYAHMIN B. YAHUDAH

Died: July 13, 2005

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Benyahmin Yahudah was killed in a suicide bombing in Baghdad, Iraq, July 13, 2005. He was trying to move children out of the area as Coalition Soldiers conducted a search. Sadly, 18 children died in the same incident. In his last moments, two of his Soldiers saw "Doc" bandaging one of the children. The 24-year-old was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Georgia, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Yahudah was laid to rest at Evergreen Memorial Park in Athens, Georgia.

On the day of Yahudah's death, Private First Class A.J. Arnett was lying wounded on the ground. Arnett is still overwhelmed with Doc's (as he was affectionately called) unbelievable passion for helping the children of Iraq. As Arnett lay wounded, he looked over at Doc, who was lying amongst the injured children. Arnett remembers seeing him putting a bandage on a small child in his last movements. The last unconditional selfless act of a man who found joy among the smiling happy faces of children will live on in the memories of those who were lucky enough to have witnessed a simple act of kindness.

Benyahmin was born a Hebrew Israelite in Fulton County, Georgia, to Leah Yahudah and the late Absalom Yahudah, on September 27, 1980. Benyahmin was blessed to



know only the ways and teachings of Yahweh and the Torah for the whole of his life. He was home schooled in Madison County, Hull, Georgia, along with four siblings until he received his GED and attended Athens Technical College at the age of 15. There, he studied marketing management and electronics.



Benyahmin's family and friends remember him for his kindness, warmth, and free and loving spirit. Family friend Mark Kelly said the Bogart community, where his family lives, "is both saddened and damn proud of this young man. He was one of ours." Carol Myers taught Benyahmin and most of his brothers and sister, even their mom, at

Athens Tech. When she read of Benyahmin's death, she was shocked that such a kind and thoughtful soul would have come to harm. She has a picture of him and his brother Yahosuah, where his smile captures for her a "certain love of life and a deep kindness that I remember that he and seemingly all his family had." Benyahmin fell in love with Annie Armstrong, a young woman who was planning their wedding when he was killed. She remembers her beloved as "an awesome guy, truly the best man that I have ever met or could ever hope to meet." He had such a passion for life, and truly loved what he was doing in Iraq.

He had wanted to be a part of the military since he was a child. He felt that saving lives was his calling, and he joined the Army to do that. Yahudah was considered by many as an outstanding medic, a kind and caring man. One of his friends and fellow Soldiers, Jamie Behnke, recalls how Yahudah motivated him through basic training and reminded him every day "why I am doing this and making me

remember how happy I am to finally make the difference like you did...I never will forget how you changed my life by simply saying go home and take care of yourself. You saved me that night, that one little night, with one little sentence that changed all my decisions." Many of Yahudah's fellow Soldiers from Fort Stewart echo the sentiment that it was an honor to have called him friend. He was known to be willing to give the shirt off his back for his fellow Soldiers and even the Iraqi civilians. They were there with this brave man when he saved so many lives, Soldiers and civilians alike. Yahudah was a friend, a brother, and their Doc. The impact that he left on them will never be replaced.

Yahudah frequently gave candy and toys to the children in Baghdad. Colleagues remembered him as someone "more interested in saving lives" than with taking them. In one incident in Iraq, the medic pulled four Soldiers from a burning vehicle, saving the lives of three of them. He did all he could to save the fourth. Teroder Hudson was Yahudah's Platoon Sergeant when he first got to Fort Stewart. During one conversation they had about how it was over in Iraq when the war first started, "All I could tell him was what I saw and how we all dealt.... But he had strong concerns about doing a greater good, than being a hero...I said do your job and however big or little you may think it is, that would be the best anyone would expect of you." Hudson now teaches medics at Fort Sam Houston, and Yahudah will always be a part of his teaching of "why we do what we do, and how important a combat medic is to any Soldier deployed or not. You will be greatly missed by me and the Desert Rogues of old. CUT 'EM DEEP."

Among his awards and decorations, Yahudah earned the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Good Conduct Medal.

Benyahmin leaves behind his mother, Leah; siblings, Kirk Sims, Elaine Olga Adams, Bethsheba Baht Yahudah, Shoshanah Baht Yahudah, Yahosuah Ben Yahudah and Avigail Baht Yahudah; and his fiancée, Annie Armstrong.



TRAVIS L. YOUNGBLOOD

Died: July 21, 2005

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1999-2005

Petty Officer Third Class Travis L. Youngblood, a 26-year-old Navy Corpsman assigned to the Naval Hospital Great Lakes in Great Lakes, Illinois, lost his life on July 21, 2005, from wounds received on July 15, 2005. Youngblood was conducting combat operations in Hit, Iraq, when he was struck by shrapnel from an improvised explosive device. He was in Iraq fighting alongside and tending to the Marines of the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Youngblood received a hero's burial when he was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, on August 1, 2005, just eight weeks before the birth of his daughter.

Youngblood was following in the military footsteps of his father and uncle when he enlisted in the Navy in 1999. Initially, he wanted to be an electronics technician and work on submarines, but destiny had other plans, so he chose the brave and honorable career of a Hospital Corpsman. While attending training in Camp Pendleton, California, fate stepped in again and he met the love of his life, the woman whom he'd soon call his wife, Laura. Youngblood reenlisted in the Navy in 2004 and deployed for Iraq in January 2005.



Travis was born at Pensacola Naval Base in Florida on June 5, 1979. He was a member of the Southampton High School drama club in Courtland, Virginia, and graduated in 1997. In 1999 Travis married Laura, and in 2000, they had a son, Hunter. Tragically, Travis did not get to meet the child his wife was pregnant with at the time of his death. Travis would write to his adoring wife that it was a dream of his to call her Emma, a "cute little girly girl." Emma was born two months after his death. When Emma was born, Laura looked into her beautiful blue eyes and saw Travis. Dad-

dy will always be with Emma and Hunter, for they embody his legacy. While Travis's death broke many hearts, none felt it more than his family. His son, Hunter, tells people, "Daddy is a hero and an angel." Laura Youngblood soberly describes how her son talks to his daddy when nobody is around. She says that Hunter tells her, "Daddy says we're going to be okay." Before Travis died, he planned to dress as Batman for Halloween, and his son was going to be Robin. But Travis

Youngblood was not a comic-book character—he was a real hero in the flesh. Hunter looked up to and idolized his father as his hero, and most important, as his role model. Following in his father's footsteps, Hunter decided to be Batman for Halloween.

Youngblood's loss was felt by many. Lance Corporal Patty Ryan memorialized him this way, "Youngblood, you were by far the funniest person I have ever known. It was an honor serving alongside you." He continued, "You were like a brother to me and will be forever missed." The impact he had on the lives he touched continues to this day. Fellow members of Lima Company will never forget him, nor will the families who did not know him except through the memories shared with them by their sons. Nancy Weber is one such mother. Her son, Lance Corporal Anthony Weber, and many members of Lima Company, have immortalized their friend and corpsman with a tattoo on their wrists. Nancy Weber shares with Laura, "Your husband Travis was one of those special people and a true hero. I believe it was in his memory that our sons were inspired to continue to carry out their missions above and beyond all expectations."

Youngblood was awarded the Purple Heart, which was accepted by his son, Hunter, during Youngblood's funeral services at Arlington National Cemetery. Hunter calls the medal "Daddy's present."

Travis is survived by his wife, Laura; his children, Hunter and Emmy Levy; and his parents, Elmer and Debra.

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DUSTIN M. ADKINS

Died: December 4, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: Group Support Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2006

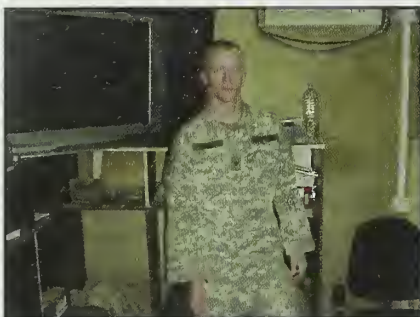
Sergeant Dustin M. Adkins was killed on December 4, 2006, when the helicopter in which he was riding crashed near Haditha, Iraq, due to mechanical problems. On his second tour in Iraq, Adkins served as a dental assistant in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the Group Support Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. An exemplary Soldier, he was also a fully trained Special Forces Soldier. Adkins is buried in Cave Springs Cemetery in Henderson, Tennessee.

Adkins enlisted in the Army in 2003 and attended basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He trained as a Dental Technician at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. After that, he attended Airborne School and was assigned to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. In keeping with his desire to improve his family's life, Adkins' entire military career was marked by ongoing training, including the Dental Technicians Course, Airborne Course, Combat Lifesaver School, Field Sanitation Course, and the Special Forces Basic Combat Course. He hoped to eventually attend Officer Training School.

In Iraq, Adkins distinguished himself as "the traveling dental technician." He often traveled in hazardous areas and endured austere living conditions in order to provide quality dental care to U.S. service members and Iraqis.



Dustin came from a strong military family, and was extremely proud to serve in the Army. His father, brother, sister, and brother-in-law all served in the military. Being extremely patriotic and very proud to be an American, he saw the service as an honorable way to serve his country. Although shy, family recalled that he enjoyed being a Soldier. He especially loved jumping from airplanes.



Dustin's family remembers him for his calm nature, love of baseball, and love of parachuting from airplanes. Most importantly, he loved his two children, Matthew and Atlanta.

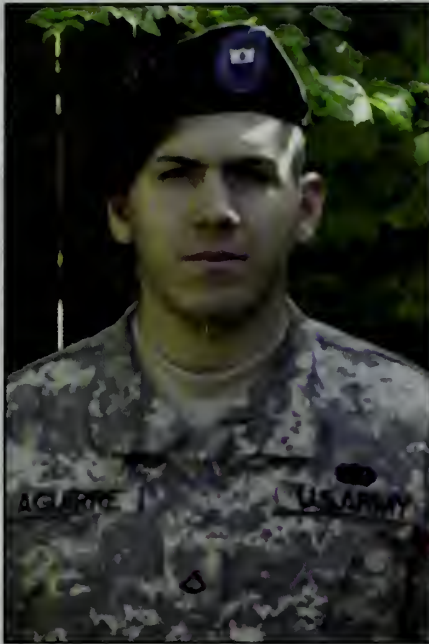
Although an avid Red Sox fan, he didn't even argue when his wife, Tiffany, a rabid Braves fan, wanted to name their daughter Atlanta. "His daughter had him wrapped around her finger from the moment she was born. He wanted a little girl so bad," his wife said. Although they were married for only three years, Tiffany is so very grateful for their time together, the love and dedication he had for her, and especially for their two little miracles. "As I watch our children grow, I see

more and more of you in them everyday. Matthew looks and acts like you, Atlanta has your soft voice. I will always love you."

An Army dentist who was also aboard the downed helicopter was broken up by Adkins's death. This was his first tour in Iraq, and Adkins had helped him a lot in terms of getting used to the routine and the surroundings. Robert Schmidt says of his comrade, "You were a good friend, great dental assistant, and most of all, an outstanding father... we at the Med Shed still think about you and [know] that you will never be forgotten [along] with all of the others at Group who have given their lives." Many of his fellow Soldiers remember Adkins as not only a compassionate man but one who was a great Soldier and a family man. Adkins was a true brother, always there to help someone in need. They will forever hold his memory in their hearts as an inspiration of what a Soldier and man should be.

Sergeant Dustin Adkins' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Combat Medical Badge, and Parachutist Badge.

Dustin leaves behind his wife, Tiffany; children, Matthew and Atlanta; his mother, Karen Scudder, and father, Richard Adkins; and his brother and sister, Nicholas Adkins and Crystal Webb.



NATHANIEL A. AGUIRRE

Died: October 22, 2006

Rank: Corporal

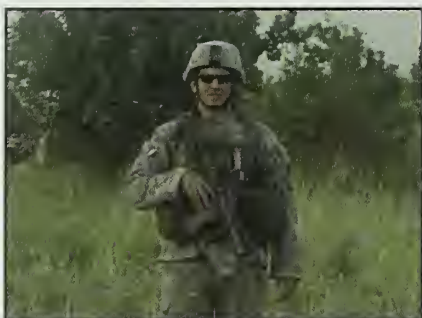
Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Corporal Nathaniel A. Aguirre was killed on October 22, 2006, by a sniper in Iraq. He was a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Hood, Texas. According to reports, Aguirre had run out into the open, exposing himself to enemy fire, to save a wounded fellow Soldier, most likely knowing that he would be the next person targeted in the ambush. In keeping with his dedication to his fellow Soldiers, Aguirre had volunteered for the mission because the unit involved did not have a medic that day. He was 21 years old. He is buried in his home town of Carrollton, Texas.

Aguirre could not wait to serve his country, and he joined the Reserves while still in high school. He was not yet 18 years old, and so his mother, Mary, had to give special permission for him to join. Aguirre graduated from basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and then graduated from Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia.

His family was very proud and supported his mission to serve his country. Nathaniel knew the risks but was willing to give his life in support of his fellow Soldiers and those in need. He considered his father, Louis, his hero because of all he accomplished in



his life. Nathaniel loved his family so much that he wanted to shield them from what was happening in Iraq so they wouldn't worry about him. An adventurous man, Nathaniel especially enjoyed rock climbing. In high school, he volunteered at a local rock-climbing gym so that he could climb for free. A natural leader, he later became a rock-climbing instructor at the gym. He also greatly enjoyed his time in the Boy Scouts, and treasured the lessons he learned there. He named the Boy Scouts as one of his life insurance designees.

Nathaniel's devotion to country was recognized by those in his

home town, where thousands of people lined the streets between the memorial service and his final resting place. Among them were Boy Scouts in uniform saluting the hearse as it passed. His military escort included a neighbor's son who had just returned from a tour in Iraq. Local businesses lowered their flags in his honor. Nathaniel is remembered as a good son, a good man, and a great Soldier. Like many medics, Nathaniel was called "Doc" by many in his unit. His fellow Soldiers also called him "Carebear." He strove to be the best in everything he did. His fellow Soldiers remember him as an exceptional combat medic who took good care of them. It was an honor to have served with him, and they will miss him.

Posthumously, Nathaniel Aguirre was awarded the Bronze Star and promoted to corporal. He also received the Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Parachutist Badge, and Combat Medical Badge.

Nathaniel is survived by his parents, Louis and Mary Aguirre.



ZACHARY M. ALDAY

Died: June 9, 2006

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2004-2006

U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman Zachary M. “Zach” Alday was killed while riding as a passenger in a Humvee on June 9, 2006, in Iraq. His vehicle struck a land mine as it was carrying out combat operations against enemy forces. Alday had been serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), based at Camp Pendleton, California. His relatives and friends grieved the 22-year-old corpsman’s passing at funeral services held on June 19, 2006, at the Spring Creek Baptist Church in Donalsonville, Georgia. Alday was buried in the church’s cemetery. A United States Navy Honor Guard attended the burial as active pallbearers. Members of the local American Legion Post 157 were also present, serving in solemn tribute as honorary pallbearers.

Zach graduated from Seminole County High School in Donalsonville, Georgia, in 2002 and enlisted in the Navy in November 2004, steadfastly believing that the Navy “was his calling and no one in his family could talk him out of it.” He sought to serve his country as well as to see the world and to advance his own education. In February 2006, he received deployment orders to Iraq and served there until his death a few months later.

Friends and family recalled Zach as fun-loving, outgoing, competitive, and energetic. He was an avid outdoorsman, taking pleasure in deer hunting, fishing, waterskiing,



and mud bogging, and he enjoyed spending time with his family and his daughter, Kamryn. Although he wasn't a big man—5' 9" and 175 pounds—he was a valued member of his high school football team and "played linebacker with heart." His family was consoled by the memory that he was able to spend a last festive Christmas in 2005 and a February 2006 pre-deployment leave with all his loved ones, recalling that "the whole family just had a great time together." All who survived Zach remembered him with affection. His daughter's grandmother, Kay Forbes,

pointed out that Zachary "was dedicated to caring for others," adding that he "saved lives on the battlefield, and he was very proud of that." Fellow angler and cousin Joel Alday marveled at Zach's valor. When he enlisted in the Navy, "the war was already going on, and he knew he'd probably be placed in this situation, and that took a lot of courage," the cousin confided. Joel derived comfort from the fact that, "I know he's in heaven right now."

Alday was promoted posthumously to the rank of Hospital Corpsman on June 16, 2006. Following Alday's death, the Alday family established a memorial in his honor. They specified that the commemorative would serve as the Zach Alday Scholarship Fund under the aegis of the Community Foundation of Southwest Georgia.

Survivors include Zach's parents, Tommy and Donna Alday; his daughter, Kamryn, and her mother, Brooke Connor; a sister, Mandy Barber; and a loving group of grandparents, nephews, aunts and uncles, cousins, and friends.



DAVID J. ALMAZAN

Died: August 27, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2002-2006

Sergeant David Jimenez Almazan was killed on August 27, 2006, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee during combat operations in Hit, Iraq while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was serving as a combat medic with the Army's 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Friedberg, Germany. Almazan was buried at the Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, California. Memorial services were held in Iraq, Germany, and Southern California. He was awarded United States citizenship posthumously, effective the day of his death.

Almazan joined the Army in 2002, hoping to make a difference in the lives of others as well as his own. He had previously deployed to Afghanistan for one year, and had recently reenlisted with a goal of becoming a physician's assistant. As a combat medic, he impressed his officers with the calm and coolness he exhibited during practice drills evacuating casualties. Colleagues described him as a leader by example, dedicated to his job and his unit. His wife, Salina Jimenez, said that he was proud to serve his country.

Born in Mexico, David had come to the United States when he was 11 years old. He never lost his appreciation for his Mexican heritage. He loved salsa dancing, and his



favorite food was enchiladas with homemade rice, beans, and Tapatio hot sauce. A childhood friend, Jose Martinez, remembers how David loved to have fun and even helped keep him out of trouble. David made the most of his opportunities and saw life in the United States as a way to a better

life through sacrifice and determination. "He came with nothing to this country and made something out of it," Martinez said. "He always wanted to be the best." David was a good friend to many. He always seemed to know how to brighten their day and make them laugh. David was loved by many and will always be remembered as an honorable and brave young hero.

David always managed to see the good in people and never had one complaint. The way he spoke of his family and how much they meant to him made him a remarkable person. Friend and co-worker, Monica Zavala, remembers the day he told her he was going into the Army. "I looked at you in disbelief and asked you why. You said, 'Cause I want to try something new and I know this way I can make a difference.' That summed up just the type of person you were, al-

ways putting others first. You were always so determined and loyal. Loyal to your family, friends and your country."

His medical platoon leader in Iraq, First Lieutenant Joshua Zeldin, had the highest praise for Almazan. "He was truly a top-notch Soldier and a leader to everyone he was around. In the Army, a medic is referred to as 'Doc' by the platoon he serves with," Zeldin wrote. "With that title comes great responsibility. The Soldiers that 'Doc' served with trusted him enough to feel at ease that their lives were in great hands." Fellow Soldier Sergeant Springer remembers Doc from when they served together in Hawaii. Springer speaks highly of this noble Soldier when he says that Doc was the epitome of a compassionate and caring medic. Where others may hand out pain medications, Almazan took the time to connect with his men and helped to put their fears at ease.

Almazan is remembered as someone who always had time for others. He would take time out of his busy day to be there for others whether they needed someone to talk to, play cards with, or watch movies with. Others in his unit remember how he was willing to stand in snow waiting to speak with his future wife on a satellite phone. He will always be remembered as a great Soldier, a great medic, and a true American hero.

In addition to his wife, Selena, David is survived by his parents, David Jimenez and Olivia Jimenez de Almazan, and two sisters, Mayra and Mariana Jimenez.



CHRISTOPHER A. ANDERSON

Died: December 4, 2006

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2005-2006

Navy Petty Officer Third Class Christopher Alan "Chris" Anderson died during an enemy mortar attack on December 4, 2006, near Ramadi, the capital of the Al Anbar Province in Iraq. The 24-year-old corpsman was serving with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, based in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. His funeral took place on December 16, 2006, at the Grace Evangelical Free Church in his hometown of Longmont, Colorado. A host of mourners, including Navy and Marine personnel, members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Patriot Guard Riders, family, friends, and strangers saluted as a horse-drawn caisson carried his remains to the church. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

A product of four generations of Navy men and women, Anderson joined the military in August 2005. He served his initial tour of duty with the Longmont Navy Recruiting Office. There, he was promoted from E-1 to E-3 and awarded the Navy Achievement Medal before reporting to boot camp, where he earned the distinction of being the class honor graduate. Anderson then attended "A" School (Hospital Corpsman Medical Training) and subsequently Advanced Combat Medical Training or "C" School. Anderson arrived in Iraq on September 6, 2006, and served there for just three months.



Almost immediately in Iraq, Anderson received the prized designation of “Doc,” a title typically given to Navy Corpsmen who have impressed their Marine counterparts with their performance in the field setting.



A 2000 graduate of Longmont High School in Denver, Colorado, Chris counted a number of significant achievements in his short life. As a 14-year-old, he became one of Colorado’s youngest certified baseball umpires and, in this role, always maintained grace under fire, an excellent preparation for the challenges to come. In his spare time, he freely helped his family and neighbors, mowing lawns and doing chores. So impressed were the neighbors by this wonderful young man, they threw

a neighborhood farewell party in his honor when he left to begin his career in the Navy. On learning of his death, all of Chris’s friends and family members honored his memory and expressed their profound grief. His brother, Kyle, recalled that when folks living nearby discovered the awful news, “the whole block shut down,” adding that, “nobody went to work. Everyone came to support my parents.”

Various members of Anderson’s unit also voiced their esteem and sorrow. One noted that, “he was a brother to all of us, loved by all of us.” Another stressed that Anderson “was awesome, and every day we went on patrol, we had his back, and we still do.” A third acknowledged that, “I think about him every day when I get up,” and a final Marine declared that “his family here [in Iraq] misses him more than anything in the world.” The respect he elicited from his buddies was exemplified in the remarks of one Marine who observed that Anderson was the “most squared away ‘Marine’ we have in this Unit.” When a marine from his unit was married, he lit a candle in honor of Anderson. Two other Leathernecks named their newborns after him, and Six Devil Dogs from his unit got tattoos memorializing

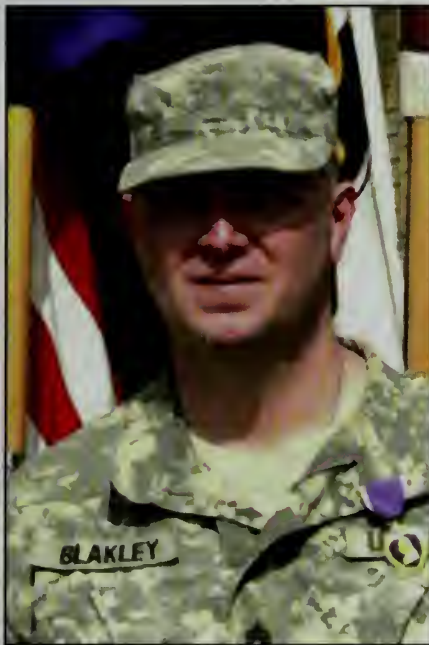
Anderson. His brother Kyle constantly wore his brother’s dog tags.

His father eulogized Chris as a “natural leader,” who was “warm, giving, thoughtful and caring,” adding that he was an “encourager and an uplifter with a truly unique ability to empower others to rise to success.” At Christopher’s funeral, his mother was understandably quite distraught. Debra cried to her husband of 26 years, “Christopher said he’d be OK. He promised he’d be safe... I miss him, I miss the phone calls. I want to talk to him.” Rick responded softly, “Hey, now we can talk to him anytime we want.” Debra sighed, “My heart hurts. ... It was my job to take care of him. I shouldn’t have let him go.” Rick quipped, “You were going to stop Christopher? Since when?” Both managed a brief smile and returned their focused gaze to their son’s casket.

In his short 16 months of active duty, Anderson earned advancement to Petty Officer Third Class and the Fleet Marine Force Warfare Specialist designator. His awards included the Purple Heart, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (with combat distinguishing device for valor), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Iraqi Campaign Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal and the National Defense Service Medal, among others.

Before deploying, Christopher informed his father that, if he died, he wanted to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. His tragically prophetic wishes became reality on December 27, 2006, when his body was interred in that sacred ground on a bitterly frigid, winter’s day. After the ceremony, Christopher’s aunt produced a bag of dirt from the home field of the San Diego Padres, his favorite baseball team. Each family member took some of the soil and scattered it on the casket. Christopher’s father, who was a quiet, stoic career Navy SEAL and always the family’s bedrock, roared, “HOOYAH, KID!” at the last moment in Arlington. In a final salutation with his voice breaking, he affirmed, “YOU DID GOOD.”

Christopher is survived by his parents Rick and Debra, and his brother Kyle, as well as other relatives, friends, fellow military members, and neighbors.



RICHARD A. BLAKLEY

Died: June 6, 2006

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: E Company, 38th Main Support Battalion, Indiana Army National Guard

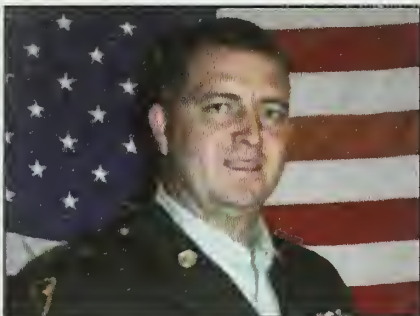
Branch: U.S. Army

Staff Sergeant Richard A. "Rick" Blakley was killed on June 6, 2006, by small arms fire while patrolling the city of Al Khalidiyah, Iraq. He was assigned to E Company, 38th Main Support Battalion of the Indiana Army National Guard, which was deployed with the 738th Area Support Medical Company to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Blakley was also a veteran of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, serving in various ports during that conflict. Blakley was buried on June 15, 2006, at Clayton Cemetery in Avon, Indiana. Both Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels and Indiana National Guard Adjutant General Major General Martin Umbarger were among the attendees at the funeral.

On January 16, 2006, Blakley was hit by a bullet that went through his body armor at the back of his neck and penetrated his shoulder. He managed to get out of the line of fire, find cover, and radio for help. When treated in Iraq for that wound, he declined an opportunity to return home for full treatment. A dedicated Soldier and medic, Blakley also refused an offer for a few days of rest and relaxation, and returned to his unit that same afternoon. He continued to treat his wound himself. When asked why, he explained that his men needed him.



For that act of heroism, Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels presented Blakley with a Purple Heart on April 15, 2006, while on tour in Iraq. Daniels mentioned that he “had been deeply moved by Rick’s courage and devotion to duty” and that he had “heartfelt admiration and gratitude for who Blakley was and what he did.”



Family members remember when Rick was unruly and undisciplined and how the military changed all that. He was a consummate Soldier who put himself in danger to save others, not so that people would point to him as an example,

but because that was his job and responsibility. They noted that he was where he wanted to be, helping people as a medic. The Army

brought out the dedicated medic and charitable side of Rick—he would ask for care packages filled with candy to hand out to the Iraqi children.

Fellow Soldiers who served alongside Blakley remember him as a great Soldier who put others before himself. Sergeant Michael Crone remembered, “Rick was my squad leader and a great friend. He was the one to tell me good job and also the one to tell me to straighten up. He was always there for me and I thank God for that. His legacy won’t die easily. Every patient I ever help will be because of the skills I picked up from your son.” Blakley’s comrades will carry his compassion and devotion in their hearts for all time as a source of inspiration.

Among Blakley’s awards and decorations was a Purple Heart that he received on April 15, 2006, for his courage and devotion to duty after being wounded by enemy fire on January 16, 2006.

Rick leaves behind his loving wife, Patty, and their two children, Whitney and Rick Jr.



JEFFREY S. BROWN

Died: August 8, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

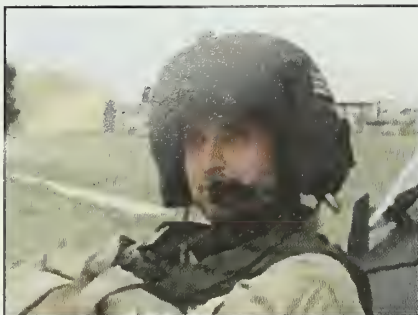
Unit: 82nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Jeffrey S. Brown was killed on August 8, 2006, when the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter in which he was riding crashed into a lake in Rutbah, Iraq, while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 25-year-old crew chief served with the 82nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance) out of Fort Riley, Kansas. Sergeant Steven Menemeyer, a medic, also died in the crash. Brown was cremated and his ashes scattered on his family's land.

Brown attended basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, before pursuing advanced individual training at Fort Eustis, Virginia. His first assignment was as crew chief in Heidelberg, Germany, with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 214th Aviation Regiment. He was later assigned to the 82nd Medical Company. Brown deployed as a crew chief in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He had finished his six years with the Army but was still in Iraq because his commitment had been extended.

Jeff was born on February 11, 1981, in Trinity Center, California. He was especially close to his brother Tim—they were like twins. Tim also serves in the Army and works on helicopters. Jeff's death devastated his parents, Ed and Diane. Ed and Jeff were going to buy a Chevy truck upon his return from Iraq. Many of his friends will forever



remember Jeff as a kindhearted, loving friend and brother. Adam Sanders considered Jeff one of his closest friends and was distraught to hear of his passing. He said, "He was an unwaveringly loyal and comforting friend to me and my family. In Germany, Jeff was a brother to me, a rare friend to



my wife, and an uncle to my son. Like all of you, there is a noticeable void in my life now that Jeff is gone. My pain from losing Jeff is immeasurable, but I realize that I am lucky to have known him in the tragically short time he had here. And for all those who feel the same, let us never forget Jeff. He lives through us."

A fellow Soldier remembered him as a great friend and the most honorable person he had the pleasure of knowing. Other members of his unit still miss him greatly; they agree that flying and pulling duty with him was always a joy. Brown is remembered as always smiling, happy, and playing the guitar.

Matt Baldwin served with Brown in Germany and was his first platoon leader. He watched as Brown transformed over the period of three years from a new Soldier fresh out of AIT to a seasoned mechanic with great leadership potential. Brown's sense of humor, coupled with his strong work ethic, made work fun even in tough times. Baldwin said, "We mourn the loss of an outstanding Soldier, leader, and great friend. We hang our heads briefly to remember Jeff's contributions both on and off the battlefield. We then hold our heads high and strengthen our resolve to train, fight, and win to ensure that Jeff's death is not in vain. Our country will be forever in debt to the family of Jeff Brown. Jeff made the ultimate sacrifice—fighting to give people the same freedom that we hold so sacred."

Sergeant Jeffrey Brown received the Bronze Star and an Air Medal posthumously. He had also earned the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Aviation Badge.

Jeff is survived by his loving and devoted wife, Ashley; parents, Ed and Diane; his brothers, Michael and Timothy; and his sister, Kathryn.



HEATHE N. CRAIG

Died: June 21, 2006

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Staff Sergeant Heathe N. Craig died on June 21, 2006, when his UH-60 helicopter hoist malfunctioned in Naray, Afghanistan, where he was serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While attempting to evacuate another Soldier hurt during combat operations, Craig was holding the wounded Soldier as they were both hoisted from a ridgeline by the helicopter. Halfway to the helicopter, the line snapped and both Soldiers fell to their deaths. The 28-year-old was assigned to the 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) out of Wiesbaden, Germany. Craig's memorial service and funeral were held at Wiesbaden Army Airfield's chapel.

Craig wanted to help people. He even considered becoming a kindergarten teacher until the desire to join the Army intervened. There, he learned his true calling was as a combat medic.

While in high school, Heathe was one of the top wrestlers in the area. He also ran cross-country track. High school friends remember Heathe as a good friend and a good teammate. He was always there to support anyone who needed it. He had just finished chatting with his wife Judy and playing peek-a-boo with his daughter Leona on a webcam when the call to deploy to Afghanistan came in. Judy remembers him



always being ready for whatever mission came up.

As a combat medic, Craig understood that sometimes saving people means risking your own life. Sergeant Krendra Jackson, one of Craig's close friends, talked about her fallen comrade during the memorial service at Wiesbaden Army Airfield's chapel. She told how Craig, even after back surgery, would work tirelessly, laboring beyond his body's limits. Jackson recounted her friendship with Craig: "Judy, you once told us we acted like brother and sister. He was my brother," she said. "He was our brother." Many of

his fellow Soldiers will always remember how he kept them laughing and walking away with a smile on their faces. Craig's sense of humor followed him onto the football field when during their downtime they would get together to play. Staff Sergeant William Cunningham says, "I'll always remember Heathe talking trash when our teams played each other." John Hawes remembers, "I was a member of the team that Heathe flew in to aid and help get our wounded out. That was a very tragic night for us all and the dedication and courage Heathe showed that night in making a risky insertion to help our wounded is that of only a true hero and American. He made the ultimate sacrifice one could make for his friends by giving his life in



trying to help others live. Though I had never met Heathe until that fateful evening, he was a 'guardian angel' sent in to help us, and I am forever indebted for his commitment to come to our aid that night. He is a true hero and remembered as such by all of us here."

Posthumously, Craig was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and was promoted to staff sergeant. In addition, in March 2007, the Armed Forces named a joint theater hospital in Afghanistan after him. The Craig Joint Theater Hospital is located at Bagram Air Base. The new facility was state-of-the-art at the time of its construction. The Army recognized that the new facility fell in line with Craig's personal mission to help people to the best of his ability.

Heathe is survived by his wife Judith, his son Jonas, and his daughter Leona, as well as his father and stepmother, Jeffrey and Sheila Craig; his mother, Donna Sloan; a brother; and his grandfather, Daniel Sloan.



DAVID N. CROMBIE

Died: June 7, 2006

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2006

Private First Class David N. Crombie died on June 7, 2006, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his Humvee in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, out of Baumholder, Germany. At the time of his death, he was attached to Task Force 1-35 of the 1st Armored Division, serving with the I Marine Expeditionary Force. That group was one of the first military units to go into unsettled areas of Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where the risk of IEDs was extremely high. Crombie was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Crombie was determined to join the Army despite his asthma. Faced with initial rejection after an asthma attack, he refused to allow the Army to deny him his chance, and joined in 2005. He successfully finished basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and then trained as a medic at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas.

While attending Cibola High School in Yuma, Arizona, Nick, as he was known by family and friends, played drums in the school band. He graduated in 2004. He aspired to teach high school band after serving in the Army. He had also formed his own band, which his grandmother remembers as being very loud. Nick will always be

remembered for his smile and making people laugh. He also loved hunting, ATVing, and other outdoor activities. He acquired his love of hunting from his grandfather, and at an early age he would act as “bird dog” for his grandfather’s quail hunts in the Yuma area. Nick attended Northern Arizona University for one semester, where he studied music.

Nick’s death inspired one of his two brothers to go to college, with a possibility of studying medicine. Nick’s brother Dan has realized what a truly great person his brother was and now idolizes him. He is extremely proud of Nick and what he stood for. Nick is known as a person who would give his life to protect and help others. He viewed every life as worth saving, and that was why he was in Iraq. Nick told his mother he always wanted to help people. Shortly after arriving in Iraq in May, he reported that he had saved an Iraqi Soldier who would otherwise have bled to death. “The last call I got from him, I think it was Memorial Day weekend, he said, ‘Mom, I saved an Iraqi Soldier today—it was so cool. I put my training into effect; I saved someone. I’m scared, but it’s so great doing this.’” Nick’s mother is comforted by the knowledge that he was doing what he aspired to do. She noted that not many 19-year-olds can say that they had accomplished their goals.

Jonathan Carp says, “Nick Crombie was my best friend in basic training and AIT. He used to push me during PT, which was my weakest area. We looked out for each other—I was his battle buddy when he had to go to the hospital all night with a fever, and he went with me to have my wisdom teeth pulled....I only knew him for seven months, but he had a tremendous impact on me in that time. Nick Crombie was a good Soldier and a good man. He is dearly missed.” Sergeant First Class Eric Duncan’s unit was replaced by Crombie’s,

and it was up to Duncan to show Crombie and the others around the local area. During that time, Crombie was able to give aid and comfort to a sick Iraqi boy. Duncan recalls that Crombie’s smile proved that Crombie was going to be a great medic. He possessed a natural compassion and desire to help others. “I will always remember Nick and his sacrifice, not only his death but his choice to serve when others would have denied him that chance.”

David’s grandmother, Mary Brock, said that by being buried in Arlington “he’ll always be remembered as a Soldier, and this will help, too, because he’s on the wall of Veterans. So we’re very proud of him and we’d give the world if he could come back, but he did keep the world a little bit safer.” Brigadier General Belinda Pinkey was in attendance at the funeral, and gave an American flag to Nick’s mother. In recognition of the medic’s efforts, a family friend of the other Soldier killed also attended the funeral. Shortly after his death, a memorial plaque commemorating his service as a combat medic was installed at Armed Forces Park in Yuma, Arizona. His grandmother Mary was instrumental in making that happen.

Posthumously, Crombie was promoted to Private First Class and was awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and the Americanism Award from the National Association of Medics and Corpsmen. Other awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon.

David leaves behind his loving mother and stepfather, Jennifer and Dennis Laybourn; brothers Dan Crombie and Jason Laybourn; and his grandmother, Mary Brock.



JASON B. DANIEL

Died: April 23, 2006

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Corporal Jason B. Daniel died April 23, 2006, in Taji, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee during combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 21-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas. Two other Soldiers died in the same incident. Daniel was buried with full military honors at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in Texas.

Daniel joined the Army just two months after graduating from high school. He received his combat medic training at Fort Sam Houston and especially loved being an Army medic. He had a strong sense of direction in life and his desire to work hard earned him five promotions in the two years following his enlistment. Fort Sam Houston spokesman Phil Reidinger said Daniel “died executing the mission that he was trained for, being with his fellow Soldiers and standing ready to provide medical treatment to casualties. He was up front and with the Soldiers. That’s where he belonged, and that’s where he would have wanted to be.” Daniel’s medical training not only benefited the Soldiers he served, but the Iraqi people as well, when he heroically saved a small child who had been shot in the chest. Linda Daniel, Jason’s mother, said, “Jason loved being a medic and planned to be a doctor when he got back and

finished his schooling. He loved helping people in any way that he could." Daniel was dedicated to improving his medical skills and was recognized as a quick learner. Major General George W. Weightman, commander of Fort Sam Houston, said that Daniel "joined the Army for the education and sense of patriotism." He continued, "He wanted to be a medic so he could learn how to take care of people. They said he was small in stature, but had a big, huge heart."

Jason was born September 26, 1984, in San Antonio to Henry Gil and Linda Daniel, and raised in Crowley, Texas. Jason's family said he considered everything in life to be an adventure. Since the age of three, he was a collector. He had at least \$1,000 worth of Legos, and sometimes played with them, until the summer of 2005, when he gave his collection to one of his cousins. Linda Daniel described her son, "When he got involved in something, he was dedicated to it. He was very responsible growing up." She also recalls that "he had a very imaginative mind." At age eight, he became a member of Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and maintained contact with his assigned Big Brother. He graduated from Crowley High School in January

2004 and married his high school sweetheart, Monika, a few months after joining the Army. Monika, an Army Reserve medic training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, intended to move to Colorado with Jason and start a family after he returned from Iraq.

Jason's fellow Soldiers recall their fallen comrade's smile and happy attitude. The Griffin family, of Fort Hood, Texas, welcomed Daniel into their extended family where he would join them for cookouts. They remember him as an honest, friendly guy, who had a smile for everyone and always wanted to help out if he could.

Daniel's service garnered him the Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, a Good Conduct Medal, a Combat Medical Badge, and the Iraq Campaign Medal.

Jason leaves behind his wife of two years, Monika Villafranca Daniel; mother, Linda Daniel; father, Henry Gil; sister, Teagan Gil; and grandparents, John and Margaret Daniel.



DAVID J. DAVIS

Died: September 17, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2006

Sergeant David J. Davis lost his life on September 17, 2006, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near the Stryker armored vehicle in which he was patrolling in Sadr City, Iraq. Two other Soldiers in the vehicle were also wounded. Davis was 32 years old and served with the 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Wainwright, Alaska. Davis joined the Army in April, 2003, and trained as a medic. He had been supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom since August 2005. Davis was buried in Poplar Springs Cemetery in Mount Airy, Maryland, on September 28, 2006.

David was known by family and friends as "Joe." He served with the Lisbon Volunteer Fire Company in Howard County, Maryland, since he was 18, and graduated from Glenelg High School in Glenelg, Maryland, in 1991. When home on leave, he continued his devotion and dedication to helping others by serving with his firefighter brothers and going on calls with the company. Colleagues recalled that Joe was an avid prankster who liked to short-sheet beds and drop water balloons on his fellow firefighters. Jim Baker, a fire company captain, remembers him as a happy-go-lucky person who liked to hear people laughing and having a good time. Joe had wanted to



become a career firefighter after leaving the Army.

Joe told his sister, Theresa, that he had to do what he had to do, and taking care of the Soldiers was what he had to do. Theresa stated, "Being a medic, he felt he was where he needed to be, taking care of all the Soldiers." She continued, "If he was scared, he didn't share it." He asked his family not to worry. He had enlisted in the Army with the hope of finding a direction for his life and to be able to use his emergency medical skills for those in need. He carried a sense of pride about the good work he

was doing. David's mother, Josephine, described her son as "outgoing" with a "sense of humor, always cutting it up." She said, "He was a wonderful boy, not an ounce of trouble. I am going to sorely miss him." Andy, his brother, recalls that Joe saw himself as a good old



country boy who always wore cowboy hats and boots and helped out on his brother's farm whenever he could. "He just helped where ever he could." Andy said, "He was a free and fun-loving kind of guy who just loved helping everybody and anybody." Carey McIntosh, the assistant chief of the Lisbon Volunteer Fire Company in Howard County, went to high school with David and worked with him for 15 years. He remembers that David "was a dedicated volunteer in everything he did. He never hesitated to help anyone."

Joe had three stepchildren with his loving and devoted wife, Bobbie, whom he met and married while serving in Alaska with his squadron a year before he deployed. Bobbie recalls her husband as a wonderful, caring, loving man, and one "hellava" Soldier medic. Fellow Soldiers remember a man who was a great Soldier and who was always motivated. They are saddened by the loss of such a wonderful and caring man. Joe touched the lives of all those who met him, and his compassion and dedication for the welfare of others will be remembered forever. He was and will always be the embodiment of a true American hero.

Joe leaves behind his wife, Roberta (Bobbie), and her three children, to whom he was a devoted father; his parents, Jim and Josephine; his brother, James Andrew; and his sisters, Theresa and Helen.



LEE H. DEAL

Died: May 17, 2006

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2002-2006

Petty Officer Third Class Lee H. Deal died May 17, 2006, as a result of injuries sustained in combat while clearing a suspected insurgent stronghold in Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, based in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Deal is buried at the Rose-lawn Memorial Garden, Calhoun, Louisiana.

Deal joined the Navy in 2002 and was a graduate of Fleet Marine School, Airborne School, and Dive School. He deployed to Iraq in late March 2006 as a Navy corpsman attached to the 2nd Battalion Marine Recon. His battalion commander noted that Deal "willingly sacrificed his own safety to the benefit of his fellow Marines and to the successful accomplishment of the mission."

Lee had been the placekicker for the West Monroe High School football team in Monroe, Louisiana, helping the team to win a string of state titles and national championships in 1998 and 2000. After graduating in 2001, he attended Louisiana State University for a year, being a walk-on to the football team, before deciding he should join the military his sophomore year.



Lee had a passion for golf, having DVDs of major tournaments shipped to him in Iraq. The gifts went both ways for Lee. He had sent his mother, Melanie, flowers for Mother's Day a week before he died. "Lee's years in the military were the happiest, most fulfilling years of his life," she states. "He had found his purpose. His strongest medicine was his gift of humor." Lee's father, Harry, appreciates the outpouring of love and support he has received since the loss of his son. He says to all those sympathetic souls, "Thank you for your kindness and support at this terrible time for me. Lee

was my 'baby boy,' my golfing buddy, a joy to watch on the athletic field (I actually coached a lot of his teams). I am not sure how I am going to try to continue on in this world without him, but I know he would want me to do just that." Many who never even met Lee honor the sacrifice of this brave young American. One in particular says that "Lee Deal is a man I will never know but will always be indebted to. On the day of his death, Lee Deal saved a Marine, a very

close friend of mine for over 12 years. If it weren't for him, my friend may not have survived the extensive injuries that he received. To his family, thank you so very much for sending this hero, this angel, to save my friend." Many wives, parents, and friends have the same sentiment. Because of Lee, many Marines were able to come home alive. His legacy lives on through his loving family and friends, the Marines and Sailors he served with, and the lives of those he helped and saved. To them, Lee was and always will be their hero. A comrade recalled Lee as the funny, outspoken guy that every platoon needs, and said, "He was a good man, a good operator, and an excellent friend....Those of us who serve, choose to, and it's our hope that those who knew us carry on with their chins up and live their lives to the fullest. I know that's what Lee would want. That's the kind of person he was."

Lee is survived by his father and stepmother, Harry and Jan Deal; his mother, Melanie Hamilton Deal; his brother, Justin Deal; and his fiancée, Margaret Bright.





ADAM L. FARGO

Died: July 22, 2006

Rank: Corporal

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Troop Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Corporal Adam L. Fargo lost his life on July 22, 2006, while his unit was conducting convoy operations in Baghdad, Iraq. The vehicle Fargo was driving was attacked by small arms fire, and an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated within two meters of the vehicle on the driver's side, killing Fargo immediately. Four other Soldiers were wounded in the blast. Fargo was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Troop Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Fargo was buried with full military honors in Culpeper National Cemetery, Culpeper, Virginia, on July 31, 2006.

Soldiers often call their medics "Doc," and Fargo was no exception. He also volunteered to drive for A Company (Engineers)—nicknamed "Sappers"—on their road-clearing missions. Fargo went out with the engineers so often that he also earned the title "Sapper Fargo." Upon joining the Army on December 30, 2004, Fargo completed basic training in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and arrived at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in July 2005. He took advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to become a medical specialist and also received a National EMT certification. After joining the 101st Airborne Division, Fargo attended Air Assault School and was awarded Air Assault Wings.

Adam was born on February 28, 1984, in Frankfurt, Germany, to proud and doting parents Douglas and Elizabeth (Libby) Fargo. Before graduating from William Monroe High School in Greene County, Virginia, in 2002, he was a four-year starter on the high school soccer team and also played for SOCA (Soccer Organization of Charlottesville and Albemarle). After graduating, he attended George Mason University for a year before enlisting in the Army. Upon Adam's death, his high school dedicated its new athletic field house to him.

Adam's family was clearly proud of their son, describing him as a "dedicated, model Soldier." Adam spoke to them of continuing his education and pursuing a degree in nursing. "He was just a very special young man," his godmother, Debra Holder, said. "He was always giving," she said. "He gave everything. He volunteered for missions that he didn't have to." Adam told his father, an Army veteran, that he believed he was making a contribution, that he could help other Soldiers if they got hurt. His mother wrote to her lost son, "We've been hearing great things about what you were doing in Iraq. We can't believe it. We are so proud of you! Words cannot express how we feel. I always said you were a special young man and were destined for great things. You proved me right. I just didn't think you would do them at such a young age. You are in a better place now, I know. And you are eternally young, healthy, and happy. I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART!!"

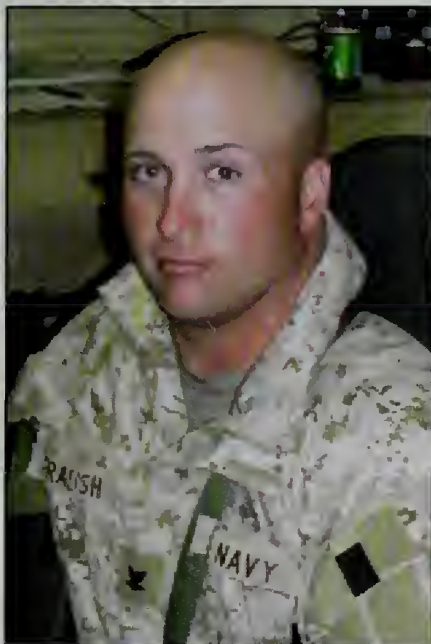
Good friend Jesse Ward speaks for so many of Adam's friends and family: "The memories you made with us can never be forgotten and for those we are all grateful; they truly are priceless. When I get sad, I just think of a special moment and hear your laugh in my head; it never fails to bring a smile to my face. As always, Adam, you

are a hero, and I am more than grateful for your sacrifice." Many in Adam's community and the Soldiers he served alongside want to thank his parents for raising such a fine and upstanding young man, whose sense of honor and decency led him to sacrifice his life for this country. Adam will always and forever be remembered as a true American hero.

A video Fargo's family received from his officers and fellow Soldiers helped show the family "what a hero Adam was," his mother said. "He has given his life for the freedom that I have today." First Sergeant (Ret.) Elige Campbell, Jr., says, "...it was an honor to serve with a loyal and dedicated Soldier. The 'WARHAWKS' will never forget his sacrifice." This sentiment is echoed by all those who knew Fargo. They will never forget his support or his laugh. He was more than a fellow Soldier; Fargo was their "Doc", their brother, their "Froggy", and their friend. His selfless compassion and dedication set the standard, and they will carry his memory for all time.

Corporal Fargo received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart and was promoted to corporal posthumously. Previously, for assisting two Soldiers simultaneously under combat conditions, Fargo received the Combat Medical Badge. This is a very prestigious award given to those who are most deserving. He was the only Soldier in his unit to obtain such an honorable decoration.

In addition to his parents, Douglas and Elizabeth Fargo, he is survived by his brother, Jason; his sister, Sarah; paternal grandfather, Douglas C. Fargo; and maternal grandparents, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) William F. and Audrey Stecher.



JOHN T. FRALISH II

Died: February 6, 2006

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2002-2006

Petty Officer Third Class John Thomas Fralish II died from chest wounds incurred when enemy forces fired on his patrol northwest of Methar Lam in the Gownapal Valley in Afghanistan on February 6, 2006. He was serving as a hospital corpsman for the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment in Laghman Province, Afghanistan, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. The 30-year-old Sailor was garrisoned at the Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe. On February 18, 2006, Fralish's funeral services took place at the Hoffman-Roth Funeral Home and his burial followed at the Cumberland Valley Memorial Gardens in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. An honor guard from Willow Grove Naval Air Station, Pennsylvania, provided full military honors.

Inspired by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, his father's Navy Reserve service in Vietnam, and his grandfather, Army Colonel John C. Fralish, a World War II and Korean War veteran, Fralish enlisted in the Navy in February 2002. Fralish participated in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and served a second tour in the Persian Gulf in 2004 at a military hospital in Kuwait. In June 2005, Fralish qualified as a Navy SEAL, after which he was assigned to Hawaii. His deployment to Afghanistan in January 2006 represented his third combat tour in the Global War on Terrorism.



A resident of New Kingstown, Pennsylvania, John was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, on September 27, 1975. His family moved to Pennsylvania, and John graduated from Cumberland Valley High School in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1994. After graduation, he worked for the North Atlantic Coffee Company in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. An active, involved youth, he played with the Old Gaelic Rugby Club in Silver Spring Township, was an avid skier, and later surfed when he lived in Hawaii, traveling around there with his surfboard strapped to the top of his

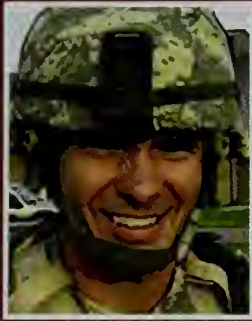
van. His last visit home was an unexpected, wonderful surprise for his family for Christmas 2005. John's uncle described him as "possessing courage, determination and almost unlimited potential," adding that John "wanted to be where he could give his kind of help. He wanted to be on the front lines." The uncle concluded, "This is a loss to all of us, to everyone in the state, to everyone in the country."

Fralish was also admired by his fellow Marines, who dubbed him "Captain America." They recalled a typical situation when Fralish was called out one night to a primitive mud hut in a dangerous area, where he found an Afghan child with a badly infected leg. He dosed her with antibiotics and cleaned and dressed the huge wound, which

extended to the bone. However, she clearly required further attention, unavailable locally. Determined to get her the secondary care she needed, Fralish wrote a note explaining who he was and what the child needed and attached his rank insignia to ensure her family's safe passage. A donkey got her as far as Mehtar Lam, where Marines, Airmen, Soldiers, and Sailors chipped in money to transport her to Bagram Airfield where, although she lost the leg, her life was spared. When Fralish died, the little girl's "whole village mourned John's death along with us," declared Petty Officer Third Class Cameron Stewart, another 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment corpsman. "All those who served with John [were] deeply affected by his loss. To see Afghan villagers also affected is a true testament to the character and type of person John was." Previously, insurgents had infiltrated the region and locals tolerated their presence. However, following Fralish's death, the locals turned against the terrorists. Fralish's commander, Marine Lieutenant Colonel James Bierman, later returned the loaned insignia to his parents with a letter of commendation.

The list of Fralish's awards and decorations bear a final testimony to his altruism, patriotism, and valorous contributions. During the few years he served, Fralish earned the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Marine Corps Device, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Included among the friends and family who mourned John's death were his parents, James Lewis and Jean Louise Fralish; three brothers and two sisters; his fiancé, Cynthia Hernandez; his grandparents; and numerous, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins.



ANTHONY R. GARCIA

Died: February 17, 2006

Rank: Captain

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1989-2006

Army Captain Anthony R. "Rick" Garcia died from a gunshot wound on February 17, 2006, on an Army base in Tikrit, Iraq. Garcia was a physician assistant with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) based in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Garcia was buried with full military honors in Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery in Texas.

Garcia enlisted in the Army in 1989, at age 32. He served in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, then in a variety of units before graduating from the University of Texas at Austin and becoming a physician assistant. He had served in Afghanistan and had a previous tour of duty in Iraq.

Rick's wife Doris remembers a husband and father who loved his kids and doing "stuff together." His father, Monico Garcia, says that his son was a happy person who loved to kid people and do fun things. Rick was a "normal boy" who participated in Boy Scouts and Little League baseball as a child. His father said he worked while he was in high school and was determined to go to college. His father recalled, "That was his big thing, higher education, to get a job and pay enough for the things he wanted



and needed.” Rick was a loving husband, father, and son, and his presence is missed in his family.

Garcia was not only a terrific Soldier with many accomplishments, but also a talented physician assistant who was well respected by all who knew

him. Sergeant Jonathan Prater recalls, “I had the great pleasure of working with Rick in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as for the time I spent at Fort Campbell. He was my mentor and friend and I could go to him with anything. He was an awesome man who loved living and his family. He will be greatly missed. Till we form again fallen Rakkasan!” Garcia’s fellow Soldiers remember him as skilled, professional, and all that a Soldier could ask for in a comrade in arms. Others said that he left a lasting impression, noting that his “quiet professional” attitude and his compassion for his family should be

emulated by all. The people he touched, even briefly, are better for it. He will not be forgotten. The U.S. Army School of Aviation Medicine, Fort Rucker, Alabama, has honored Garcia’s memory by adding his name to the plaque of those in aviation medicine who have given their lives in the service of their country.

Garcia’s awards and decorations throughout his career include the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Combat Infantryman Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Pathfinder Badge, Ranger Tab, Scuba Diver Badge, Special Forces Tab, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Rick is survived by his wife, Doris; his daughter, Kelly, and his son, Garrick; and his parents, Monico and Josephine Garcia.



DANIEL R. GIONET

Died: June 4, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2001-2006

Sergeant Daniel R. Gionet was killed June 4, 2006, when the tank in which he was riding hit an explosive device near Taji, Iraq. The 24-year-old had been serving as a medic with the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas. After being wounded, he tended to those around him. When a medical unit arrived, Gionet, apparently unconcerned with the severity of his own wounds, directed them to treat his lieutenant first. "Don't deal with me," he said, moments before dying. "Go help the lieutenant. He's in greater danger than me." Gionet was buried with full military honors at Gibson Cemetery in Massachusetts, just across the state line from his home town of Pelham, New Hampshire.

Gionet joined the Army in 2001 to earn money for culinary school. His first station was Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan, as a cook. He emphasized the importance for military morale of providing good food. However, enemy fire was so frequent that he found himself spending most of his time as an infantryman rather than cooking.

In 2004, Gionet surprised his family by re-enlisting to serve as a medic. He received his medical training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Some of his experiences in Afghanistan played into his desire to be a medic. He really wanted to help people any way



he could. Family and friends recalled Daniel's sense of humor, bear hugs, and devotion to family. Daniel's high school baseball coach, Joe Connors, remembers Daniel as always a giver, someone who would take others under his wing, and saw him as a selfless Soldier.



Standing before a church full of mourners, he asked everyone to close their eyes and to picture Dan in their minds. "He's smiling, isn't he?" Connors asked. Several people nodded and chuckled. Dan had the ability to make people smile, Connors said.

Daniel was born in Lowell, New Hampshire, and moved to Pelham with his mother after the fifth grade. In 2001, he graduated from

Pelham High School, where he was a member of both the wrestling and baseball teams. His coaches noted that he was not the star of the team, but he was a hard worker who always brought a smile to everyone's face. As a senior, he won the wrestling team's sportsmanship award. In 2005, Daniel married his soul mate Katrina. The message on his cell phone said: "If this is Katrina, you are the love of my life. If it's not Katrina, you know who you called." Before leaving for Iraq, Katrina's father had told Daniel he didn't need to be a hero. "We all agreed that you were already our hero," his mother Denise wrote in an open letter to her son after he died. "But you did, anyway."

His sister Alycia remembers Daniel as saying that you "should pledge allegiance not only to the flag, but to yourself. Don't forget to breathe deep, live your dreams, and reach for your own stars." A few days before he died, Daniel called his father for his birthday and said that he loved him—a call Daniel Sr. almost missed. They were the last words he would hear from his son.

Sergeant Eric Haines was the tank gunner the day Gionet was killed. "I don't remember anything that happened as I was severely injured. What I do remember is the truly stellar medic that we were lucky enough to have. Daniel was a professional Soldier with a heart of gold." Gionet made a choice to make a difference in this world. He earned the respect of his peers, friends, and fellow Soldiers. For his undeniable selflessness, his dedication, and the ultimate sacrifice that he willingly paid, Gionet will be remembered forever as a true American hero.

Gionet received both the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart posthumously. In addition, a year after his death, a section of Route 4 in Danbury, New Hampshire, was dedicated in his name.

As a hearse carried Gionet's body to the church, students lined both sides of Marsh Road, holding small American flags and placing their hands over their hearts. The flag-draped casket was escorted into the church by a military escort. State Governor John Lynch praised the young Soldier in his speech to the mourners.

Daniel leaves behind to cherish his memory his wife, Katrina; his mother, Denise Gionet; father, Daniel Gionet; brother and sister, Darren and Alycia; and grandparents, Ernest and Theresa Trepanier and Euclide and Louiselle Gionet.



AARON M. GRINER

Died: June 28, 2006

Rank: Corporal

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Corporal Aaron M. Griner died on June 28, 2006, in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan when his vehicle struck a land mine while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. He was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, New York. A Funeral Mass was given on Friday, July 14, 2006, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Tampa, Florida.

After joining the Army in 2004 and completing basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Griner attended advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to be a combat medic. He was assigned to Fort Drum in September 2004. He emerged as a leader in the military, teaching others CPR and related medical procedures. He intended to pursue a medical career after finishing his four-year enlistment, possibly as a registered nurse or an emergency medical technician. Family recalled that Griner's assignment to perform humanitarian missions as part of his military duties suited him perfectly. He felt his calling in the military was to help the innocent people harmed by war, not to fight the war directly.

Aaron was a native of Tampa, Florida, and attended Sacred Heart Academy, Morning Star School, and Tampa Bay Tech Senior High School. He was an avid soccer player,



having started at the age of four. Before deploying to Afghanistan, Aaron went to visit his former soccer coach, Jack Blanton, to say goodbye. Blanton remembers a young man who never talked back when being admonished, but always responded with the smile that earned him the nickname “Grinner.” In photos, he’s always smiling, and that’s exactly how his loved ones will remember him.

When he joined the Army, Aaron was seeking a career; what he found was a lovely young woman by the name of Amanda Helmer, who was to become his wife. Sometimes, when you least expect it, your life’s ambitions shift. Aaron’s son, Austin James, was born only a few weeks before his unit deployed. The Army delayed his actual deployment until Austin was a month old, giving the young family a little more time together.

One of his fellow Soldiers, Roberto Hanna, remembers Griner as a selfless man whose colleagues respectfully called him “Doc.” No matter how difficult a situation was, he was always right there whenever they needed help. One really hot day, after an ambush left Hanna’s water-carrying equipment useless, Griner gave him what little water he had left, even though they had no idea how much longer they’d be without fresh supplies.

Kyle Bauch first met Griner at Fort Drum and remembers that he had a big heart and always a smile on his face. He calls Griner a great man and a great medic and says he is fortunate to have met and befriended him. Griner will forever be remembered as a great guy, an incredible friend, and an amazing medic.

Aaron wrote on his MySpace page that he just wanted to get home to Tampa and look out his window and see the blue water of the Gulf of Mexico lapping against the shore. As Aaron arrived back home to his loving and heartbroken family, firefighters trained two arcs of water across the plane that carried him—a simple tribute to their native son, a caring and compassionate man, a true American hero.

Corporal Griner’s awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal with V Device for valor, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon and Combat Medical Badge.

He is survived by his wife, Amanda, and his son, Austin James; his mother, Anita Bridges Lovallo; his father, Ernest Griner, and his wife, Sylvia; two loving sisters, Annie Van Horn and Megan Griner; and an extended family that will cherish his memory forever.



RICHARD J. HERREMA

Died: April 25, 2006

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1999-2006

Sergeant First Class Richard J. Herrema died on April 25, 2006, from wounds received during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq. The 27-year-old Soldier's unit had received intelligence concerning some insurgent activity and, in response, mounted an attack on the enemy. Herrema was the first man off his helicopter, and enemy fire hit him almost instantly. Although he was evacuated to a nearby field hospital, his wounds were fatal. His family buried him in Forest Grove Cemetery at Jamestown, Michigan.

Herrema entered the U.S. Army as an infantryman on January 11, 1999. His father remembered that, while his son had not been athletic as a youth in school, "military life seemed to come naturally to him." He said as soon as Herrema took the oath of enlistment, "he took a liking to it and moved pretty quickly from one thing to another, always doing really well."

Herrema's career achievements confirm his father's account. He completed basic training and subsequently was assigned to B Company, 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Shortly thereafter, he was promoted and assigned as a Squad Leader in Headquarters

and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment. In June 2003, he left Fort Campbell on a permanent change of station to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course as a Medical Sergeant. Afterwards, he received orders to report as an instructor in G Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne). Herrema's selection for this much-sought-after assignment after only four years of Army service was extraordinary.

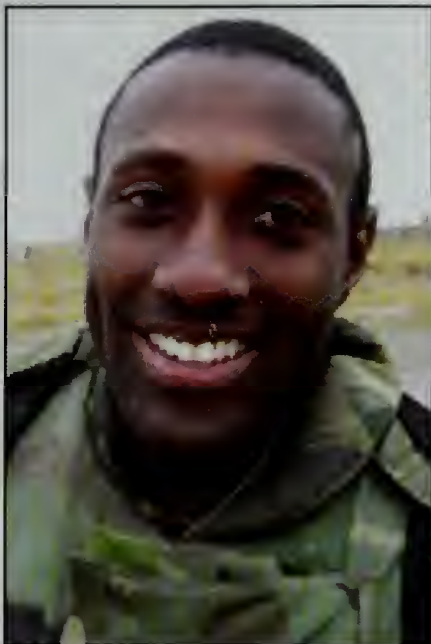
His final duty was as a team member assigned to the Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg. Herrema's family shared a touching detail that illustrated the scope of his fellow Soldiers' regard. Rather than sending the typical two-man notification team from a local military installation to inform the family of Herrema's passing, six Soldiers from Fort Bragg, including some of Richard's buddies, made the trip to Michigan from North Carolina to break their sad news. Their willingness to make such a long and melancholy journey was a measure of their great esteem for their fallen comrade-in-arms.

Richard was born on March 28, 1979, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He graduated from Unity Christian High School in Hudsonville, Michigan, in 1997. Jack Posta, Richard's high school principal, said that his former student's death "rocked the school." He observed that all of Richard's teachers loved him, concluding, "he was the kind of kid who didn't talk much, but when he did, you knew that he meant what he said." One of Richard's favorite pastimes was working on old cars. He also was a keen NASCAR fan. After reporting in to Fort Bragg, he learned to surf and took great pleasure in that sport.

Richard's family and friends described him as a "committed Christian." The last communication the Herrema family received from their son came as an electronic message on Easter Sunday, 2006, in which Richard reassured his family that he had attended chapel services that day. His mother said that he "placed only God above his family." He also enjoyed spoiling his younger sisters. When it came time for the girls to attend their school prom, Richard made special arrangements to hire a limousine to carry them to the dance and return them home safely and in great style. She also noted that "he was a pleasure to raise...a special son...the kind that saw work before you even asked him to do it."

Herrema was posthumously promoted to Sergeant First Class and awarded a Bronze Star Medal with V for valor, the Purple Heart and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. Other awards and decorations include two Army Commendation Medals, five Army Achievement Medals, two Army Good Conduct Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon with numeral two, and the Army Service Ribbon. During his service, he also earned the Military Freefall Parachutist Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Air Assault Badge, and both the Special Forces and Ranger Tabs.

Richard's survivors include his parents, Richard and Mary Herrema, and his sisters, Katie Lynn and Janie Lynn Herrema.



ANTON J. HIETT

Died: March 12, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 391st Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1998-2006

Sergeant Anton J. Hiett died on March 12, 2006, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his patrol in the Pech Valley in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Three other Soldiers died in the same incident. Hiett was 25 years old and serving with the 391st Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve, out of North Carolina. He had recently transferred to that unit when he learned that his own unit would not be deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan. The unit had arrived in that part of Afghanistan only a couple days earlier. The Army Honor Guard of Fort Bragg gave full military honors at Sergeant Hiett's burial in the Salisbury National Cemetery, Salisbury, North Carolina, on March 25, 2006.

Hiett was born July 26, 1980, in Washington, DC, to George L. and Angela McCree Hiett. He graduated from North Surry High School in Mount Airy, North Carolina, in 1998. He enlisted in the Army that same year and went to Fort Benning, Georgia, for basic training. He began his military career as an infantryman, but later had a desire to become a combat medic. After serving four years, he became a reservist and very much wanted to help in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

George Hiett, a Vietnam veteran, said he supported his son's decision to go to Afghanistan. The two had talked about the risks, and Anton knew that it was not going



way. Anton had married his true love, Misty, the day before leaving for Afghanistan. He also left behind their two-year-old daughter, Kyra

to be easy. "You know, we live in a free country, but no one wants their child to die," his father said. "I also know that somebody has to fight the battle, and freedom has a price." His family is proud of him and his choice to deploy. They knew his whole life's goal was to make a difference in other people's lives, and his mother is comforted by knowing that her son touched many lives in a positive way. The Hietts raised a man they can always be proud of. He dedicated his life to helping others in the most difficult of situations and selflessly put himself in harm's

Lenai. The last time Misty spoke with her husband, he told her that he loved her and would call her as soon as he could. He died the next morning. Although Anton will never again hold his little girl or loving wife in his arms, he leaves behind his legacy within Kyra Lenai. She is the living embodiment of her daddy's love.

Friends remember Anton as a very funny and compassionate man. He was trustworthy; a person you could confide in and talk to. Many knew Anton to be a man of strong character and faith in God, and it came as no surprise to them that he went to war to fight for what he believed in and to stand by his brothers-in-arms and make sure that they all returned home to their loved ones.

His fellow Soldiers remember Hiett as a great guy who was nice and easygoing and who inspired respect. They knew him to be an excellent Soldier and an excellent man. Hiett made a choice to make a difference in this world.

Anton is survived by his wife, Misty Hiett; his daughter, Kyra Lenai Hiett; his parents, George and Angela Hiett; two brothers, Tyrone T. Moore and Immanuel D. Hiett; and one sister, Sonia Moore Hiett.



MERIDETH L. HOWARD

Died: September 8, 2006

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 364th Civil Affairs Brigade, U.S. Army Reserve

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant First Class Merideth L. Howard died September 8, 2006, in Kabul, Afghanistan, when a car bomb exploded near the Humvee in which she was riding as the gunner. At 52 years old, she was the oldest U.S. female casualty of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the oldest American woman to die in combat in U.S. history. She was assigned to the 364th Civil Affairs Brigade in support of the 10th Mountain Division, acting as a liaison between the Afghan people and the military in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Her husband scattered her ashes in two firework displays.

Howard joined the Army Reserve when she was 34 years old. After her Reserve medical unit was disbanded, she entered the Individual Ready Reserves for Soldiers without a unit. She went to monthly drills, but mainly handled paperwork, biding her time, until putting in her 20 years and earning retirement benefits. Howard was called to active duty when the military created provincial reconstruction teams (PRT) in Afghanistan, consisting of members of the Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marines. While serving in Afghanistan, she frequently mocked the fact that she was so much older than most of the Soldiers around her. Howard and another similarly aged Soldier, Staff Sergeant Robert J. Paul, jokingly referred to themselves as the "Gray Eagles." Paul died



with her in the same incident. Never shy or retiring, Howard volunteered to take the gunner position in the Humvee. Since she was too short to see outside the vehicle, she built a wooden box on which to stand. Her philosophy in life toward danger was that when it's your time to go, it's your time to go, and being scared would not change that.



Merideth never let barriers such as age and gender stand in her way. In 1978, she became the first female firefighter in the Bryan City, Texas, Fire Department. She eventually started her own successful consulting company for fire protection, after deciding that fighting fires had become too dangerous.

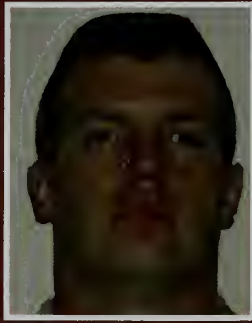
She was a no-frills woman, more comfortable pounding a hammer than wearing a dress. In Afghanistan, she often visited the base area known as Home Depot, where the wood was stored, and built herself a rudimentary armoire and a side table. Her hammer still sits in her room on base. An unfinished picture frame, made from Afghan carved wood she bought at a local bazaar, waits on her desk.

Merideth began dating Hugh Hvolboll, who made fireworks for a living, in 1991. She would joke, "You set them off, and I'll decide how much damage they cause." They decided to make their relationship official and were finally married shortly after she was called up in December. "Merideth liked to live life as an adventure," her husband said. Merideth and Hugh enjoyed traveling the world together, especially to places where they could snorkel. Hugh remembers how much she loved the water. Merideth and her cousin Lorraine Stevenson would go crabbing and fishing, then have a picnic lunch.

Howard's roommate, Air Force Technical Sergeant Felicia Mason, remembers that Howard never wanted people to think she couldn't do something just because she was a woman. She strove to excel in everything. She would sit on the back steps of the barracks in the evening admiring the stars with a renewed sense of wonder each night at how beautiful the sky was. Howard discovered she enjoyed what she was doing in Afghanistan so much that she was thinking of extending her tour. She loved riding in the turret, creating a bizarre sight of a gray-haired woman in a helmet on top of a Humvee. "That's why Sergeant Howard loved the turret," said Air Force Senior Airman Brenda Patterson, 26. "She wanted to give little girls dreams of their own." Another Soldier in Howard's unit said that this is the worst tragedy to have befallen their unit. He said Howard was, without question, the kindest and most sincere person ever. She treated everyone with respect, regardless of rank, and on many occasions, she seemed like a mother making sure everyone had everything they needed to do their job comfortably. The Soldier believes he speaks confidently for everyone in this PRT team when he says, "She was a personality, and above all, a Soldier, who will be dearly missed." In honor of the Gray Eagles, the 485th Civil Affairs Battalion named its post in Afghanistan Howard-Paul Point.

Howard's military awards include the Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with numeral three, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, and the Expert Weapons Qualification Badge. She was posthumously "pending" award of the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, and the Combat Medical Badge.

Merideth is survived by her husband, Hugh.



MATTHEW D. HUNTER

Died: January 23, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

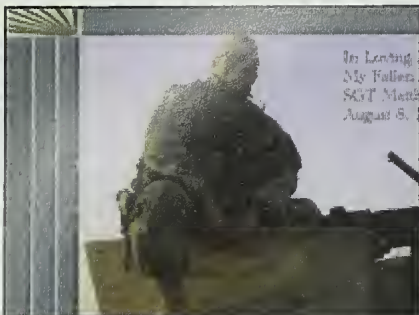
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1995-2006

Sergeant Matthew D. Hunter was killed in Baghdad, Iraq, on January 23, 2006, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his dismounted patrol during combat operations. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Matthew Hunter was laid to rest in West Alexander Cemetery in Pennsylvania.

Matt was a native of Valley Grove, West Virginia. High school classmates from Wheeling Park High School in nearby Wheeling, West Virginia, recalled that Matt always wanted to enter the Army. He followed his dream, entering the military in 1995. He was so proud of being a Soldier that he wore his dress uniform to his 10-year high school reunion in 2002.

Anyone who met Matt knew immediately that he was a genuine person with a positive attitude. Friends remember him as very team-oriented, and some say even selfless. One friend remembers that Matt gave him a book for Warrant Officer School so he could try to make a better life for himself, motivating him to apply to school and take the exams. Because of this effort, Matt earned his eternal love and respect. Fellow



Soldiers said Hunter was living his dream in a world where so many are lost. They remember the simple things he did, like helping relieve simple aches and pains, and his great taste in music. He cared deeply and had strong values.



Specialist Jeremy Caldwell served alongside Hunter and remembers him fondly. He wrote on a memorial website, "You were a great friend and a shining example of the real NCO Corps and the real army. I miss you brother and keep you in my heart and prayers forever."

Matt's funeral was attended by so many that they couldn't all fit in the church. Many of the attendees were members of the American Legion Post 656 of West Alexander and the Valley Grove and Clearview fire departments who stood in remembrance of their fallen friend. American flags were hung from poles all through town, and many residents displayed their own flags.

Matt is survived by his wife, Wendy, and stepdaughter, Meredith; his mother Kathy and her husband, Joe Kinney; his father, Fred Hunter and his wife, Debbie; and a brother and sister. All who called Matthew husband, father, son, brother, friend, and Soldier cherish his memory as a legacy of love and compassion.



WAKKUNA A. JACKSON

Died: August 19, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 710th Combat Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division

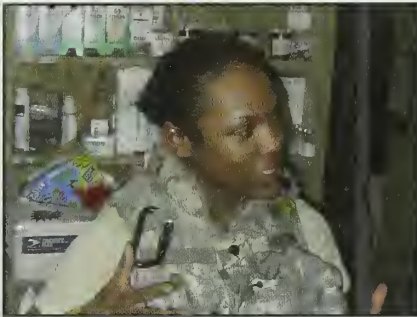
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Sergeant Wakkuna Jackson died in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, on August 19, 2006, when an improvised explosive device detonated near her convoy vehicle, which was then attacked by Taliban fighters. The convoy was delivering supplies to a hospital serving women and children. Sergeant Jackson was assigned to the 710th Combat Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, New York, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. She was buried in Edgewood Cemetery near Jacksonville, Florida, on September 1, 2006. She was 21.

Jackson discovered early that her path in life led her to the Army, where her kindness and devotion to helping others would meet an immediate need. She joined the Army after graduating from Stanton Preparatory School in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2004, hoping to save money to attend college and eventually become a pediatrician. After completing basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, she trained to become a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. She deployed to Afghanistan in early 2006.

Wakkuna's desire to help people predated her service as a medic. A compassionate child, she always reached out to others. At age seventeen, she cut off her hair and donated it to a local cancer society. Family noted that this was just one example



of her empathetic nature. Her father, Sherman, says, "She never thought twice about it—she would do anything—she wouldn't think anything about it, just like that was what she was born to do." Through her countless selfless acts of humanity and compassion, she leaves behind a legacy that inspires and motivates others to follow in her footsteps. Her passion for knowledge to expand her own abilities came through in everything she did. While in high school, Wakkuna, which means "princess" in Hawaiian, was on the honor roll, spoke Spanish, and taught

herself to play the guitar. While stationed in Afghanistan, she learned the native language so she could communicate better with those she was there to help. Her father remembers her kindness and understanding, and noted how friendly she was to everyone. "Wakkuna Jackson is the kind of kid that you know immediately when you walk into the classroom," teacher Meg Hawley said. "She had a tremendous presence; she was clearly a leader." Her band director said, "It's obvious, in terms of her self-esteem and her motivation... what she was doing was for a real purpose, and that's serving this country."

"She just really gave everything she had," said Sergeant Charles Bartell, who served alongside Jackson and was with her when she was killed. "I never heard her say anything negative about anyone or anything." Another Soldier said Jackson could lift anyone's spirit.

This Soldier recalled that she had had a dream of Jackson shortly after she died, from which she woke up laughing. She said that even in dreams, Jackson had a way of making you forget about your hardships and making you smile. Specialist Anthony Johnson recalls that "We were all devastated when we heard the news...you never fully realize things until they hit home...I sit now and think back to those days in AIT...me, you, and Humes always getting in trouble... you always had a smile on your face and a song in your heart...you probably never realized how many people you touched in the short amount of time you were here on this earth...but I for a fact know that you touched the lives of everyone that was with us in B232...you will be greatly missed. ... Soldier Medic! ..."

Jackson's awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and Driver Badge. She was to be promoted to sergeant in October 2006, and she received that promotion posthumously. The clinic at Camp Salerno, Afghanistan, was named after Jackson and another medic killed alongside her, Specialist Christopher Sitton. Jackson's father says that the life she chose now lives on through others continuing the fight. "It makes me know that her life wasn't in vain, her death wasn't in vain. She was there for a purpose. We're over there for a purpose and that makes me feel good." Jackson's name also appears on the Veterans Memorial Wall in Jacksonville, Florida.

At her funeral, family, friends, and fellow Soldiers shared stories of her kindness and compassion, and of her love of family and country. They all mourn the loss of this talented and compassionate young woman.

Wakkuna is survived by her parents, Sherman and Teresita Jackson, and two sisters.



JAIME S. JAENKE

Died: June 5, 2006

Rank: Petty Officer Second Class

Unit: Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25, U.S. Navy Reserve

Branch: U.S. Navy

Petty Officer Second Class Jaime S. Jaenke, a Navy Reservist assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25 (NMCB 25) out of Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, lost her life on June 5, 2006, while serving her country in Anbar Province, Iraq, when the Humvee she was riding in was struck by an improvised explosive device. The 29-year-old Seabee—the third Navy female to die in Iraq—had been serving as a paramedic in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for less than three months. Her funeral services were held June 14, 2006, at the First United Methodist Church in Iowa Falls, Iowa, after which she was laid to rest in Alden Cemetery in Alden, Iowa.

Jaenke joined the Navy Reserves to fulfill her lifelong dream of becoming a nurse and helping people. She trained in California before deploying to Iraq in March 2006 with a unit that provided infrastructure support for the reconstruction of Iraq by building schools, airstrips, housing, and wells. She successfully completed 25 missions in Iraq, safely escorting 375 personnel—an admirable accomplishment for any young Sailor.

An Iowa native, Jaime spent her early childhood in Iowa Falls, Iowa. She later moved to Ellsworth, Wisconsin, and graduated from high school there in 1995. True to her calling to help people, Jaime volunteered as an emergency medical technician with



the Ellsworth Area Ambulance Service before joining the Navy Reserves. She had only recently returned to her hometown of Iowa Falls to pursue another passion of hers, horses. She opened Siloam Springs Stables, an equestrian center for training and boarding horses. Jaime was also enrolled in the nursing



program at the Ellsworth Community College in Iowa Falls. During funeral services at the First United Methodist Church in Iowa Falls, a cousin described Jaime as “the kind of person the world will miss,” and affectionately reflected on her cousin’s life, saying, “Her dream was to be a nurse. She did what she loved doing, which is help others and serve her country.”

Jaime’s former colleague at the Ellsworth Area Ambulance Service, Bill Brookshaw, described her as “a very conscientious, wonderful person,” and remarked, “She gave a lot to the community. That was her niche in life. I was heartbroken to lose such a wonderful person.”

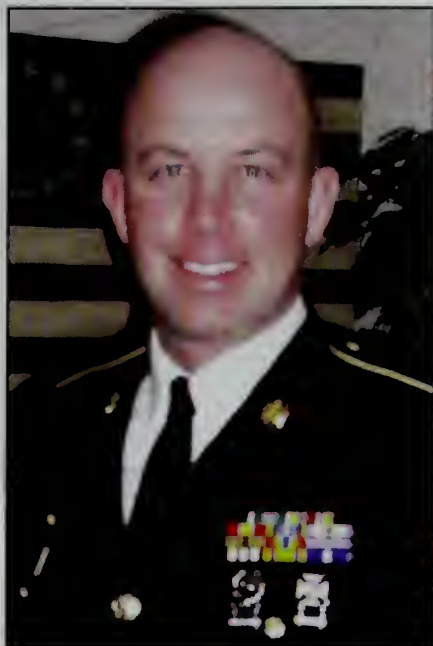
A fellow petty officer described Jaenke as “caring and giving.” When Kathy Ray was wounded, it was Jaenke who tended to her injuries. Ray said she will always remember Jaenke as a great person and a true hero for having such care and compassion for her during such

a stressful time. Hospital Corpsman First Class Kristina Nanninga, who served with Jaenke in the NMCB 25 Medical Department, said, “She has forever touched my heart, with many amounts of laughter and lots of smiles. She could light up a room with her smile and always make you laugh.” Her comrades have lost a hero, friend, and shipmate. Jaenke touched many people, and her work will live on through the lives of her shipmates in NMCB 25. “Her Seabees meant so much to her,” said her mother, Susan. Jaenke will never be forgotten; her sacrifice is recorded in their hearts forever.

Family and close friends honored Jaime’s life during the funeral services by releasing red, white, and blue balloons while hundreds of mourners looked on. It was a touching tribute to a young woman whose premature death left a void in the hearts of many, but whose life exemplified service, compassion, and bravery—a fitting role model for the daughter she left behind. “We are proud of her and miss her so much,” her mother said.

Jaenke’s courageous commitment to her country was apparent when several of her medals were given to her parents during an awards ceremony at the funeral. Among Jaime’s medals were the Purple Heart, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with “V” for valor, the Navy Reserve Meritorious Service Medal, the Operation Iraqi Freedom Medal, and a Combat Action Ribbon.

Jaime leaves behind her 9-year-old daughter, Kayla, who shares her mother’s passion for horses and now lives with Jaime’s parents.



CHARLES J. JONES

Died: September 20, 2006

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 149th Brigade Combat Team, Kentucky Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1993-2006

Sergeant First Class Charles "Jason" Jones died in Camp Liberty, Iraq, on September 20, 2006, while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 29-year-old medic was assigned to the 149th Brigade Combat Team, which is commanded by his father, Colonel Charles T. Jones. Colonel Jones was serving in Tikrit, Iraq, at the time of his son's death. Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher ordered flags in the state to be flown at half-staff in the days leading up to Jones's funeral. He was buried in Locust Grove Cemetery in Keavy, Kentucky.

Since 1993, Jones was a full-time Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier stationed in Frankfort, Kentucky. He had deployed to Germany and Bosnia in 2002, and to Afghanistan in 2004. Major General Donald C. Storm, Kentucky's adjutant general, a close friend of the family, called Jason a fine Soldier who died serving his nation in a faraway land. "He was a very intelligent young man and worked hard," Storm said. "His being a medic conveys to you that he wanted to help others."

Comrades and friends from his service in Afghanistan remembered Jason's sense of humor and how it helped them through difficult times. Major Chad Nelson, who served with Jones in Baghdad, spoke about how Jones saw his Dad as the one the



family looked up to, and his Mom as the glue that held the family together. The two friends, who were sometimes mistaken for one another, also talked about fishing and hunting, friends, and finding kinship in a lonely and troubled world. Another Soldier recalls what Jones meant to him: not merely the great work that Jones did while serving as a member of their team, but rather the great person Jones was.

Jones is mourned by those who came to know and enjoy his country-boy humor, good and generous nature, easy laughter and room-warming smile.

Timothy Walsh served with Jones at 4th Infantry Division Surgeon Section in Iraq. He recalls, "I can't remember a single time I talked to him when he didn't make me laugh. We pledge to stay focused on the mission here and to honor Jason with our service. He touched

us all, and we will miss him. He was a fellow Soldier, a great NCO, but most of all he was our friend." Staff Sergeant Brian Mires served with Jones as a medic at Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia. Mires considered Jones an upstanding Soldier. He misses the way Jones talked. Mires could never understand a word Jones said and always had to ask him to repeat himself. To all his Soldier friends, Jones will be remembered and honored as a true American hero whose smile and compassion inspires them to carry on.

Jones' awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, an Iraq Campaign Medal, and the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal.

The Hikes Point Post Office in Louisville, Kentucky, was dedicated to Jones and nine other service members who paid the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives in Iraq or Afghanistan. During the dedication ceremony, Congressman John Yarmuth, who spearheaded the Congressional act to rename the post office, declared, "Though they did not serve together, they shared a bond, selfless dedication, love of country and immeasurable courage."

Charles is survived by his parents, Colonel Charles A. and Linda Jones; sister, Brandi Jones; and grandparents, Dorothy Taylor Hensley and Charles and Bunny Jones.



DALE J. KELLY, JR.

Died: May 6, 2006

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), Maine Army National Guard

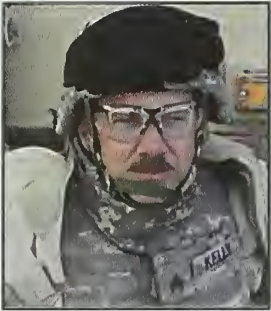
Branch: U.S. Army

Staff Sergeant Dale Kelly, Jr., dreamed of providing a full barbeque feast for his fellow Soldiers in Iraq. Fate denied him that opportunity, however, when an improvised explosive device hit his truck during combat operations in Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq, on May 6, 2006. Kelly was serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), out of Brewer, Maine. The unit was deployed to provide security operations for convoys in Iraq. Kelly was riding in the lead truck at the time of the attack, serving as a medic. Kelly was buried with full military honors at the Maine Veteran's Memorial Cemetery in August, Maine. The family had requested that donations made in his memory be in the form of supplies and support to the troops still in Iraq. Maine's governor ordered that all flags be flown at half-mast the day of the funeral.

In 2003 Kelly trained to become a medic in the Maine Army National Guard. He turned down a promotion at that time, requesting that it be given to another medic in the unit with more seniority. With the change in specialty, his nickname changed from "Machine Gun Kelly" to "Doc Kelly." Kelly intended to reenlist when his term ran out the month after his death.



Dale was born to Barbara and Private Dale Kelly on November 30, 1957, in Stuttgart, Germany, where his father was serving in the Army during the Cold War. Shortly after graduating from Cranston High School in Cranston, Rhode Island, Dale joined the Rhode Island Air National Guard, 143rd Tac-



tical Airlift Group, as a loadmaster. While serving the first nine years of his military career, he met and married Nancy Cabral, also a member of the 143rd Tactical Airlift Group. They renewed their vows and everlasting love at their 25th wedding anniversary on December 17, 2005, shortly before his deployment to Iraq. His love for his wife and children was evident to all those who

knew and served beside Dale. They would see the light in his face and love in his eyes whenever he spoke of them, which was often. Nancy proudly remembers how Dale always wanted to be an instrument of healing. His goal while overseas was to bring all the soldiers home whole.

Dale found solace in religion and prayed daily for guidance in his thought and actions. His family was extremely proud of who Dale was, as a man, as a husband, a father, and a Soldier. Shortly after arriving in Iraq, Dale had shared plans with his wife for building an outdoor deck with a barbeque. He would then order steaks over the Internet, and hold a massive feast to share with those around him. His wife recalled that this type of planning to improve morale was a hallmark of her husband. She had already sent him a folding chair, table for the deck, and candy to pass out to Iraqi children. E. Hilpert, a civilian contractor working in Iraq, will always remember Dale "for his professional yet mirthful bearing. He was very much connected to humanity." Though the war waged "outside the wire," Dale displayed a more centered and deeper peace than most. When he spoke with others from his unit, he had such a "disarming smile." Dale will be remembered most for his uncanny ability to use humor as a tool through all difficult situations and his willingness to rise to any occasion. Many of the younger Soldiers saw him as a father figure. They credit Dale with giving them strength, guidance, and protection during a time when they didn't think they could make it. Dale is forever in their hearts, not only as a friend but as a fellow Mountain Infantry Soldier.

Dale is survived by his wife, Nancy, and three children, Julie, Christopher, and Jennifer.



CHADWICK T. KENYON

Died: August 20, 2006

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Navy Hospital Corpsman Chadwick T. Kenyon was assigned to the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force in Twentynine Palms, California, when he died on August 20, 2006. The 20-year-old was conducting combat operations against enemy forces in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq, when the vehicle he was riding in was struck by an improvised explosive device. Family and friends said their final farewells at the Evergreen Mortuary Cemetery and Crematory in Tucson, Arizona. A service was held by the Marines and Sailors of Company D's 2nd Platoon, who memorialized their comrade in a quiet ceremony held in the normally bustling dining hall turned somber funeral hall, in Rawah, Iraq.

Kenyon enlisted in the Navy in 2004, while still in high school, through the Delayed Entry Program. He trained at the Navy Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Illinois, from October 2004 until March 2005. He was then stationed at the Field Medical Service School in Camp Pendleton, California, after which he received his assignment to the 1st Marine Division in Twentynine Palms. He deployed for Iraq to support Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2006.

A Tucson native, Chad was born to Charmaine and Douglas Kenyon on January 4, 1986. He graduated from Mountain View High School in 2004. Chad was the third



graduate of Mountain View High to die while serving in Iraq. Chad's passions were music and the Boston Red Sox, and he was an avid University of Arizona Wildcats fan.

Chad's friend Joey De La Rosa echoed the sentiment of many of the speakers at his funeral:

"He was my best friend. He was a lot of people's best friend," noting that dozens of Chad's friends have left comments about him on MySpace. "I see more and more, every day, how many people loved Chad and how much strength he gave everyone." Chad's father, Doug, recalled that his son loved everyone unconditionally, while Chad's uncle, Larry Maynard, said his nephew was a "protector, a savior of lives." Chad's mother, Charmaine, later proudly recalled an incident when a pipe burst in her home. When she told Chad, who was stationed in California, about it, he got permission to go to Tucson to help his mother. "He was very protective of me," she proclaimed.

During the memorial ceremony in Iraq, comrade Lance Corporal Gary M. Cassen remembered Kenyon as a person who would "put his life on the line for others. In fact, he was glad to do it." Cassen recalled how Kenyon would spring into action without concern for his own welfare: "Rounds would start going off and Chad would be in the front running and gunning. After everything had calmed down, we would be like, 'Hey Chad, you need to stay in the vehicle until someone gets hurt.' But he would look you dead in the eyes and say, 'And what? Let you have all the fun?'"

Although Kenyon was young, he was an exceptionally accomplished Sailor. He was awarded the Fleet Marine Forces pin, a Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and a Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Chad is survived by his parents, Charmaine Wright and Douglas H. Kenyon, Jr., in addition to numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.



JANE E. LANHAM

Died: September 19, 2006

Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Unit: Naval Branch Health Clinic in Manama, Bahrain

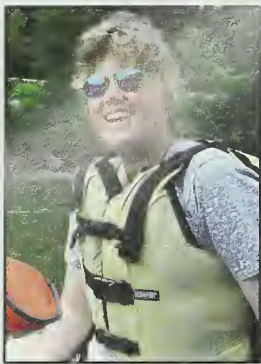
Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1988-2006

Lieutenant Commander Jane E. Lanham died unexpectedly of natural causes on September 19, 2006, while in Manama, Bahrain, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 43-year-old Sailor was assigned to the Naval Branch Health Clinic in Manama. She is buried in Resurrection Cemetery in Daviess County, Kentucky.

Lanham's Navy career began in 1988. She served at the Naval Hospital and Naval Reserve Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She then received assignments to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, DC; the Naval Hospital at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; aboard the USS *Ronald Reagan*; and the Navy Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit 2 (NEPMU2) in Norfolk, Virginia. Her final assignment was the Naval Branch Clinic in Bahrain serving as a Certified Industrial Hygienist.

Jane was born in Daviess County, Kentucky, on April 20, 1963, to proud parents Marvin and Avis Lanham. She attended school in Owensboro at the St. Pius X School and Church, and graduated from Owensboro Catholic High School. She went on to further her education at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, and Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



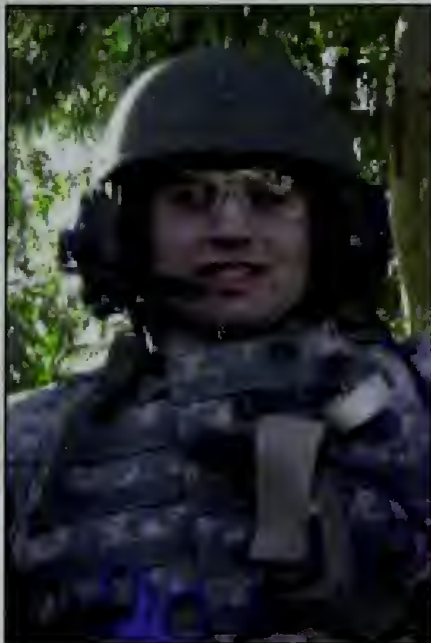
Friends and family remembered Jane for her beautiful smile and kindness. Her husband, John, recalls how “all the people she met that needed help she would help. She gave so much to me, her two daughters, her family, and to all whom she knew. She did not ask for much in return.” Colleague Leslye Scott recalled, “She touched a lot of people in her lifetime.” Another colleague, George Crosby, remembered, “I worked with Lieutenant



Commander Lanham at NEPMU2. She was a beautiful person inside and out. She helped me through some tough times. I’ll never forget a time when I got in trouble and had to see her. She told me that I have to own up for what I did. It was the look in her eyes when she said it that will always be with me. I really was trying to put the blame somewhere else. She made me meet it head on. She will truly be

missed.” Jo Ann Maser affectionately remembered her friend, “What a privilege and honor it was to have known Jane and to have called her friend. She was truly the kindest person I’ve known...Jane left a legacy of love and compassion to all she met.”

Jane was a devoted wife and mother to husband John Tafoya and daughters Rachel and Natalie. Other surviving family members include her mother, Avis; brother, Brad; and sister, Phyllis.



JEREMY LOVELESS

Died: May 29, 2006

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team

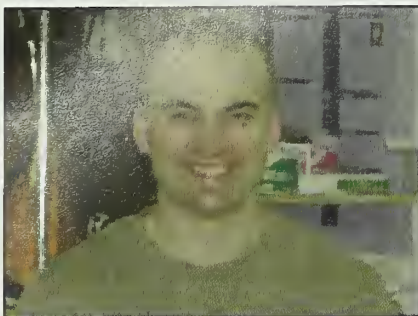
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Corporal Jeremy Loveless was killed by a sniper during combat operations on May 29, 2006, in Mosul, Iraq. While serving as lookout, outside the protection of his Stryker vehicle, Loveless was shot in the shoulder unbeknownst to fellow Soldiers. The 25-year-old was assigned to the Medical Platoon of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Wainwright, Alaska, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Loveless was laid to rest with full military honors at George Cemetery in Estacada, Oregon.

Loveless enlisted in the Army in 2004, in part to earn money to attend a civilian paramedic school. He completed basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and trained to become a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, graduating in 2005. His first assignment was at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. Recognizing his potential, his commanders soon sent him to the Live Tissue Tactical Combat Casualty Course. He deployed to Iraq in August 2005. In combat, he volunteered for the dangerous jobs of gunner and lookout, refusing to stay inside the Stryker vehicle. Riding in the turret, he could protect his fellow Soldiers as well as watch people and throw candy to children.

Jeremy was a volunteer with the Estacada Fire Department in Oregon. His best friend and mentor, Joe Schwab, was impressed with Jeremy's desire to learn and succeed



in becoming a firefighter/paramedic for the sake of his family. An attentive learner and an enthusiastic student, Jeremy quickly decided this was his calling and looked at his options for becoming a full-time firefighter-paramedic. A husband and father at a relatively young age, he was determined to give his family the very best he could. Jeremy made it a point to kiss his wife Meredith and daughter Chloe and tell them he loved them before he ever left the house. Like Jeremy himself, that kind of love leaves a legacy that can never be forgotten. Friends remem-

ber Jeremy as open and warm and inclined to heart-to-heart talks, "someone who was genuinely here to help others." A close friend

noted that Jeremy did not go to war to fight an enemy. Rather, he went to war to help people.

A speaker at his memorial service in Iraq noted that an unusually high number of people had asked to speak. This was explained not only by his assignment to two units, but also as a testament to his character and quality. "Corporal Loveless didn't just prove himself to a platoon once, he proved himself to 10 platoons," said Captain Christopher Terhune. Loveless was remembered as a medic willing to take on any task to protect his fellow Soldiers. "He never thought that what he did for us was that great of a thing," said Private First Class Brian Manscill of Loveless's unit. "He only thought he was doing his job, but to me he was doing more than just his job. He would reach out to people to be their friend. And he was my friend."

Loveless' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, Operation Iraqi Freedom Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Combat Medical Badge.

Jeremy leaves behind his wife, Meredith, and daughter, Chloe.



THOMAS D. MAHOLIC

Died: June 24, 2006

Rank: Master Sergeant

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1986-2006

Master Sergeant Thomas D. Maholic lost his life on June 24, 2006, while supporting his country in Operation Enduring Freedom. The 38-year-old Green Beret was conducting a cordon and search mission in Ghecko, Afghanistan, when his patrol unit came under fire from enemy forces. A 17-hour battle ensued, and he was hit by small arms fire. Master Sergeant Maholic was assigned as a medical sergeant to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He is buried at Willow Dale Cemetery in Bradford, Pennsylvania.

Master Sergeant Maholic enlisted in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in 1986 as an infantryman. He served in this position for five years, and in July 1991, he enlisted and was called to active duty with the Regular Army. He received his assignment to the 508th Infantry Battalion at Fort Kobbe, Panama, and served there for the next two years. He volunteered for the elite Special Forces branch in 1993, and graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1995, where he was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group as a medical sergeant. In 2003, Master Sergeant Maholic received his assignment as an Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course instructor at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center

and School at Fort Bragg before joining the 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group in April 2005 as an Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA) team sergeant.

Master Sergeant Maholic's military education also includes the Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses; Combat Diver Qualification Course; Combat Diver Supervisor Course; Advanced Special Operations Techniques Course; Basic Instructor Training Course; Air Assault Course; Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course; Basic and Advanced Airborne Courses; Spanish Language Course; Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape Course; and both the winter and summer mountain warfare schools.

Thom, as he was known by family and friends, was born February 1, 1968, in Bradford, Pennsylvania, to William and Dorothy Maholic. He graduated from Bradford Area High School in 1986. On December 27, 1993, he married his wife Wendy. Family members described Thom as "a loving husband, a devoted father, a caring son, and a selfless Soldier." A fellow Special Forces Soldier and friend, Greg, recalled his comrade this way in an online memorial: "Thom is most definitely among the best men I have ever known, not only as a friend, but also as a Soldier. He would always place the needs of others well before his own...His sense of humor even in the most adverse of situations could always lighten the mood and made living at Ghecko a lot more enjoyable...It was an honor to have known him and I am proud to have had the privilege to have served with him throughout his Special Forces career."

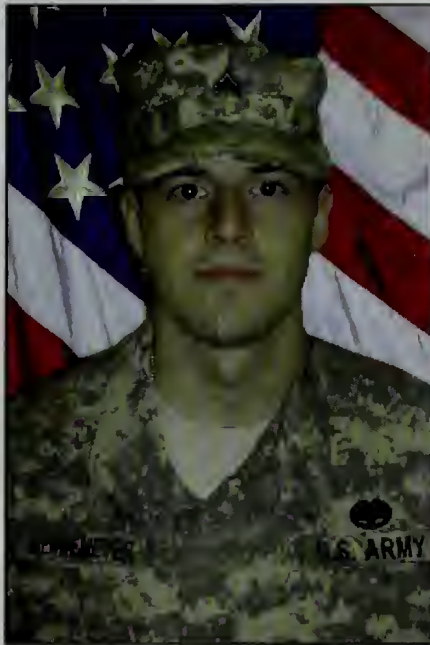
Another Soldier who signed his name simply "Fellow Soldier of Ft. Bragg, NC" wrote, "I served in Afghanistan with Tom. He was an

incredible man who always put his team and mission first...He is a shining example that we should all strive to follow."

Another comrade wrote to Thom's family, "I had the honor of meeting Tom and seeing him and his team work a couple of months ago outside Kandahar...It was obvious that he was truly a quiet professional. I can not speak more highly of a warrior... Thank you for giving us such a fine American and a fine Soldier, he will be missed." And Kelly Keating, Thom's senior weapons sergeant on his first ODA (722), said, "...he was an excellent medic and a great team member...he had always been the same low key, easy to get along with guy..."

Maholic's long military career reaped him many awards and decorations. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal with a V for Valor, Bronze Star Medal for Service, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, and Combat Infantryman Badge. He also earned the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Expert Field Medical Badge, Special Operations Dive Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Special Forces Tab.

In addition to his wife, Wendy, Thom leaves behind a son, Andrew; his mother, Dorothy; a sister, Ann; brothers, David, John, Michael, and Robert; and numerous extended family and friends. His father preceded him in death.



STEVEN P. MENNEMEYER

Died: August 8, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 82nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1998-2006

Sergeant Steven P. Mennemeyer died on August 8, 2006, in Anbar Province, Iraq. On his second tour in Iraq, Mennemeyer was serving as a flight medic assigned to the 82nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance) out of Fort Riley, Kansas. He had been a ground medic during his first tour of duty in the country. Sergeant Mennemeyer died when his UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed into a lake in the vicinity of Rutbah, Iraq. Also killed was Sergeant Jeffrey S. Brown.

Family and friends gathered for a memorial service and celebration of his life in Granite City, Illinois. He was buried with full military honors in the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri.

Immediately after graduating in 1998 from Granite City High School, Mennemeyer joined the Army Reserve. He entered active duty four years later, in 2002. His calling and his passion for his country motivated him to sign up as an Army flight medic and to return to Iraq for a second tour. He believed that the men and women in battle needed competent care from good medics. At the time of his death, he had only one more class to take before becoming a physician assistant.



Even as a small child, Steven was attracted to helicopters. When he was two years old, whenever he'd spy a helicopter, he'd point to the sky and say, "Hocker dockers!" Heidi Sellers, a longtime family friend, noted that, although his life on earth was short, in his 26 years, he touched the lives and hearts of scores of people. She described him as "a remarkable and awesome young man." His mother, Ramona, finds comfort in the fact that so many people loved Steven and that his sacrifice, as well as the sacrifice of all of our fallen heroes, lives on in our hearts.

Steven's grandfather, Junior Mennemeyer, recalled, "When he was four or five years old, we used to go to the lake all by ourselves. When he was last here, we spent our last day together at the lake." Steven had a four-day leave three weeks before he died. He spent one of those days fishing with his grandfather, his father Steve, and his son Andrew, an autistic child and the light of Steven's life. His family plans to do all they can to keep Steven's memory alive so that Andrew has vivid memories of his brave and compassionate father.

Before entering active duty in 2002, Steven worked as a paramedic for Abbott Ambulance in Belleville, Illinois. After his death, his personnel file revealed dozens of thank-you notes. These letters of appreciation originated from patients he helped and were a testament to his extraordinary contribution. His co-workers remembered Steven as an

exemplary paramedic. Throughout his years in this role, he showed a deep respect for his patients, providing them with care and a calming presence.

Fellow Soldiers remembered Mennemeyer as a kind-hearted, level-headed, caring man. One comrade recalled that Mennemeyer always made time to listen or talk to anyone. His squad leader at the 47th Forward Support Battalion eulogized him as a true-blue Soldier, an asset to his unit and the Army. Others described him as having an animated personality and an infectious laugh. They considered him a great medic and held him in the highest esteem. Knowing him was deemed an honor. On Friday, November 16, 2006, Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn dedicated a billboard at the intersection of Highway 162 and Horseshoe Lake Road, in Granite City, in Steven's honor. The billboard reminded readers that freedom is not free, and that they should thank veterans for that freedom. Steven's mother, Ramona, thanked everyone who "contributed their time, money, and physical labor to make this happen."

In a career marked by superior service, Mennemeyer earned the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Aircraft Crew Member Badge, the Weapons Qualification Expert Badge, the Air Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Combat Medical Badge.

Steven is survived by his mother, Ramona Phillips; his father and stepmother, Steve and Maria Mennemeyer; his son, Andrew; sister, Sarah; stepbrother, Drake Wallingsford; maternal grandmother, Myrtle Phillips; paternal grandparents, Jerry "Junior" and Marilyn Mennemeyer; and his girlfriend, Staff Sergeant Ginny Akins of the 82nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance); as well as an extended family of relatives and close friends.



MARCQUES J. NETTLES

Died: April 2, 2006

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: Force Service Regiment, Fleet Marine Forces Pacific

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2002-2006

Petty Officer Third Class Marcques J. Nettles was killed on April 2, 2006, in Anbar Province, Iraq, when the truck he was riding in during a combat logistics convoy rolled over in a flash flood. The 22-year-old hospital corpsman had been in Iraq for less than three months at the time of his death. A remembrance of Nettles' life was held on May 7, 2006, at the New Beginnings Christian Center in Portland, Oregon. Accompanied by the sound of bagpipes and a 21-gun military salute, he was buried at Willamette National Cemetery in Portland.

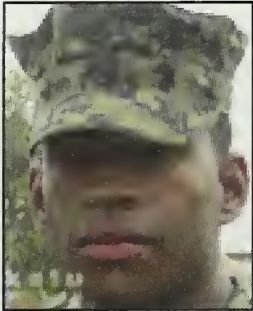
Motivated by a desire to pursue a nursing career, and following in the footsteps of his big brother, Curtis, Nettles enlisted in the Navy on September 11, 2002, and was assigned to Force Service Regiment, Fleet Marine Forces Pacific. His career took him to Whidbey Island Naval Hospital in Whidbey Island, Washington, followed by Camp Pendleton, California, in 2005. He deployed to Iraq on February 14, 2006, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Born in Tacoma, Washington, on July 24, 1983, Marcques attended elementary and junior high school in Kent and Tri-Cities, Washington. In July 1996, the family moved to Beaverton, Oregon, where, in 2002, he graduated from Westview High School. In



high school, he ran track, was co-captain of the football team, and was a “superfan”—a member of a club that stirred up school spirit. In August 2003, Marcques married his longtime love, Christina Mullen. His hobbies included fishing, crabbing, golfing, and racquetball.

He enjoyed cooking and fine restaurants, and had a fondness for reptiles and tropical fish.



In his short life, Marcques overcame many obstacles, including spinal meningitis and a learning disability. As he soared over the hurdles, he left a legacy of genuine compassion, kindness, and triumph. Family members describe Marcques as having a wonderful character, gentle strength, and a nonjudgmental personality. Suzie Nettles, his mother, lovingly characterized her son: “Marcques was a very kind and gentle yet incredibly strong young man. He was very accepting of everyone.” Pastor Rich Hempel spoke of his brief yet inspiring life during the memorial service: “Marcques had great love. He shared with us great love, and we honor him. His

struggles helped him become the great young man he turned out to be. Life wasn’t always easy for him, but it was the challenges he faced and overcame that gave him insight and compassion into other people’s lives.” Matt Coleman, principal at Westview High School, said that Marcques was remembered fondly by staff for his “positive energy” and for “having an incredible impact on the school and school community.”

Hospital Corpsman Jorge Arreola affectionately remembered his friend and colleague: “He made me realize that there is still good in the world, you just have to look around for it. If you were searching for hope or just peace of mind, all you had to do was look at his smile.” Coach Keith Cordray also warmly recalled the boy with the special smile: “That smile is constant. It’s always on his face. That’s Marcques.”

A tribute to Marcques on the Marine Corps Moms website reads: “There’ll be a party in Heaven tonight as one more soul is welcomed into the Kingdom where the best and brightest guard golden streets.” Rest assured, we can all take comfort knowing that Marcques is guarding those golden streets with that sweet, beautiful smile on his face.

Marcques is survived by his wife, Christina; his parents, Curtis and Susan; his brother, Curtis, Jr.; and his sisters Bianca and Manny.



KYLE A. NOLEN

Died: December 21, 2006

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2005-2006

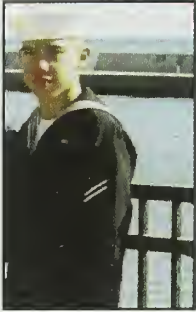
On December 21, 2006, 21-year-old Hospital Corpsman Kyle A. Nolen died as a result of injuries he received in a land mine explosion in Anbar Province, Iraq. The Ennis, Texas, native was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force out of Twentynine Palms, California. Nolen was carried by horse-drawn carriage to his final resting spot in Myrtle Cemetery in Ennis.

Nolen volunteered for the Navy in August 2005, fulfilling a boyhood pact he made with friends in elementary school to join the military. He became a hospital corpsman and received his assignment to Twentynine Palms in April 2006. He deployed for Iraq in August 2006 and had served less than four months at the time of his death.

Kyle was a lifelong resident of Ennis and a 2003 graduate of Ennis High School, where he played soccer and ran cross-country. He married his high-school sweetheart, Cassie, on July 22, 2005, just a month before entering the Navy. He was a dedicated father to their two children Ryan and Railey, who were only 3 years old and 5 months old when he died. Kyle enjoyed spending time with his family, fishing and playing soccer.



On January 2, 2007, family, friends, and an entire community turned out to Kever Chapel in Ennis to celebrate the life and mourn the loss of Kyle. During the standing-room-only memorial service, the common sentiment from the many family, friends, and military comrades who paid tribute to Kyle



was his dedication and loyalty to his loved ones. He was also remembered as a "kind and happy young man who always strived to go the next step and face the obstacles in his life." Kyle's uncle, Army Sergeant First Class Marty Moreno, said, "Kyle did not run from difficulties, he met them head on and tried to conquer them." He noted that his nephew refused to take a less dangerous job in the Navy because he did not want to leave

his men behind. Moreno remarked, "I would like to think that God chooses who He wants in Heaven, and I'm not sure if He has a navy,

but I know that Kyle is in God's Army now." Admiral Brian Brannman said that Kyle was "not just a cog in the wheel, but a treasure of the nation." Regarding her son's eagerness to serve his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Frances Nolen said in an interview, "He wanted to go as much as we wanted to talk him out of it." Kyle's wife, Cassi, reflected on her husband, "He was simply the best. He was loving, energetic, passionate, sweet and romantic. He always knew how to make me feel better."

While he will never have the joy of watching his children grow into adults, or hold his wife in his arms again, or go fishing with his father, Kyle Nolen's children will grow up knowing that their father died to protect their future; his wife will carry on his legacy of love; and his father will proudly proclaim that his son fought so that we can all live free.

Nolen was awarded the Purple Heart. In addition to his wife, Cassie, and his children, Ryan and Railey, Kyle leaves behind his parents, Michael and Francis Nolen; his sisters, Angelica, Mikayla, Tori, and Sarah; and his brother, Shea.



GEOVANI PADILLA ALEMAN

Died: April 2, 2006

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: National Naval Medical Center, U.S. Naval Service Comfort Detachment

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Hospital Corpsman Geovani Padilla Aleman, a Navy corpsman assigned to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, was killed on April 2, 2006, when a bomb exploded near the Humvee he was riding in while on patrol in Al Anbar Province west of Baghdad, Iraq. The 20-year-old was in Iraq with the United States Naval Service Comfort Detachment, providing medical care to the Marines of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2/28 Brigade Combat Team. Padilla Aleman had been in Iraq for only a month at the time of his death. Family and friends said their final farewells on April 14, 2006, at the Rose Hill Memorial Chapel in Whittier, California, and he was buried at Rose Hill Memorial Park.

Padilla Aleman's military career began in January 2004, when he joined the Navy, enticed by both his dream of becoming a surgeon and the opportunity to see the world and satisfy his adventurous spirit. He attended Hospital Corpsman School in Great Lakes, Illinois, then spent six months at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and another six months at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia. He was promoted to hospital corpsman on November 16, 2004. On September 12, 2005, he received his permanent assignment to Bethesda Naval Hospital, where he served as a pharmacy technician. On March 1, 2006, he deployed to Iraq to support his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, Geovani grew up in Boyle Heights and South Gate, California. In 2003, he graduated from South Gate High School, where he was an exceptional student, according to his cousin, Salvador Padilla. "He was just very intelligent." He had many friends

and enjoyed hanging out and playing video games. He was an avid reader, preferring books with a philosophic or social theme as well as those with a dark comedic theme. The one thing he loved more than anything else was his mother's cooking. Geovani's family and friends describe him as a smart, compassionate, fun, and friendly man who was eager to fulfill his duty tending to wounded comrades. His cousin Salvador, who calls Geovani his role model, said, "He didn't go there to fight. He went there to heal."

Commander Eugene de Lara, head of the Pharmacy Department at Bethesda Naval Hospital, recalled Padilla Aleman's enthusiasm about serving his country: "He didn't whine or complain one bit about going to Iraq. He said he welcomed the opportunity and saw it as his

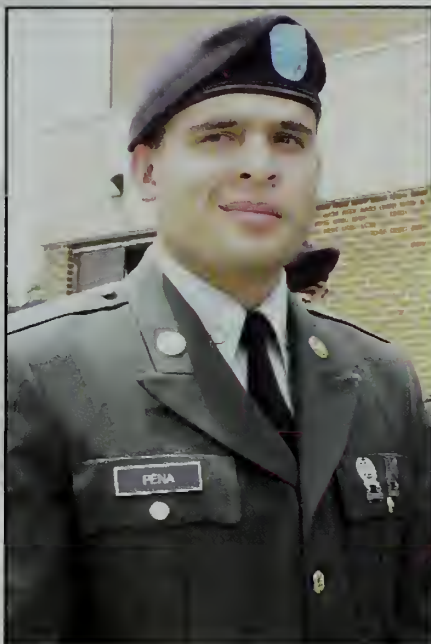
duty, his responsibility." De Lara said Padilla Aleman "demonstrated maturity and dedication to duty well beyond his years."

National Naval Medical Center Commander Rear Admiral Adam Robinson described him as "a bright, young, and enthusiastic corpsman who loved his country, his freedom, and everything that was synonymous with being an American—enough so that he was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for it." Admiral Robinson continued, "We can also rest assured that he died as a hero, a corpsman doing exactly what he was trained to do—serving with valor, integrity, and purpose. He epitomized the Navy's motto: 'Not self but country.'"

Geovani wrote his friend Nairobi Alvarez a letter shortly before his death in which he said, "We should not grieve when a hero dies. Instead, we should be grateful that he lived and consider ourselves privileged to have walked along his footsteps, if only for a short while."

Padilla Aleman received the Purple Heart posthumously.

He is survived by his proud family that includes his parents, a younger sister, and many extended family members.



ROGER P. PEÑA, JR.

Died: June 14, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 10th Sustainment Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)

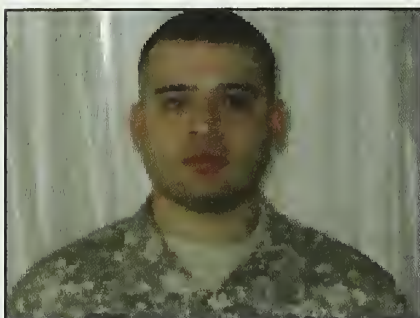
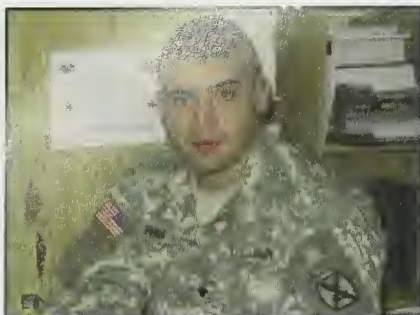
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Sergeant Roger P. Peña, Jr., lost his life while supporting his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He died June 14, 2006, while on a resupply mission. The convoy he was in came under enemy small-arms fire during combat operations in Musa Qulah, Afghanistan. The 29-year-old combat medic had only recently been promoted to sergeant. Sergeant Peña was assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, New York. Funeral services for the fallen Soldier were held June 23, 2006, at the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas. He was laid in his final resting place with full military honors in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

Peña joined the Army on March 18, 2004, and completed basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. After completing advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, he became a combat medic. He received his assignment with the 10th Sustainment Brigade Troops Battalion on October 10, 2004. He deployed to Iraq in February 2006.

Roger was born on October 28, 1976, to proud parents Roger, Sr., and Paula Peña. He attended school at Harlandale in San Antonio, Texas, where he earned excel-



lent grades. At the age of nine, Roger learned to play chess and took to it quickly. In junior high school, he joined the chess club and started competing. In 1991, while in the eighth grade, Roger placed first overall among his class at the Texas Junior State Championship in Austin; the team placed second. In high school, Roger was a champion chess player and became one of the top players in the state. He also played on the football and soccer teams and was a part of the youth club at St. Leo's Catholic Church. While involved with the youth group at his church,

Roger led more than 50 retreats while he was in high school. Ritz Martinez, a former youth leader and Roger's godmother, recalled his leadership abilities: "I've maybe met a handful of youth who you could say were born leaders, and Roger was one of them."

After high school, Roger went on to further his education at the University of Texas, in Austin, intending to teach history. While attending UT, Roger met Marisol Gomez, and the two were married shortly after graduation. They were later blessed with two children, Ivan and Gabriel. Roger loved his mother's home cooking, but Mexican food was his favorite. His father said there is just one thing people should

know about his son: "He was a hero. That's how I want him to be remembered." Roger's chess coach, Felix Fierros, Jr., recalled Roger as a born leader. He said, "He had the looks, the smarts, the charisma, and the kids liked him."

Roger is remembered as an intelligent, funny, charismatic, and deeply spiritual man. His best friend, Castro, said Roger changed his life. He was a gang member before Roger convinced him to go to church: "He told me it would be a good way to meet girls. He always had a way to get you to do what he wanted." Roger and Castro helped start the church's youth ministry, and by the time they were 16, they were speaking to crowds of thousands of youths. Months before his death, Roger asked a question on his Web site: "Who would you most like to meet?" He responded to his own question, "Jesus, just not any time soon." Roger's journey through this world was replete with integrity, grace, and commitment. He lived his life with integrity; he loved his family with graciousness; and he served his country with commitment. While Roger was called to his eternal home way too soon, he got to meet Jesus, just like he wanted.

Peña earned many awards during his military career, including the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Combat Action Badge.

Roger is survived by his wife, Marisol; his two sons, Ivan and Gabriel; his parents, Roger, Sr., and Paulita; his sisters, Karen, Yvette, and Annette; and his brother, Frederick; along with many extended family and friends.



JOHNNY J. PERALEZ, JR.

Died: January 5, 2006

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

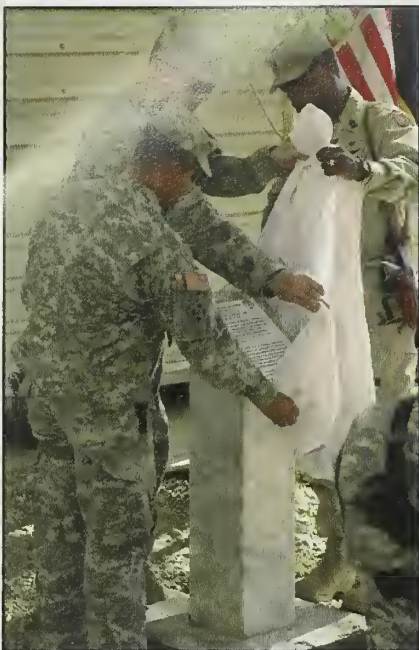
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1999-2006

Sergeant Johnny J. Peralez, Jr., lost his life on January 5, 2006, when an improvised explosive device detonated near the Humvee he was riding in while providing medical coverage during convoy operations in An Najaf, Iraq. The 25-year-old Soldier died while serving his second tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sergeant Peralez was a medic for the 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas. Family and friends gathered at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Falfurrias, Texas, on January 17, 2006, to say their final farewells to their beloved hero before he was laid to rest at the Falfurrias Burial Park.

Sergeant Peralez joined the Army on September 8, 1999, and became a combat medic. He served in Germany as an ambulance driver and medical squad leader with the 1st Infantry Division. He also served in Kosovo and was among the first contingent of American troops to be deployed to Afghanistan after 9/11. He later served 14 months in Iraq before receiving his assignment to Fort Hood. Before Peralez deployed as a senior medic for his second tour to Iraq, on November 29, 2005, he told his family that he had "found his calling" in the Army and planned to make it his career.

Johnny was born February 1, 1980, in Kingsville, Texas, and graduated from Falfurrias High School in 1998. He earned good grades, played alto sax, and performed



in school plays. He was also a star player on the high school tennis team. Because of his involvement in the performing arts, it surprised many when he joined the Army a year after graduating instead of pursuing a career in music or theater.

Johnny was a tall, slender man who had a fondness for dead trees. His family found the perfect spot by a dead tree to bury him; no doubt, a spot that Johnny would have loved and picked for himself.

Family and friends remember Johnny as a “happy, creative guy who loved to perform and make others feel good.” Cristina Ruiz, Johnny’s friend and neighbor, remembered Johnny as the “nicest, funniest, best friend I’ve ever had.” Cynthia Perez, Johnny’s tennis coach, affectionately recalled, “He was always so witty and in such a good mood because he wanted to make everybody happy.”

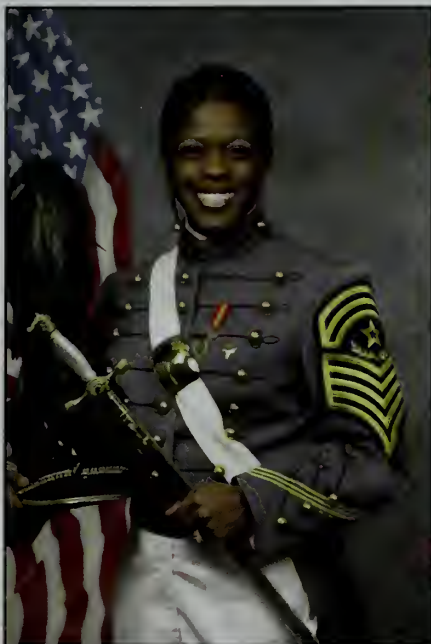
Johnny’s sister, Nina, recalled a conversation with her brother before he left for his second tour in Iraq. His words prove his commitment to his Army brothers: “I said, ‘Don’t ever go again.’ He answered, ‘I can’t leave my men over there.’ I guess when you go to war with your second family, which is the Army family, you’ve got to stick by them. He wanted to go back.”

William Smith of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment out of Fort Lewis, Washington, left the following memorial to Johnny: “...Johnny was my Soldier in Vilseck, Germany. He was one of the smartest, brightest and caring soldiers I have ever had the pleasure of leading.” Travis Truesdell, 4th Infantry Division from Tryon, Oklahoma, fondly recalled of his comrade: “Sergeant Peralez was an outstanding NCO. I had the great chance to work with Sergeant Peralez in the Aid Station. He knew so much about the medical field and would teach you anything you asked. He was the type that when he was around, you checked yourself over to make sure that you were on point. Because God knows he was always on point. God bless him and his family.”

Johnny’s commanders remembered him as a consummate professional, always ready for the unexpected. He trained the medics under him to meet the same high standards. The motto of the 1st Infantry Division, and Sergeant Peralez’s philosophy toward his mission as a medic, is: “There is no mission too difficult and no sacrifice too great.” Johnny exemplified that motto. While his mission was difficult, he performed it with honor and dedication. While his sacrifice was great, he offered it freely and with bravery.

On September 10, 2006, the Combat Medical Training Facility at Camp Victory, Iraq, was dedicated to the memory of Sergeant Peralez. Dedicating the training facility in his honor was particularly appropriate, since he stressed ongoing training and preparedness among all medics who served with him.

Johnny is survived by his mother, Virginia Garcia; his father, Johnny J. Peralez, Sr.; his sister, Nina; his brothers, Romeo and Jessie; grandparents Jose and Tomasa Peralez; grandmother, Carmen Arellano; grandfather, Pedro Vasquez; and his fiancée, Luisa Reyes.



EMILY JAZMIN TATUM PEREZ

Died: September 12, 2006

Rank: Second Lieutenant

Unit: 204th Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2006

Second Lieutenant Emily Jazmin Tatum Perez, 204th Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, was killed on September 12, 2006, when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded under her Humvee as she was leading a convoy near Najaf in southern Iraq. Lieutenant Perez, from Fort Washington, Maryland, was 23 years old and was the first female graduate of West Point to die in Iraq. She is buried at the West Point Cemetery.

Lieutenant Perez was born in 1983 in Heidelberg, Germany, where her father was stationed. Described as “smart as a whip,” she spent much of her youth in Germany, learning to read by the age of three, and was fluent in German by the age of four. As a freshman at Heidelberg American High School, she was selected as one of the youngest members of the Model United Nations, which resulted in travel to Russia and the Netherlands as a youth ambassador. She was also the first clarinet in the Heidelberg Band and, as a member of the track team, won a silver medal in the 1997 European Finals. Her family moved to Maryland in 1998, where she was captain of the track team at Oxon Hill High School and graduated in 2001 in the top five percent of her class. While in high school, she was honored by the American Red Cross for her contributions as an AIDS peer educator with the Alexandria, Virginia, Red Cross. She was also



instrumental in establishing an HIV/AIDS ministry while an active member of Peace Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

Emily, who had her choice of many universities, chose West Point for its academic and physical challenges, graduating in 2005 in the top 10 percent of her class. At West Point, she ran track, sang in the gospel choir, and helped start a dance squad to cheer for the football and basketball teams. She was the first minority female command sergeant major of the Corps of Cadets in West Point history. Lieutenant General Bill Lenox, the West Point Commandant, called her "The Full Package" for her academic, athletic and military achievements. She was

commissioned a second lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps upon her graduation from West Point, selecting that branch for its opportunity for service to others. She completed the Army Medical Department Officer Basic Course at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and in December 2005, deployed to Iraq as the Treatment Platoon Leader of Charlie Company of the 204th Support Battalion. Her West Point faculty advisor described her as amazing, and her pastor said she was "one of the most brilliant people I've ever met." She was an avid reader and loved music and fishing. Her interest in the Army was influenced by the military service of her father and grandfather. Fellow Soldiers, classmates, and friends praised Emily for her spirit, leadership, and good humor. The gunner on her Humvee said, "I would

ride with her anywhere. She led from the front. That seemed the only way she knew how to lead." Classmates praised her as a "star among stars," and her roommate said her accomplishments were the result of an "unshakable self-confidence." Her interpreter in Iraq said he had "adopted" the young platoon leader. He wept when told of the death of "my beautiful child."

Deeply religious, Emily described the Iraqi terrain in biblical terms: "As we rode along the highway, there were shepherds with their flocks of sheep all over. I tried to get a good picture. We'll see if I did, but the whole time I kept thinking of the stories and parables throughout the Bible involving shepherds and sheep. Just like the preachers always describe, the sheep follow right behind the shepherd, and wherever the sheep were grazing, the shepherd wasn't too far away and was usually sitting in their midst. It kept bringing to mind how if only we could trust and follow God the way sheep do their shepherd, we'd be so much better off. That was one of the most amazing moments, being able to see that."

Her military awards include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Combat Action Badge.

The West Point Foundation has honored the memory of Lieutenant Perez through sales of a print of Emily in her West Point uniform, the proceeds of which support the Foundation's charitable activities. In Iraq, the Kalsu Forward Operating Base clinic was dedicated as the Emily Perez Treatment Facility. In 2006, Daniel and Vicki Perez established the Emily J.T. Perez Foundation to honor their daughter's legacy through a mentoring and scholarship program for girls and young women.

Emily is survived by her parents, Daniel and Vicki Perez; a brother, Kevyn Kimberly; her maternal grandmother, Rena Gunter; and her paternal grandmother, Delia Torres.



DAVID J. RAMSEY

Died: September 7, 2006

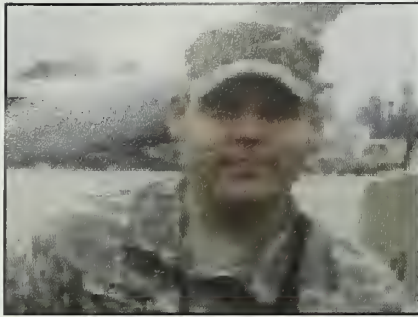
Rank: Specialist

Unit: 47th Combat Support Hospital, 62nd Medical Brigade

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist David J. Ramsey was medically evacuated from Mosul, Iraq on August 24, 2006, as a result of a non-combat-related incident. He died on September 7, 2006, in Spanaway, Washington. The 27-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 47th Combat Support Hospital, 62nd Medical Brigade out of Fort Lewis, Washington. Specialist Ramsey deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in October 2005, proudly serving the 47th CSH in Mosul, Iraq. Friends and family said their final farewells on September 13, 2006, at the Mountain View Funeral Home in Tacoma, Washington, before laying him to rest in Mountain View Memorial Park in Tacoma.

David was born June 2, 1979. Friends and family members describe him as someone who "...was loved by so many people and welcomed anyone and everyone into his life with open arms." Tanna Farley Bartlett, who knew David in high school and college, said he was "one of the kindest spirits I have ever met." Kevin Bleich, a former colleague, memorialized him this way: "I found him to be a genuine, honest, thoughtful, caring, upstanding, and honorable person. I have fond memories of our days working together...I feel my life is better for having known him and I know he must have been one of the most honorable members of our armed forces."



David's comrade, Sarah Schmude, said, "Specialist Ramsey made a huge impact on me. I served with him in Iraq. He kept me going when I was down and always knew how to put a smile on my face. He will not be forgotten, ever. I will miss our midnight chow



hall runs, and going to the gym, and trips to the phone center, and just having a great friend. I already miss you Ramsey!"

David was overwhelmingly remembered as a sincere, loving, and helpful man who knew how to make a person feel better and put a smile on their face. Although his admirable life was cut short, the memory of his smile, his

encouragement, and his sincerity will be cherished forever in the hearts of those whose lives he touched.

In addition to his loving parents, Joseph and In Tok Ramsey, he is survived by his wife, Genesa; his stepchildren, Travis and Lela; his sister, Christina; brother Scott; and many extended family and close friends.



NICHOLAS K. ROGERS

Died: October 22, 2006

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team,
10th Mountain Division

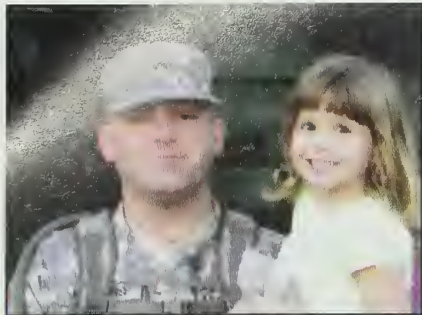
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2006

Specialist Nicholas K. Rogers died October 22, 2006, when his convoy was ambushed in Baghdad, Iraq. While under heavy small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire, Specialist Rogers moved to his M240B machine gun and began suppressive fire. His actions allowed the pinned-down members of his platoon to move into position, achieve fire superiority, and suppress the enemy attack. Specialist Rogers served as a combat medic with the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, New York, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried with full military honors at Deltona Memorial Gardens in Deltona, Florida.

Rogers enlisted in the Army in February 2005 and completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He later completed advanced individual training to become a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In October 2005, he was assigned to Fort Drum, New York, and deployed with his unit to Iraq in August 2006.

Before enlisting in the Army, Nick was a certified medical technician. While a student at Deltona High School in Deltona, Florida, he was a member of the Deltona High Blue Brigade Band and was active in the Boy Scouts. Friends remember his genuine



kindness and his warm smile. They watched him grow into a loving husband, father, and big brother. Nick was always a smiling face and shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen, and a friend when you needed one most. In 2001, Nick married his high school sweetheart, Kelly Williamson. Kelly was his whole world from the day he decided she was his one and only. They had two beautiful daughters, Jocelyn and Isabelle. Isabelle was born after Nick was deployed in January, so he never got a chance to meet her. His family described Nick as a compassionate man with

a strong desire to help others, and they appreciated that he kept them updated with frequent missives home. Whenever Nick's mother, Penny, looks at her granddaughters, she knows her son lives on through them, and they keep her going.

Staff Sergeant Jeff Payne proudly calls Rogers "brother." He tells others of Rogers's friendship, brotherhood, compassion, and devotion

and hopes that he will "watch over me when I deploy, give me the strength and wisdom to teach my troops how to safely complete their missions." Rogers was always there for his comrades whenever he was needed. "Doc" Rogers will always be remembered by his fellow Soldiers as a great man and a great Soldier. They cannot and will not ever forget his courage, dedication, and ultimate sacrifice, and are now fighting in honor of their fallen comrade.

For his brave actions that day, Specialist Rogers was honored with the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and the Army Commendation Medal for valor with "V" attachment. The statement that accompanied his Army Commendation Medal stressed that his actions were "vital" to the survival of the rest of his platoon. During his distinguished Army career, he received numerous other service medals, including the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon and the Combat Medical Badge.

Nick will be cherished forever by his wife of five years, Kelly Williamson Rogers, who has been his best friend for more than 12 years; his daughters, Jocelyn and Isabelle; parents Robert and Penny Rogers; sister Crystal Lynn Rogers; and maternal grandparents Dorothy and James Meurer.



CHARLES O. SARE

Died: October 23, 2006

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: Naval Ambulatory Care Center, Port Hueneme, California serving with Multi-National Corps–Iraq

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2004-2006

United States Navy Hospital Corpsman Charles Otto “Otter” Sare perished on October 23, 2006, while serving in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His death resulted from injuries he sustained when an improvised explosive device (IED) hit the vehicle in which he was a passenger.

A final visitation took place on November 1, 2006, at Hemet’s Miller-Jones Mortuary. Charles’ funeral was held the next day at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hemet. Over 600 mourners attended the services, and Charles’ “tricked-out Toyota pickup truck” took the lead in the procession of vehicles carrying grieving friends and relatives to the cemetery. He was laid to rest at the San Jacinto Valley Cemetery in Hemet, California.

Corpsman Sare was serving as a “devil doc” with the Multi-National Corps–Iraq in support of the Marines. His home unit was the Naval Ambulatory Care Center, Port Hueneme, California. Sare enlisted in the Navy in 2004 and became a corpsman because he wanted to help people. He had completed only two months of his six-month overseas deployment, yet he had already helped to save the life of a Marine who had stepped on an IED. He was extremely proud of that noteworthy accomplishment.



Charles was born and raised in Hemet. He graduated from Hemet High School in 2001. While a student there, he was an active member of the Future Farmers of America and indulged to the fullest his passion for riding in off-road vehicles. His career aspirations involved becoming a paramedic and firefighter. He planned on moving with his best friend, his brother Matt, to Las Vegas once he finished his stint in the Navy.

Everybody who knew him agree that Charles was a fun-loving, engaging, and active youth. On his MySpace site, Charles claimed the title of

King of Comedy and referred to himself as "Willy Wonka." He was "a happy-go-lucky guy who tried to coax a smile from others," his father affirmed. On one occasion, his mother said, Charles Saran-wrapped his chief petty officer's car. Another time, on a casual Friday at the clinic, he dressed in old, funky clothes from a Salvation Army Store to get a few laughs. But he also had a soft side. When he deployed to the Persian Gulf in early September 2006, his girlfriend of seven months gave him a teddy bear that he kept close for safety and comfort.

For two seasons, Dale Hummel coached the easy-going Charles in youth baseball. He marveled that Charles could play virtually any

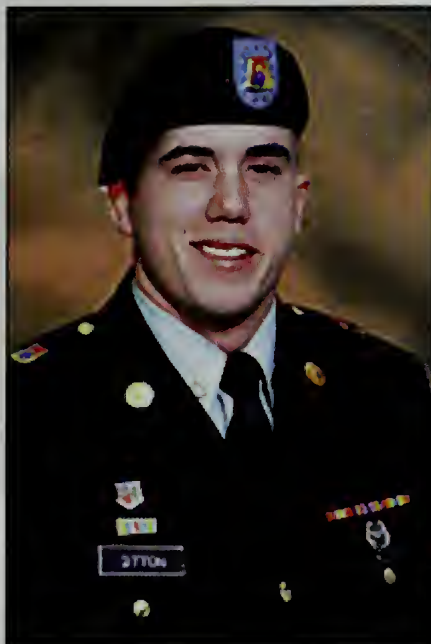
position, from the outfield to the pitcher's mound, adding, "he never missed a practice. He was always there. He [was] a well-liked kid."

His parents experienced constant fears for his safety in the line of fire. His father recalled that Charles "was 6-foot, 3-inches tall. I would always tell him, 'Find the biggest guy in the platoon and stay behind him or learn how to duck.'" His mother, a detective with Utah's Cache County Sheriff's Office, walked into her office one morning to find a Navy lieutenant present. "He didn't have to say anything," she said. "I just started crying. I knew."

Many of Sare's fellow Sailors have fond memories of going through boot camp and school with him. They recall that he was always ready with a laugh and had a positive attitude about life. He was proud to serve his country and passed this enthusiasm on to his fellow comrades. Sare had a calling, and he answered it; he had a duty to perform, and he fulfilled it.

Following Charles's death, his family asked that those who wished to commemorate his life make a donation to the Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund. His mother also established a nonprofit foundation in his memory at www.charlessarescholarship.org. The foundation has a dual mission to provide scholarships to deserving students and to support children with cancer. Every year on Charles's birthday, December 3, the foundation does something out of the ordinary for these "purple heart children."

Surviving Charles are his parents and stepparents, Charles "Ed" Sare and his wife Karen; Victoria Carver and her husband Jon; brother Matt; stepsister Stephine; stepbrothers, Prince, Chaz, Schuyler, Adam, and Brian; and numerous loving relatives and friends.



CHRISTOPHER F. SITTON

Died: August 19, 2006

Rank: Corporal

Unit: C Company, 710th Combat Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Corporal Christopher F. Sitton was killed August 19, 2006, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his convoy, which was then attacked by Taliban fighters. The convoy was passing near the border with Pakistan en route to deliver supplies to a hospital from Camp Blessing in Kunar, Afghanistan, while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Two other Soldiers, one a fellow medic, died alongside the 21-year old Sitton. Sitton served as a combat medic with C Company, 710th Combat Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, out of Fort Drum, New York. He was buried with full military honors in the Grand View Cemetery, just outside Montrose, Texas.

Sitton enlisted in the Army in January 2004. He completed basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and moved on to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to become a combat medic. While in Afghanistan, Sitton participated in two major military offensives against the Taliban and al Qaeda. His dedication was recognized by all who served with him. After the crash of a Russian helicopter, Sitton received a Commander's Coin from a four-star general in recognition of his efforts. On another occasion, he was awakened in the middle of the night to save the life of an Afghani girl who was struggling to breathe.



Christopher enjoyed music and the outdoors. While in high school, he ran track and became an Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts, and participated in the coed Venture Crew program. Family remembered him as a team player with a desire to work hard. He had an outgoing personality, and he especially

enjoyed going on weeklong backpacking and camping trips. Shortly before his death, Christopher told his family that he wanted to get his physician assistant degree and possibly go on to medical school.

He loved life and wanted to make the most of it as he continued to learn and grow. Christopher had a special closeness with his family. He was a great friend to many and had a smile for everyone. Chris leaves his imprint on all those he influenced while he fulfilled his special place in this world. "He was larger than life," said Christopher's fiancée, Specialist Ashley Villarreal, who served in the same unit. "No matter who you were or how (angry) you were or how sad, he made you smile." "He was proud of what he did," his mother, Judy, said. "Chris not only helped his wounded fellow Soldiers, he also gave a lot of medical aid to local children near his base at Camp

Blessing." He is described as the type of person to whom others gravitated—always happy and willing to help. He was extremely proud of his path in life and the military. As he would always say, "It's all good."

Staff Sergeant Yvette Onwudiwe, a fellow Soldier who served with him at Fort Drum, thanked Sitton's parents for raising their son to be the man he was. "He knew how to be a friend to all, a person you turned to when there was no one else," she said, asking them to be proud of all he did, big and small. Sitton will always be remembered by those who loved him, including his Charlie Company family who call out, "Thank you for all that you have done and all that you were to us."

Sitton's awards and decorations included the National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Posthumously, he received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, and Combat Medical Badge and was promoted to Corporal. In addition, the clinic at Camp Salerno, Afghanistan, was named after him and Sergeant Wakkuna Jackson, a medic who died alongside Sitton.

Christopher is survived by his parents, Steve and Judy; a sister, Laura; his grandfather, Cleo Elliott; and his fiancée, Specialist Ashley Villarreal.



JOHN T. STONE

Died: March 28, 2006

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 15th Civil Support Team, Vermont Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1971-2006

Sergeant First Class John Thomas Stone was killed by enemy mortar and small arms attacks during combat operations in Lashkagar, Afghanistan, on March 28, 2006. He was shot several times while supporting the Afghan Army Soldiers his unit was helping to train. The 52-year-old Soldier was assigned to the 15th Civil Support Team, Vermont Army National Guard, out of South Burlington, Vermont. He was on his third tour in Afghanistan, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. He is buried in Saint Anthony Cemetery in Wilder, Vermont.

Tom, as he was called by family and friends, joined the Army in 1971 after graduating from Woodstock Union High School in Woodstock, Vermont. His reason, at least partly, was to learn what had happened to his brother Dana, a freelance photographer. Dana helped instill in young Tom a sense of adventure and desire to make an impact on those around him by telling him stories of his own adventures from around the world. Dana disappeared with Sean Flynn, the son of movie star Errol Flynn, on April 6, 1970. Dana was on assignment for CBS News and Sean for *Time* magazine. They had ridden into the Cambodian countryside on motorbikes when they were captured by communist guerrillas. They were never heard from again.



In 1992, Tom set off to walk around the world. It took him eight years to complete his journey of 22,000 miles, through 29 countries. All who knew him considered him a remarkable man and a patriot, someone who impressed you the moment you met him. Tom's sense of humanity and compassion

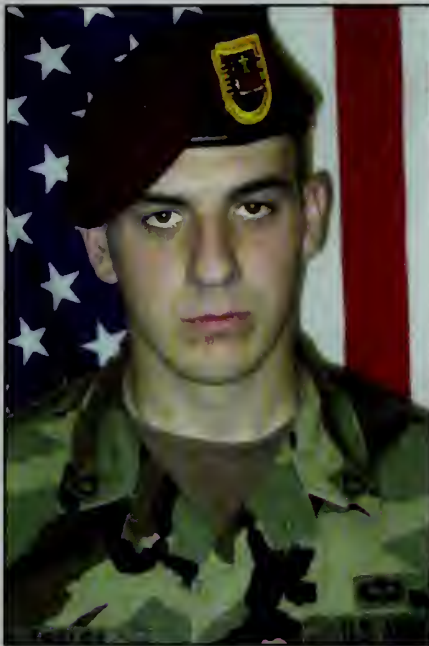
overshadowed any desire for financial or personal gain. He followed a life's path to heal, help, and hold others in high regard. "He was an individual, even though he was military. His motivation was always to help people in need, particularly kids," said Vermont Secretary of Administration Michael Smith, a lifelong friend. "I used to sit back and say he had it right. He had that sense of the world that 'I need to help.' He was an adventurer and he sought people out and tried to help them." Tom had an unusual and poignant sense about himself that left others honored to call him friend.

In Afghanistan, Stone set up public medical clinics near forward-operating bases to treat local civilians. He was credited with saving hundreds of Afghan lives. Fellow Soldiers remembered Stone as a

well-respected, compassionate role model, dedicated to caring for those around him. He joined the Vermont Guard in 1982, and began working there full-time in 2000. Previously, he had served in the Army's Special Forces. Captain Jeff Roosevelt served with Stone on his second tour, in 2004, and remembers that "he was all about taking care of the Soldiers around him; that's why he went on the three deployments: to take care of the Soldiers who were his brothers."

Stone's fellow Soldiers affectionately called him "Doc" and "Stoney," but saw him as more than a medic—he was their friend and protector. They know Stone not only as an awesome man but a great Soldier. His compassion for children was evident in his daily work. His commanding officer recalled that Stone handed out lollipops to children after their visits. He helped his comrades get through the tough winters in Afghanistan and cope with the distance and loneliness of being away from family and friends. To them, Stone was the man who ran toward gunfire to aid his comrades and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Stone's bravery goes beyond words; he will always be their medic and hero.

Though Tom never married, he left a life partner to cherish his memory, Rose Loving, and his sister, Roberta Harley.



DOUGLAS L. TINSLEY

Died: December 26, 2006

Rank: Specialist

Unit: D Company, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Douglas Logan Tinsley died December 26, 2006, of injuries sustained when the vehicle in which he was riding rolled over into a canal in Baghdad, Iraq. The 21-year-old Soldier was conducting a mounted patrol at the time. Another Soldier died in the same incident, and a third was seriously injured. Specialist Tinsley was assigned to D Company, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, out of Fort Richardson, Alaska, to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried with full military honors at Chester Memorial Gardens in Chester, South Carolina, on January 6, 2007. The South Carolina General Assembly passed a formal resolution expressing its members' "deep sorrow" and offering "deepest sympathy" to his family and friends.

Tinsley completed his Basic Training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and then trained to become a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. After that, he completed the Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. He also graduated from Combatives Level 1 and Basic Airborne School.

A native of Newfoundland, Canada, and a resident of Chester, South Carolina, for 11 years, he was the son of proud parents Douglas and Lori Tinsley. He was a 2004



graduate of Chester High School. Having always wanted to join the military, Logan was thrilled to join JROTC in ninth grade, eventually to become its Executive Officer. Like a father figure, he encouraged his fellow cadets to excel in the program. He led his JROTC cadets to tri-state competition, where his battalion was recognized as an Honor Unit. Logan and his brother Ryan, only two years apart, were not only brothers, but best friends. Ryan was also involved in JROTC and both brothers loved wrestling and baseball. Ryan soon followed his big brother and joined the

Army. A gifted guitarist, Logan once sent an audition tape to the Army band. However, his heavy metal style was not what they were looking for. His whole family was musical. Lori Tinsley used to sing and play guitar in rock bands. She showed her sons some chords, but they mostly taught themselves, she said. Between the three of them, they had at least a dozen guitars. Many who knew Logan were impressed by his compassion and his willingness to help others. Before Logan was sent to Iraq, he was stationed in Alaska. There, he met a college student, Sarah Nelson, whom he planned to marry when he got leave in January 2007.

Specialist Brooke Robson trained with Tinsley at Fort Sam Houston and fondly recalls how he had such an upbeat and wonderful per-

sonality. For Robson and many others, the world is a sadder place without him, but Tinsley will be long remembered for his selfless acts of compassion, his sense of military brotherhood, and his unflagging loyalty. The boys of Dog Company called him "Doc Tinsley". As a combat medic, he often found himself serving as an infantryman until the call for medic was made. Sometimes it's hard to reconcile the two sides of one soul and, like so many other medics, Tinsley found solace when he could save the wounded. He had e-mailed his mother about how upset he was the first time he had to kill an enemy Soldier. He had killed two enemies but also saved two by the time he died. Tinsley loved Airborne, and he was a dedicated medic. Without a doubt, he gave all and was so much to those who knew and served with him.

Posthumously, Specialist Tinsley received both the Bronze Star Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. He previously earned the Bronze Star Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Combat Medical Badge, Parachutist Badge, and Basic Marksmanship Qualification Badge.

Douglas is survived by his mother, Lori F. Tinsley and her companion, Rhonda Graham; his father, Douglas Vance Tinsley and his wife, Connie; brother, Private First Class Ryan Tinsley; sister, Kristen Tinsley; fiancée, Sarah Rose Nelson; three step-brothers, Brandon Larin, Austin Barker, and Derrick Blair; maternal grandmother, Zelma B. Fairfax; paternal grandfather, Douglas H. Tinsley; and four foster brothers, Darrell Satterwhite, Nicholas Satterwhite, Greg Estes, and Harrison McWaters.



ANGELO J. VACCARO

Died: October 2, 2006

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2006

Corporal Angelo Joseph “Moose” Vaccaro died on October 2, 2006, in Korengal, Afghanistan, while rescuing fellow Soldiers during combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Vaccaro was a medic with the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York. Upon discovering that two of his platoon’s Soldiers had been injured in a firefight, Vaccaro set out to retrieve the men. Reaching the most seriously wounded Soldier, Vaccaro shielded him with his own body, returned suppressive fire to the enemy, and then dragged the wounded trooper to a secure area. While returning to recover another Soldier, however, Vaccaro was killed by a rocket-propelled grenade. On October 14, 2006, Vaccaro was buried at the Deltona Memorial Gardens in Orange City, Florida.

Vaccaro entered the Army in 2004, attending basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. His first permanent assignment was to the unit he so proudly served until his death, the 10th Mountain Division. His short-term career goal was to attend the practical nurse course, and his future career aspirations involved becoming an Army physician’s assistant.

Angelo was born in New Rochelle, New York, in 1983, spent part of his youth in the Bronx, New York, and then migrated to Florida in 1990 with his family. There he



linked up with a troubled peer group, but Angelo credited his mother's influence as the inspiration that convinced him to turn his life around. He graduated from Deltona High School in 2001. While there he was renowned as a practical joker and one who strove to cheer up everyone else. For a time, Angelo worked at a Wal-Mart as a stock boy, but his soul yearned for something better. He found that something as an exemplary Army medic.

A childhood friend, Kenny English, remarked that Angelo "went into the Army to save his life, and who would have thought it

would be the thing to take it." Angelo's parents were convinced that the Army had given their son the incentive to straighten out his life. Every time he came home on leave, they could detect a change for the better. On Angelo's last visit home from Afghanistan, Ray Vaccaro marveled that finally his son "was a man." Angelo's platoon sergeant,

Brian Mack, extolled Angelo's virtues: "He was an impact maker. He loved his job, he loved his guys and he loved his family," adding that "he changed my life, and if you knew him, I'm sure he changed yours. He will be missed, but he won't be replaced and he will never be forgotten."

Corporal Angelo Vaccaro received a number of awards that illustrate the caliber of his service and commemorate his heroism: two Silver Stars, the Purple Heart, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, and Combat Medical Badge. His family established a nursing scholarship in his honor with the Daytona Beach Community College. The 10th Mountain Division dedicated its Medical Simulation Training Center at Fort Drum to Angelo and another valiant medic who distinguished himself during World War II, Horace A. Bridgewater. The center became known as the Bridgewater-Vaccaro Center. Additionally, the headquarters building of the Warrior Transition Brigade at Walter Reed Army Medical Center was renamed Vaccaro Hall as a tribute to Vaccaro's sacrifice and devotion to duty. His spirit lives on as the ideal of Army Medical Department courage and valor.

Angelo is survived by his wife, Dana L. Cipolla; his parents, Ray and Linda Vaccaro; his brothers, Vincent and Ray; a sister, Christina; and a number of nephews and a niece who lovingly called him "Uncle Lo."



NATHAN J. VACHO

Died: May 5, 2006

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve

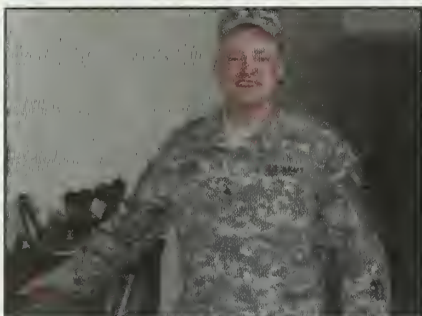
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1998-2006

Staff Sergeant Nathan J. Vacho was killed on May 5, 2006, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq. Two other Soldiers died in the same incident. The 29-year-old Kentucky Reservist had been in Iraq only two weeks as part of a mission to rebuild Iraqi villages. He had volunteered to deploy to Iraq as a combat medic with a civil affairs battalion based in Tennessee. On the day of his funeral, both sides of Highway 8 near the Ladysmith High School in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, were lined with Patriot Guard members and their bikes. Many had come from other states to show their support for his family. Vacho was buried at Riverside Cemetery in Ladysmith.

Vacho enlisted in the Army Reserve as a military firefighter in 1998. Putting the training he received in the Civil Air Patrol to use, he served with an engineer unit before transitioning into the Army medical field in 2002. He completed the Practical Nurse Course at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, in 2003. In 2005, he completed the Army Emergency Technician Refresher Course.

Vacho was assigned to the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, Army Reserve out of Knoxville, Tennessee. His unit was attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry



Division. Although his term of service ended on March 23, 2006, the Army had kept him on duty. Vacho's father said that his son was intending to reenlist. Vacho dislocated his shoulder playing football at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, just before he was supposed to leave for Iraq. However, when offered the chance not to be deployed, he insisted on staying with his unit.

Nathan was born in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, and lived in Janesville, Wisconsin. He came from a long military tradition. His grandfather served in World War II, and, at the time

of Nathan's death, his father was command sergeant major of the 88th Regional Readiness Command at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. "You ain't going to find a more patriotic Soldier," John Vacho proudly declared of his son. Nathan planned to make the military his career, as the generations before him had. When Nathan last spoke to his father on April 30, he said he was being sent to the infamous Triangle of Death area south of Baghdad. John said, "Son, be careful. Don't cut corners."

In civilian life, Nathan was a licensed practical nurse and worked in nursing homes in Wisconsin. Shelly McGuire, director of emergency room nurses at Edgerton Memorial Hospital, said she admired Nathan's special talent for helping young and elderly patients. She said, "He'd light up the room when he came in. It didn't matter what the circumstances were, [or] what the situation was, he always jumped in and helped out."

Ladysmith High School guidance counselor Jackie Pederson said, "He loved gliding. He wanted to glide, so he built a glider. He had a penchant for technology and a zest for life." Nathan was also on the football team and the school newspaper staff. His father described Nathan as a fun-loving person who touched everyone around him, saying, "If it wasn't happening when he walked into a room, it was happening when he left." Army families seem to grow exponentially in times of trouble. Every comrade, friend, and loved one who came forward essentially repeated the message that nothing meant more to Nathan than serving his country the best that he could. Nathan himself once said, "I have been sworn to defend my country and my flag, and I have volunteered to join the forces of freedom. I couldn't feel any better about myself."

Sergeant Charles Lovelace recalls that Vacho "was one of the best soldiers I've ever worked with." Vacho's commander, Major Geraldine Kass, said, "He was a Soldier who had so much enthusiasm and was so positive." Many of his comrades say they are proud of Vacho's devotion and the sacrifice he made. They want to keep his memory close to their hearts and live up to the standard he set for being a Soldier. He was a wonderful friend and a wonderful man.

Vacho was posthumously promoted to staff sergeant and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Combat Action Badge. Additional awards include the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Expert Weapons Qualification Badge.

Nathan is survived by his father and mother, John and Carol Vacho; his wife Amanda; his daughters Emma Grace and Bayli Ellen; and his sister Ashley. They will hold his memory in their hearts for all time.



RUBEN J. VILLA, JR.

Died: August 18, 2006

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: Area Support Group, Coalition Forces Land Component Command, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1988-2006

Sergeant First Class Ruben J. Villa, Jr., died on August 18, 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from a non-combat-related cause. He was assigned to the Area Support Group, Coalition Forces Land Component Command, Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. He was laid to rest at Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso, Texas, on August 30, 2006.

Villa had served in the Army for 18 years at the time of his death. Although his official job designation was veterinary technician, he also performed the duties of environmental control officer. He had been in Iraq as part of the first Gulf War. During his second deployment, in addition to caring for local animals, he inspected the drinking water and checked and controlled for possible airborne diseases affecting Soldiers or the local population.

Ruben joined the Army in 1988, shortly after graduating from Bel Air High School in El Paso, Texas. In high school, he played on the varsity soccer team and in the orchestra. He was also a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Ruben's life was filled with family. When he married Cecilia, he not only gained a loving wife, but also three stepchildren. His capacity for love was so immense that the children became his. They never questioned his love and called him Dad. To this day,

they all dream of their dad and know that he watches over them, encouraging and supporting them. They know he is in a good place because, when he comes to them in their dreams, he seems happy and content. However, it is still difficult at times for his family to accept that their loving husband and father will not be coming home.

Ruben lived his life to the fullest. He touched others with his laughter and compassion, just as he allowed others to touch his heart. His father-in-law considered Ruben to be his son, and was as proud of him as any father would be. "Tears fill his eyes when we talk about you or see the old home movies. My mom has found him watching the movies by himself, crying," Cecilia says of her father.

Cecilia holds in her heart and mind the last image of her devoted husband—as he turned around at the door of the plane and said, "I love you." Their children remember his last embrace, when he told each one that he loved them. Cecilia, like her father, sometimes watches the old home movies. Sometimes when she hears Ruben's

voice or his laugh, she cries; sometimes she laughs with him. She is grateful for the time they had together as husband and wife and as a family.

Villa's gentle compassion and devotion touched not only his family but also his fellow Soldiers, who were proud to call him a friend. Many still find it hard to accept that he is gone. Slowly, they have overcome some of their sadness and anger, but they still think about him and miss him. Villa inspired and encouraged his comrades to greater heights. Sergeant First Class Dawn Smith-Teart calls Villa her mentor and says he taught her to strive for the stars. She will always remember how he could keep a smile on his face through any circumstance.

Ruben is survived by his wife Cecilia; daughters Kristle, April, and Jacqui; and son Raul; as well as his mother, Irma; sister, Sharon Villa-Romero; and his nephew, Patrick.



RYAN D. WALKER

Died: January 5, 2006

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Ryan D. Walker was killed on January 5, 2006, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his Humvee in Baghdad, Iraq. During convoy operations supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 25-year-old medic was trying to help Soldiers injured by an IED when a second IED detonated near him. Another Soldier was killed in the same incident. Walker was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Georgia. Family and friends buried their fallen son, brother, and hero on January 16, 2006, in Pilot Rock Cemetery in Pilot Rock, Oregon.

The previous April, Walker had been grazed by a bullet while rushing to help Soldiers hit by a car bomb in Baghdad. He received a Purple Heart for that act.

Ryan grew up in the kind of small town where everyone knows everyone else. Pendleton, Oregon, was an idyllic community where friends and neighbors were like your family. He graduated from Pendleton High School. His father described him as "a friendly kid who didn't have an enemy in the world." College friend, Krissy Preim-Smith, can still see his smile: "Ryan could always lift you up when you were feeling down and make you feel good about yourself. He was just the guy that stood out



among everyone else. Mostly it was that smile—one look at him and you knew he was a good-hearted person.”

In joining the Army, Walker was carrying on a family tradition—his father had served in Vietnam, his grandfather in World War II, and his great-grandfather in World War I. One of Walker’s fellow Soldiers, Specialist Somers, served with Walker in Iraq and believes that his battalion was very lucky to have had a lot of good medics that year in Iraq. He said, “Doc Walker was the finest medic I ever served with. It was not because he knew more about the job than the next guy, but because he loved his job. Doc gave his life doing what he loved, helping other Soldiers.” Another Soldier, Adam Mattis, wants his fallen comrade to know, “You took care of me, changed my bandages, cleaned my wounds, and made sure I wasn’t in any pain after the rest of the unit swept me under the rug. I remember when you helped me get on the bird to go home—you gave me instructions on how to keep my arm clean until I got home and said, ‘Goodbye, bro.’ I didn’t think that would be the last time I saw you. I’ll never forget you or the lessons you taught me.”

Fellow Soldier Jonathan Epelbaum met Doc Walker at Fort Stewart. “He was the one medic in the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regi-

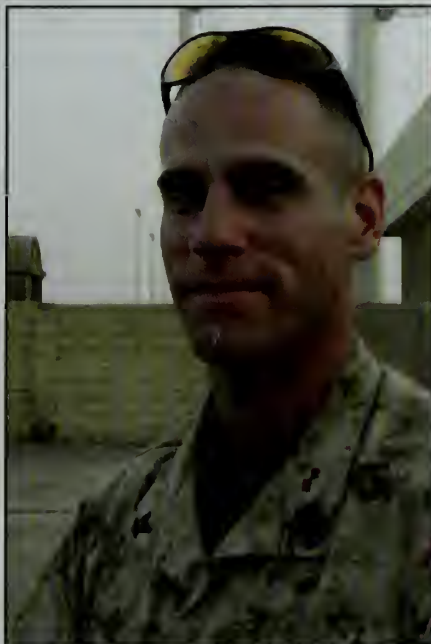
ment that everyone wanted. He was knowledgeable about his job, would just sit and listen if anyone was having a difficult time, give words of encouragement and advice, and could put a smile on your face no matter what.” Walker is remembered for always being in a good mood and trying to keep people’s spirits up. He was the medic who would volunteer to go on dangerous missions that weren’t assigned to a medic, just to be there for “his guys” in case anyone was injured. When he went out with them, it gave them a feeling of invincibility. They knew he’d walk through hellfire to get to them if they were wounded. It was this selfless attitude that put him in the situation that took his life. The word “selfless” is often used to describe Walker.

The Soldiers who considered Doc Walker their friend and guardian angel are grateful to his family for bringing him into the world and letting him touch all the lives that he did. He will remain in the thoughts and prayers of his comrades. For him, they will press on.

Ryan’s father said he takes comfort in knowing that his son died doing what he loved best—being a medic and coming to the aid of others. His compassion and love of life was evident in all the things he did. Ryan’s legacy lives on in the many friends he gathered around him in his short life. He made the ultimate sacrifice as a Soldier.

Specialist Walker was posthumously awarded two Bronze Stars for valor and a Purple Heart, in addition to two Purple Hearts awarded him before his death.

Ryan is survived by his father, Randall Walker; his mother, Louise Walker; and his brother, Steven.



CHRISTOPHER G. WALSH

Died: September 4, 2006

Rank: Petty Officer Second Class

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division

Branch: U.S. Navy

Petty Officer Second Class Christopher G. Walsh, a Navy Reserve Hospital Corpsman, heroically gave his life while serving his country on September 4, 2006. Walsh was conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb. The 30-year-old Hospital Corpsman was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, out of Bridgeton, Missouri. After an escort back to the United States by his brother, a Marine, funeral services were held for Walsh September 15, 2006, at St. Joseph Catholic Church, followed by his burial in Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery.

Driven by a passion to save lives and following in the footsteps of his father, a medic who served in Vietnam, Walsh volunteered for the Navy Reserves and trained as a corpsman, with his first assignment in Fallujah, Iraq, in March 2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Chris was raised in Shawnee, Kansas, by his parents, Thomas and Maureen. He graduated from Bishop Miege High School, in Shawnee Mission, Kansas, in 1994, where friends say he "always had a smile on his face." He played football his freshman and sophomore years, worked on the school newspaper, and was involved in



scouting, achieving the highest award, the Eagle Scout badge. Chris moved to St. Louis after graduation and earned his emergency medical technician (EMT) license at the age of 22 before joining the St. Louis Fire Department in 2001, again following family tradition—his grandfather and uncle had both been firefighters.

Family and friends recall that Chris “pushed to be sent to Iraq.” Friend and fellow firefighter Timothy Kirchoff worked with Chris for several years. He said of Chris, “What was clear was that he chose his own path.”

Timothy recounted Chris’s feelings about deploying to Iraq: “He said he was a little scared, but he wanted to go over there. He basically wanted to expand his training and experience. He wanted to be on the front lines.” Chris’s sister Erin affectionately recalls her brother’s commitment to helping people, “He loves his line of work. He was very proud of what he was

doing.” EMT Mark Rauss trained Chris when he joined the fire department, noting that he wasn’t surprised that Chris joined the Navy Reserves. He stated, “He was an honorable person, and he went on to serve his country honorably. He gave his life doing something he believed in—serving other people.”

Walsh’s good deeds went beyond his service to country. They stretched across cultural boundaries when he went beyond the call of duty to tend to the needs of an Iraqi baby in desperate need of an operation. While on patrol searching for a sniper, Walsh and his unit were approached by a desperate mother with a visibly sick baby. Walsh put down his gun and examined the baby, taking pictures to show the chief medical officer, convincing him that they needed to help that baby. After an incredible amount of red tape, the baby, Mariam, was wheeled into the operating room at Massachusetts General on October 13, a month and a half after Walsh’s death. She came through the surgery just fine. Mariam’s grandfather asked Walsh’s mother, who flew to Boston to meet the child her son fought so hard to save, for pictures of Walsh to put in Mariam’s scrapbook. He gratefully said to her in Arabic, “God sent him to Mariam. Thank you for your son.”

Chris is survived by his beloved family, which includes his mother, Maureen; brothers, Patrick and Joseph; sisters, Erin and Meghan, and grandmother, Rose.



JAMES R. WORSTER

Died: September 18, 2006

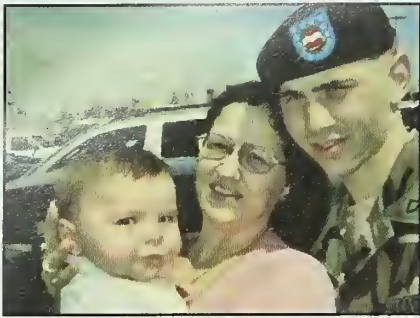
Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 10th Combat Support Hospital, 43rd Area Support Group

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant James R. Worster died September 18, 2006, of cardiac arrest in Baghdad, Iraq. The 24-year-old Army medic was assigned to the 10th Combat Support Hospital, 43rd Area Support Group out of Fort Carson, Colorado, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This was Worster's second tour of duty in Iraq. In 2003, he served as a field medic. In accordance with his wishes, Worster was cremated.

James moved with his family to Alaska when he was seven years old. He attended Denali and Nordale elementary schools and North Pole middle and high schools, graduating in 2000. While in high school, he became a summer intern for the National Park Service, even though he was told that NPS usually doesn't hire interns that young. He spent the summer between his sophomore and junior years working at Yellowstone National Park. Following graduation, James moved to Ohio to attend Cleveland State University, where his fiancée, Brandy Kusinski, who graduated in 1999, was enrolled. The 9/11 terrorist attack changed James's plans, and he enlisted in the Army. He wanted to help ensure that the United States was not attacked again. After basic training, he and Kusinski were married on October 13, 2002. They have a son, Trevor James, who was the light of his life. His mother, Donna Thornton, said, "He hoped someday the country would be safe for his son and all people's sons."



His wife, Brandy, knows what an amazing person James was, and she made this promise to him: "People come and go from our lives, some are here to stay forever...even though you are in heaven, you will be forever in our lives. I promise that I will raise Trevor to be the best man that he can be,

and that you will always be his hero. You were an amazing man, and I am thankful that I have known you for so long and that you are Trevor's father." James dreamed of someday becoming a physician, motivated by the death of his father and hero, Richard Malcom, who died from hepatitis C. James's mother, Donna Thornton, has a great sense of pride for her son, his service to our country,

and the lives he saved. For her, his "light will continue to shine... for as long as there is breath in my body. Having you for a son brought more joy than I can ever express."

Worster told his family that his hospital treated a lot of sick and wounded Iraqi children. He was glad he was there to comfort them, as well as wounded Soldiers. He received credit for saving more than 100 lives during his tour in the Combat Support Hospital. Like many Soldiers, Worster did the best he could to cope with the stress and emotional turmoil that he faced daily. "He was one of the shining stars. He was always there," said Major Jim Alonzo. First Lieutenant Shane Rilat recalls Worster as a great asset to the team in the EMT section of the 10th Combat Support Hospital. Worster kept the morale up by always smiling from ear to ear. "We could have just finished the most gruesome of trauma resuscitations or MASCALs [mass casualties], and he would find something positive to say about how we worked together as a team doing the best we could for those injured. I carry on these days toting a small piece of James's positive attitude everywhere I go."

James is survived by his wife, Brandy; his son, Trevor; his mother, Donna Thornton, and stepfather, Burleigh Thornton; two brothers, Jack Allen and Josh Malcom; and his sister, Joy Malcom.

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CHARLES D. ALLEN

Died: January 4, 2007

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1997-2007

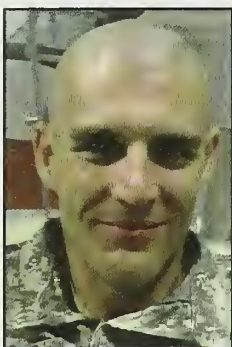
Staff Sergeant Charles D. Allen was shot during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq, on January 4, 2007. The 28-year-old combat medic served with the 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Lewis, Washington. He had volunteered to leave the safety of the base to assist an infantry battalion whose medics needed a rest. On his first day with that battalion, he was mortared while treating the wounded at the scene of a car bombing, made several runs to the field hospital under fire, and had a car bomb go off within 100 yards of his Stryker vehicle. He thanked the commander for the opportunity and asked if he could go back the next day. He is buried at Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, Washington.

Allen had been in the Army for 10 years, stationed in Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina. At the time of his death, he was on his second tour of duty in Iraq; in fact, he had put off the chance to go to school in order to deploy with his unit. During his first tour, he tended inmates at Abu Ghraib prison. He arrived at the prison just as the scandal broke. When the major who had been overseeing the prison hospital was relieved of her duties, Allen was temporarily put in charge of the wound care center. He reduced the infection rate to a level lower than that in many stateside



hospitals. However, he much preferred to be in the field with his “guys” and didn’t seek promotions because he wanted to be able to work directly with his Soldiers.

Charles was a 1996 graduate of Colony High School in Palmer, Alaska. His high school friends



and family remember him as a “rock” and a natural leader. When his grandfather was diagnosed with terminal cancer, Charles helped care for him and enabled him to die with dignity and in comfort. In Junior ROTC, Charles was one of three company commanders, and his enthusiasm predicted his future success as a Soldier. Retired Staff Sergeant David Gogert—a JROTC instructor and friend—said, “He was a very hard-charging young man, very dedi-

cated, very focused, and an outstanding individual.” Charles enjoyed playing video games and watching cartoons with his seven-year-old son, Orion. He also enjoyed outdoor activities, such as hunting and fishing. He especially enjoyed fishing with a bow and arrow. His wife Kerensa said, “We almost crashed a car one day, because he thought he saw a carp jump out of a lake.”

Allen lived by the saying, “Sacrifice the good of the few for the good of the many.” He was all about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and he had the career of his dreams—one filled with adventure, activity, and challenge. “He was an extraordinary Soldier, an extraordinary man,” Kerensa said. A fellow Soldier recalled how Allen befriended and mentored him: “He was the quiet leader who always seemed to do the right thing. We were deployed together from July 2004 to July 2005. During that time, he took me under his wing and taught me everything he knew.” First Sergeant Marlo Montes, his boss in the medical company of the 296th Brigade Support Battalion, said, “He had all the traits to lead his Soldiers to accomplish any mission.” Major Robert Bennett, the brigade’s rear detachment commander, said Allen was “a medic cut from the same cloth as the World War II-era medics remembered, honored, and loved by the Soldiers of that era.”

A memorial service in Wasilla, Alaska, drew about 100 people, including Governor Sarah Palin. Charles is survived by his wife Kerensa, son Orion, parents David and Kathy Allen, and stepfather Tony Shelton. He earned at least six medals, including the Army Achievement Medal and the Army Good Conduct Medal. He was promoted posthumously to Staff Sergeant.



JOHN E. ALLEN

Died: March 17, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

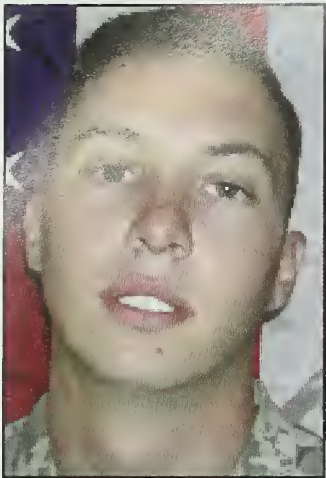
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1999-2003; 2005-2007

Sergeant John E. Allen was killed March 17, 2007, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Allen was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Allen joined the Navy straight out of high school in 1999 and served until 2003. In 2005, he enlisted in the Army, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, who had served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam and who is also buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Allen trained as a medic and loved it when his friends and fellow Soldiers called him "Doc."

A 1999 graduate of Palmdale High School, in Palmdale, California, John married his high school sweetheart, Aspen Shinkle, in 2006. He taught himself how to play the piano, and his artwork graces his parents' walls. John also loved to snowboard, scuba dive, and skydive. Family and friends describe John as a very outgoing person who enjoyed life and didn't want to waste a minute of it. He wasn't one to sit around



watching TV; he was out and about all the time.

John was famous for his goofball sense of humor. A friend, Jim Johnson, described him this way: "All you had to do was ask him once, and he would be up there singing karaoke." His twin sister, Amanda Braxton, said, "He always created these special, funny moments. John had a way of making good things happen even though it was done in the strangest possible way." His mother knew that when he shipped off to Iraq, John had chosen the right path and had become a man. John's family takes comfort in knowing that he was doing a job he believed in, alongside comrades he loved. Although they were married for only eight months and together only four months before he was deployed, his wife, Aspen, knows how precious that time was. She describes

John as her love and her hero. A friend, Carlton Hill, says that if he could tell him anything, it would be "Thank you, and I'm proud of you, and I am glad that I was able to call you best friend." Adam, John's brother and fellow Soldier, reminds us that he is "in our hearts daily" and wants everyone to know that he was a dedicated man who did what he knew was right. He gave his life defending his beliefs and the right of others to disagree with them.

John's family is humbled by the lives their son touched—since his death, there has been an amazing outpouring of love and support from around the world. Fellow Soldiers remember John as an honorable man and a Soldier who was respected for his ability to brighten anyone's day and who heroically made the ultimate sacrifice for the American and Iraqi people.

Posthumously, Allen was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He also earned a Navy Unit Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and a Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

John is survived by his wife, Aspen; his parents, Richard and Kellie; his twin sister, Amanda; and his brother, Adam.



BRIAN D. ALLGOOD

Died: January 20, 2007

Rank: Colonel

Unit: Multi-National Force-Iraq

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1986-2007

On January 20, 2007, Army Colonel Brian Duane Allgood, the Command Surgeon, Multi-National Force-Iraq, turned over a new American-built hospital to the people of Taji as part of an ongoing effort to rebuild the entire Iraqi health care system. On the return flight to Camp Victory in Baghdad, the Arkansas Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter carrying Allgood and 11 other Soldiers was hit by a surface-to-air missile near the insurgent stronghold of Baqubah and crashed in Diyala Province northeast of Baghdad. All 12 Soldiers on board perished. The most senior Army medical officer yet to die in Operation Iraq Freedom, Allgood had been in this demanding post since July 2006. His future in the Army Medical Department seemed to be exceptionally bright, and he had been selected to assume command of the 30th Medical Brigade in Germany in the summer of 2007.

Memorial services were held at the Camp Liberty Chapel in Baghdad; in Heidelberg, Germany; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Colorado Springs, Colorado, his hometown and the home of his parents. After memorial services in their hometowns, Brian and his Army colleagues who died in the crash were buried in a group interment at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, on October 12, 2007.



He is survived by his parents, Jerry and Cleo; his wife Sallye; and his son Wyatt.

The son of a career Army Medical Service Corps officer, Allgood was a 1982 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. He attended the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine in Oklahoma City, following in the footsteps of his paternal grandfather and uncle. Upon receiving his M.D. in 1986, he entered the Army Medical Corps. He served a one-year internship in general surgery at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas,



before completing the Ranger and Combat Casualty Care courses. From 1987 to 1990, he was the surgeon for the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, at Fort Benning, Georgia, and completed the Army Medical Department Officers Advanced, Army Flight Surgeon, and Jumpmaster courses. He jumped into Panama with his battalion in December 1989 in Operation Just Cause and was awarded the Combat Medical Badge.

Allgood completed a four-year residency in orthopedic surgery at Brooke and became the division orthopedic surgeon for the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1994. In 1996, he achieved board certification in orthopedics and moved to Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as chief of the orthopedic clinic while also serving as the orthopedic consultant to the Joint Special Operations Command. The following year, he took command of the 274th Forward Surgical Team (Airborne), 44th Medical Brigade that supported the 82nd Airborne Division and XVIII Airborne Corps. In 1999–2001, he commanded the 232nd Medical Battalion, Army Medical Department Center and School, at Fort Sam Houston and directed the Combat Medic Course, which trained medics for the Army and other services. His extensive field medical experience allowed him to play a key role in transforming that curriculum and program to produce more skilled and capable military medics. After completing the U.S. Army War College in 2002, he returned to the U.S. Military Academy as its surgeon and commander of the Keller Army Community Hospital in West Point, New York. His next assignment, in 2004, took him to the Republic of Korea, where he commanded the 18th Medical Command and 121st Combat Support Hospital at Yongsan Garrison in Seoul. There he spearheaded the challenging transformation of medical support for U.S. forces on the peninsula. In July 2006, he became command surgeon, Multi-National Force-Iraq, in Baghdad. He was responsible for medical care for all coalition Soldiers in Iraq, as well as for helping the Iraqis reform and rebuild their military and civilian health care systems.

Born in Regensburg, Germany, on October 19, 1961, Brian was an Army brat who came by his love of the military and medicine natural-

ly. He was from a family of Oklahoma physicians, and his father Gerald "Jerry" Allgood was a career officer in the Army Medical Service Corps and a hospital administrator. When Brian attended Air Force Academy High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, he was already focused on a career in the military and medicine. He entered the U.S. Military Academy in July 1978, and graduated in 1982. There he met his future wife, Sallye Jane Meek, also of that class, who went on to serve in the Medical Service Corps and reached the rank of colonel before retiring. Brian and Sallye's son, Wyatt, was born in 1995.

Brian's strong belief in the importance of religion and family made him a quiet yet firm and confident leader whose personal philosophy of life was simple: "Stay focused on, and never forget, what is important to you...Religious beliefs, family, others...and act accordingly."

Perhaps the best perspectives on Brian's life, personality, and leadership traits come from those who knew and worked with him most closely. His mother, Cleo Allgood, said that "Brian was a wonderful human being. He was a wonderful brother, son, husband, and father. He was just a giving person who served his country." His father, Jerry, who was an Army hospital administrator and had the unique opportunity to observe his son in the operating room and caring for his patients, commented that Brian "reminds me of my daddy, the doctor, of how he treats people: with empathy. He had a way of making the patient feel that he was doing the best for them." Brian's uncle, Richard Allgood, a thoracic surgeon, said, that Brian "was committed to doing what he was doing. He very much knew the risk involved... He was absolutely doing what he always wanted to do, combining a military and medical career." Colonel Jonathan Fruendt, another Army Medical Corps officer who worked for Brian in the command surgeon's office at Multi-National Force-Iraq headquarters, said, "It was evident to me from the moment I met him that he was an incredibly capable and remarkably dedicated military officer and medical professional." Fruendt said that Brian "provided rock-solid leadership with an aura of calm orderliness in an environment that was anything but calm or orderly." Dr. S. Ward Casscells, now the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, was an Army Reserve colonel on

duty in the command surgeon's office working on building the Iraqi health care systems when Brian arrived as the new command surgeon in July 2006. "Into this maze came Allgood," Casscells wrote, "he had the effortless grace of officers whose mental and physical fitness set them apart. He was direct, and did not kiss up or kick down, swear, yell or threaten. He said little, promised less, learned fast, and acted faster." Of Brian's leadership style, Casscells said, "His command presence led even older officers to treat him with deference, but when I kidded him about it, he said only that the thing he liked least about the Army was returning all the salutes. Other than that, I never once heard him complain... He did not micromanage but he set high standards. When they were not met he said so, but only to the soldier involved." Another Medical Corps friend, Colonel Terry Walters, commander of Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg, summed up Brian's sadly shortened career when she lamented that "This is a tremendous loss to the Army. ... He died as he lived, a consum-



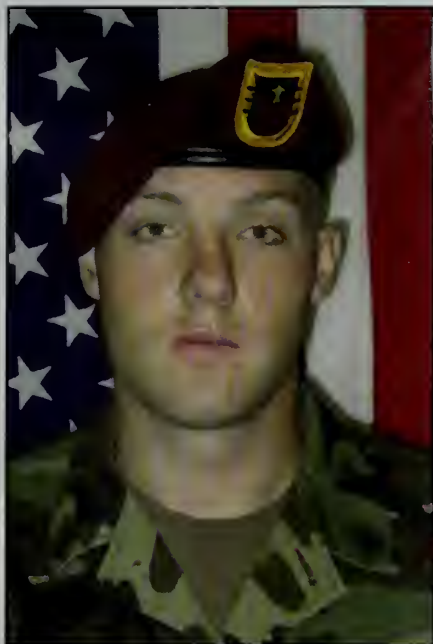


mate professional, courageous, engaged in delivering health care to his fellow human beings...This is truly a loss for America."

Allgood received a number of awards and decorations during his distinguished career: the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Joint Service Commendation Medal (Joint Special Operations Command), the Army Achievement Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Humanitarian Service Medal (Hurricane Fran), the Army Superior Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal (with Bronze Star), the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with Arrowhead (Operation Just Cause), the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Combat Medical Badge (Operation Just Cause), the Combat Action Badge, the Army Flight Surgeon Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Senior Parachutist Combat Badge with Bronze Service Star (Operation Just Cause), the Expert Field Medical Badge, and the Ranger Tab. In addition, he received the Order of Military Medical Merit from the U.S. Army Medical Department Regiment.



Nothing can replace the son, brother, father, husband, and healing physician who was lost on January 20, 2006, but Brian's life, career, and achievements have received fitting recognition. The Society of Military Orthopedic Surgeons established the annual Colonel Brian Allgood Military Orthopedic Leadership Memorial Award. The awardees' names will be inscribed on a permanent plaque at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland, which trains many of today's military surgeons. On June 30, 2008, the Army Surgeon General, Lieutenant General Eric B. Schoomaker, dedicated the 121st Combat Support Hospital building at Yongsan Garrison, Seoul, which Brian had commanded in 2004-06, as the Colonel Brian D. Allgood Army Community Hospital. In concluding his remarks, Schoomaker said, "We are all filled with memories of a true friend, colleague, and an American hero who made the ultimate sacrifice."



RYAN J. BAUM

Died: May 18, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 509th, Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Ryan J. Baum died May 18, 2007, in Karmah, Iraq, of wounds received from contact with enemy forces using small arms fire. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, out of Fort Richardson, Alaska in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Baum was scheduled to go home the day after he died. Hundreds attended the fallen Soldier's funeral held at Southeast Christian Church in Parker, Colorado.

Baum attended basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, took combat medic training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and went on to graduate from Ranger school with high marks. After that, he was accepted into the Army's elite medical training facility, the Special Operations Combat Medic School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. His first assignment out of that school was Fort Richardson, Alaska. In 2006, he was selected to be senior instructor of the Alaska branch of pre-Ranger school.

Ryan was a 1997 graduate of Smokey Hill High School in Aurora, Colorado. In addition to his service as a Soldier, Ryan counted football, baseball, camping, and family gatherings among his passions. When he died, Ryan was only 27 years old. His daughter, Leia Ryan Baum, was born just 11 days after his death. He was supposed to be home



for her birth, but volunteered for one last mission before going home. His family was overwhelmed with emotions by the loss of one precious life and the start of another one. A picture of the newborn baby that Ryan never got to meet will be forever tucked inside the chest of his uniform jacket.



Amber Baum, Ryan's wife, remembers fondly how ecstatic he was to learn he was to be a father. He loved children so much that he couldn't wait to have one of his own. She knows that Ryan would have been a fine father and believes that his spirit lives on in his

daughter. Amber is also comforted to know that he saved lives doing the work he so enjoyed and that he relished the challenge. Amber herself trained as an Army medic, so she understood the demands he faced. Ryan's family noted that he never wanted to be remembered as a hero—rather, he was simply doing his job, as important as that was. "He was simply determined to help by working as a medic. The family is remembering who he was as a person," said

his mother, Dana Baum. Shortly after Ryan's death, Laredo Middle School in Aurora, Colorado, held a basketball game, dedicated to Ryan Baum, to support the troops called "Hoops for the Troops." Ryan's mother was overwhelmed by the love and support the school has shown her since her son's death. It proves to her how much her son has touched those around him, and the students now have a greater respect for those serving in the military. Ryan's fellow Soldiers called him "Doc Baum," and described him as the finest type of Soldier: talented, dedicated, and proud. He was that rare breed who placed duty and sacrifice above his own needs and wants. Sergeant Josh Salley, who studied medicine with Ryan at Fort Benning, Georgia, remembers him as a true man; he would be hard pressed to find an individual who cared so much for his fellow Rangers and his country. "Ryan and I shared many conversations about going to war, and I believe in my heart that if he had to pass away, he would be honored to do it for the country that he loves so much, the United States of America."

Sergeant Ryan Baum received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart posthumously. Colorado Governor Bill Ritter attended Ryan's funeral, along with several hundred people gathered at Southeast Christian Church in Aurora.

In addition to his wife, Amber, and daughter Leia, Ryan is survived by his parents, Richard and Dana; his brother, Jason; and his sister, Mande.



CHRISTOPHER K. BOONE

Died: February 17, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: H Company, 121st Infantry (Airborne) Long Range Surveillance, Georgia Army National Guard

Branch: U.S. Army

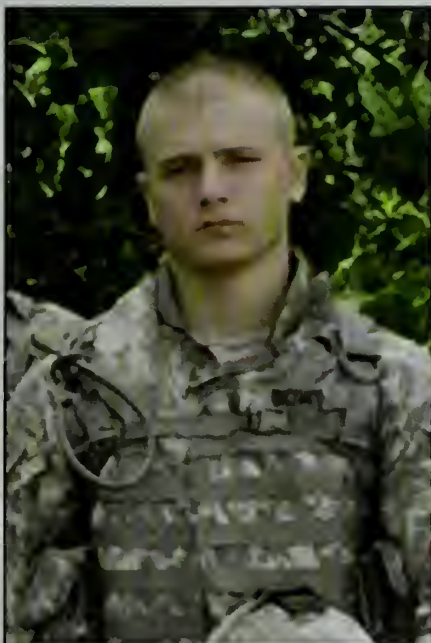
Specialist Christopher K. Boone died as the result of a non-combat-related incident in Balad, Iraq, on February 17, 2007. The 34-year-old medic served with the Georgia Army National Guard's H Company, 121st Infantry (Airborne) Long Range Surveillance unit out of Fort Gillem, Georgia. His company was protecting the border between Iraq and Syria. He was laid to rest at Houston National Cemetery in Houston, Texas.

Chris was born on December 9, 1972. Having a desire to help others, he joined the Army National Guard, choosing the noble field of combat medicine. One of the most highly respected members of any combat team is the medic, and Boone earned the respect of his fellow Soldiers. Fellow comrade William Campbell went through advanced individual training with Boone. He wrote on a memorial website, "Man, you were a great friend and I was deeply saddened to learn that you had passed. May God bless your soul." Another fellow Soldier, Specialist Will Collins, who served with him in the 121st Infantry, wrote, "Love you, Boone. You were a great medic. You will be missed, my friend."

Friends and fellow Soldiers gathered at Forward Operating Base Sykes on March 2, 2007, to honor their fallen brother-in-arms. They carried in their hands a memorial

program for a medic everyone knew as “Doc.” He was remembered as a great “Doc” who loved helping people. Colonel Keith Geiger, commander of the military intelligence brigade to which Company H is attached, spoke at the memorial. He echoed what surely would have been Boone’s sentiments and urged Soldiers to seek help if Boone’s death was affecting their well-being. He said, “We want to make sure that the rest of you get back home.”

Specialist Christopher K. Boone chose a path in his life that few people are brave enough or strong enough to choose. It is said that medics are the heroes of the heroes. Chris Boone chose a hero’s path, and his country will remember him and honor him for his courageous sacrifice. Retired U.S. Navy member Henryk Zaleski honored Specialist Boone with these words: “When you gave your all, you had to give the most precious of your possessions, your life; only heroes can do that. Rest in peace.”



MATTHEW C. BOWE

Died: February 19, 2007

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division

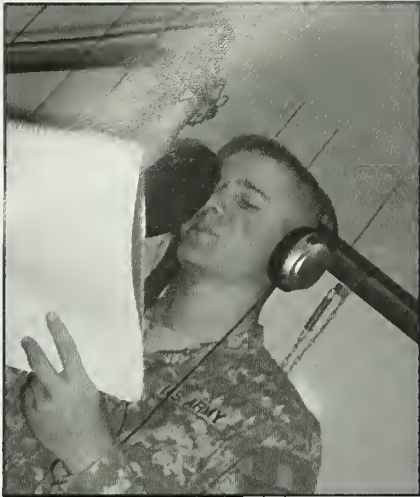
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Private First Class Matthew C. Bowe, a combat medic, was killed on February 19, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq, when the vehicle in which he was riding was struck by an improvised explosive device (IED). He was serving with the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, New York, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried at Coraopolis Cemetery in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. More than 250 people from his small hometown of Moon, Pennsylvania, attended his funeral.

This was not Bowe's first exposure to a roadside bomb. On September 26, 2006, an IED exploded near another vehicle, severely injuring Private First Class Thomas Hewett. Bowe immediately rushed to begin treatment and shielded him when a second explosion occurred. Private Hewett died on October 13 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, but Bowe's courageous actions allowed Hewett's parents to see their son one last time.

The 19-year-old Bowe wanted to become a doctor so he could serve others, and he saw the military as a way of getting an education. He enlisted in the Army in 2005 and completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He then moved on



to advanced individual training as a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

In addition to being a dedicated medic, Matthew was a talented musician and songwriter who also enjoyed hunting and fishing. At home, he helped care for his brothers and sisters, helping them with their homework. He also helped his mother Lori take care of the children in the day care center she ran. She said he was interested in

becoming a pediatrician and even took child development classes in high school.

Mark Capuano first got to know Matthew when he signed up to play on Mark's varsity football team. He said Matthew always put others before himself. "He never complained about playing time or not starting when he was a senior. He was a team player. Sometimes he had to miss practice because he had to take care of his family." Matthew was likened to a guardian angel for the way he took care of others.

Friends and fellow Soldiers miss his laugh, his music, and his great friendship. They search for answers to why he died but know that he

lives on in their hearts. Memories of him bring comfort, knowing that he watches over them, laughs along with them in their happy times, and comforts them in their grief. Matthew was their friend, brother, healer, and hero.

Fellow Soldiers remembered the young medic as a hardworking integral part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 89th Cavalry Regiment. Sergeant Nicholas Patla said that he represented the best of them. No matter what kind of problems they were dealing with, Bowe always kept a positive outlook. His comrades will continue his legacy of compassion and humor, trying to inspire others to live life to the fullest and follow their destiny. To them and so many others, Bowe is a true American hero.

At the funeral service, Brigadier General Anthony Tata noted that Matthew is a biblical name that means "selfless servant." General Tata said, "Matthew Bowe was a selfless servant to our nation."

Bowe's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and Combat Medical Badge.

Matthew is survived by his parents, John and Lori; siblings Melinda, Amanda, John Jr., Megan and Tiffany; and grandfather, Donald Eichenberger.



JOSHUA M. BOYD

Died: March 14, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: C Company, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1997-2001, 2002-2007

On March 14, 2007, Sergeant Joshua M. Boyd succumbed to wounds he received on March 5 when an improvised explosive device exploded near his vehicle in Samarra, Iraq. He was serving with C Company, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Boyd died at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He was laid to rest in the Elliott-Hamil Garden of Memories in Abilene, Texas.

Boyd first joined the Army in 1997 as an infantryman and was honorably discharged after completing his first full term of service. Prompted by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, he rejoined the Army in the spring of 2002. He decided to become a combat medic in 2005 and went through medical training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. After completing the airborne course at Fort Benning, Georgia, Boyd reported to the 82nd Airborne as an ambulance driver in March 2006. He became a trauma specialist six months later and deployed to Iraq, where he served with the Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) team, providing both routine and emergency care for Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

As a combat medic, Josh lived by a simple creed: to help those who could not help themselves. He was remembered by friends as an active, intelligent man who loved



to heal others. He had studied massage therapy and gave great bear hugs. Kelly Mavis, his best friend, said he was an intelligent, active man who loved to heal his friends. "He affected a lot of people in a very profound way," Kelly said. "Those of us who were close to him and knew him, we'll never be the same. And in a good way."

Josh is remembered as funny, sincere, loyal, and one of the nicest people to grace this world. Many friends and fellow Soldiers are grateful to Josh's parents for sharing their son with them. He is the man against whom they measure all others. His mother, Tonya, says Josh "was a good son, brother, and friend. His father and I were honored to be his parents. We were truly blessed to have been able to share 30 years." Their time together may have been short, but the love he shared and his impact on others were great.

Boyd earned the trust and respect of his fellow Soldiers, who considered him a hero and were honored to have served with him. He was considered an "awesome guy" and a model Soldier. They knew him as a friend and as a man who returned to the Army to serve his country and to make a better life for himself. He always put the needs of others before his own, and his comrades felt a tremendous loss when he died. Specialist Lee Wolf said, "Doc Boyd never complained, and his good spirits always motivated the rest of us when we were down. His maturity and life experiences were a huge asset to all the guys in C Company."

Posthumously, Boyd was promoted to the rank of sergeant. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Medical Badge, and the Parachutist Badge.

Josh is survived by his parents, Robin and Tonya Boyd.



JONATHAN D. CADAVERO

Died: February 27, 2007

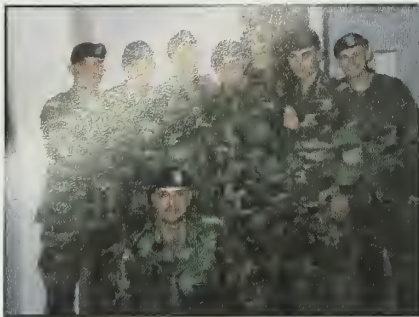
Rank: Specialist

Unit: 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Jonathan D. Cadavero was killed on February 27, 2007, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq. He died while on an IED-hunting mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 24-year old combat medic served with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, New York. He was buried at the Orange County Veterans' Cemetery in Goshen, New Jersey.

Jon, as he was known by friends and family, graduated cum laude from Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland, in 2004, with a bachelor's degree in counseling psychology. He made the dean's list every year and played on the basketball team, despite being only 5' 7" tall. He belonged to both an academic and a psychology honor society. He intended to attend graduate school after finishing his Army service. From the time he was a little boy, Jon was determined to join the Army. He told his sister, "Kris, I want to fight so that your kids don't have to." He was willing to make a sacrifice in the hope that America's children, and their children's children, would never have to. Jon had married a fellow Soldier from his unit, military policewoman Michelle Heiter, the previous Thanksgiving. He adored his beautiful wife and they planned to have a big church wedding upon returning from Iraq.



Family and friends remembered the young medic as a protector and leader who was full of compassion. He stood up to bullies and befriended those less fortunate. Jon's father, David, is humbled and honored by the impact his son had on friends and Soldiers alike. He reads with great pride the comments left online speaking of Jon's compassion and humor; how he never missed a mission; how he was always there when anyone needed his help; and how he selflessly put aside his own needs for those of others. He is remembered as caring and warm and very funny.

He could make anyone laugh. He was everyone's friend, and he gave people a sense of belonging. In his Bible, he underlined a passage that exemplified his sense of purpose: "Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it."

Cadavero was a medic with a platoon tasked with hunting IEDs and disposing of them before they could explode—one of the most vital and dangerous assignments in Iraq. In a six-month period, Cadavero's platoon found and disposed of 172 IEDs, 62 of which had the

potential to explode. Even given the choice of staying on base to work in the medical clinic, Cadavero insisted on being on the front lines. Cadavero believed deeply in the U.S. mission in Iraq and all that America stood for. He would regularly send veterans cards on Veteran's Day thanking them for their service to this country. He served his country as he lived his life—with commitment, integrity, and honor. Sergeant Randy Acord served with Cadavero in Advanced Individual Training and in Iraq, and was there on the day he died. "He was a true friend, a great American, and the best Soldier I ever met. You are my hero, Jon." Major James Mott of the U.S. Air Force spoke with Cadavero's father. He explained that "Truly, there is no greater calling—no greater gift of oneself—than to minister to a brother or sister during the most vulnerable time of any firefight—when comrades have suffered injury and require immediate medical attention. Often provided under hostile fire, while fully exposed to continued harm, these brave men and women nevertheless choose to place themselves at great risk—such is the bravery and courage of every Army medic or Navy corpsman. There can be no greater example of love in action."

Specialist Cadavero's awards and decorations include the Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and Combat Medical Badge.

Jon is survived by his wife Michelle, his parents Nadia and David, and his sister Kristia Cavere.



MARK R. CANNON

Died: October 2, 2007

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2003-2007

Petty Officer Third Class Mark R. Cannon was killed in action by a gunshot wound while on patrol in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, on October 2, 2007. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Cannon was buried at Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church in Lubbock, Texas.

Cannon had trained as a nurse at South Plains College in Texas. The September 11 attacks affected him so deeply that he decided to leave his career as a nurse's aide at Covenant Medical Center in Lubbock, Texas, and enlist with the Navy in 2003. Cannon had served a tour in Iraq in 2006 and had volunteered to go to Afghanistan with the 3rd Marines. He knew his place was with his unit, helping to defend and care for others. Cannon once told his father that we "take the war to them or they will be here again." In addition to caring for the Marines whom he called "his guys," he cared for Afghan children who were wounded by shrapnel and mortar attacks launched by the insurgents.

A 1994 graduate of Coronado High School, Lubbock, Texas, Mark had been unable to play sports because of a weak knee. Nevertheless, Mark would later fill out to 6' 5" and 250 pounds of strength and determination—a gentle giant with the nickname "Ox."



"He had a real tender, soft side to him which went well with his interest in the medical field. He had that manner that could make people feel good," his father said.



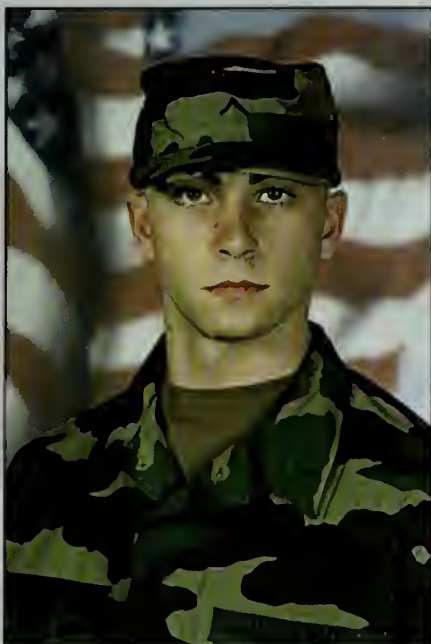
Sometimes, the loss of a loved one comes not from war. Mark's mother, Becky, died of a heart attack in 2006. Six days later, Mark had to leave his hometown to serve in Iraq. Mark's parents instilled in him a sense of community and public service. Tom Cannon, Mark's father, was a criminal defense attorney and later a Lubbock County court-at-law judge.

Becky Cannon was the founding director of Lubbock Rape Crisis Center. Helping others through painful and difficult times was a part of who Mark was. His dad says the thing he will miss most is his only son's laugh and love for life. Family friend Kelly Whitman watched Mark grow from a tall, skinny boy who couldn't play high school sports to a proud warrior. "I would tell him all the time, 'It's an honor to know you,'" she said. "He grew

up to be very serious about his job. He cared so very much about his guys. He was their leader....His guys in Afghanistan—I feel worse for them than I do for us because they lost their doc," Kelly said. Mark's unit had a brotherly camaraderie and they all protected their "Doc" because he was so important to their unit. They weren't the ones with the ability to care for the wounded. That's what Mark did. And not just for American soldiers, but for Iraqi soldiers, Iraqi police, and innocent children. Service, valor, and commitment are traits that he exemplified as a Hospital Corpsman. Mark's dedication to helping others and being there when needed will always be remembered by those with whom he served.

Petty Officer Third Class Mark Cannon's awards include the Purple Heart, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Expert Pistol Shot Ribbon, and the Hawaii Medal of Honor.

Mark is survived by his father, Tom Cannon. With the loss of his son, Tom has gained a global family that sends their love and support from around the world. They hope he finds comfort in knowing that he is not alone in his grief and that others stand tall with pride for Mark's courage and ultimate sacrifice he made in the name of family, friends, and country.



JOSEPH H. CANTRELL IV

Died: April 4, 2007

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Corporal Joseph H. Cantrell IV paid the ultimate sacrifice when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Taji, Iraq, on April 4, 2007. The 23-year-old served with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried near his hometown of Westwood, Kentucky.

Joey, as he was called by family and friends, graduated from Fairview High School, Westwood, Kentucky, in 2002. Joey's high school teachers remembered him as an outstanding student and natural leader. He encouraged students to reach ever-higher levels of achievement and conduct. He also played football in high school. "The last time he was home he came by and said, 'Coach, don't worry about me,'" Joey's coach, Bill Musick, said. "He loved the military. He lived it and breathed it." Family members noted that Joey intended to enroll in college after serving in the Army. A dedicated healer, the young combat medic had aspirations of becoming a physician someday. Joey last saw his family in February, when he made a surprise visit around Valentine's Day, his mother said. He gave her a medallion in the shape of a dog tag that had a picture of himself, his mother, and his brother etched into the metal. The medallion bore an inscription: "Close at Heart." Joey's conduct and compassion have always



filled his mother's heart with pride. While visiting a friend, Jack Preston, Joey told of the wonderful and interesting adventures he was experiencing in the military. It was obvious that he had found his purpose and it inspired him to be a better medic. Whenever Jack needs inspiration to complete a project or just to reflect on the life of a true American hero, he looks at a picture of Joey. "He inspires me and I am so proud to have known him." Family members were amazed by how many people were deeply affected by Joey's death.

Fellow Soldiers are still emotional over the loss of their friend and comrade. They vow remembrance in their hearts as they pass Cantrell's memorial in their division. Sergeant Jason Worsdale is a medic in 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and thanks Cantrell's family for their support, dedication, and sacrifice for this country. He says Cantrell "died a hero, and his loss will be forever with me and the other troopers who had the privilege to serve with him." Another Soldier met Cantrell at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and says that he was one of the best all-around Soldiers there was, Army-wide. He had a natural ability to lead and was highly intelligent. Cantrell was a great person to be around; funny, smart, with a great personality and strong charisma. Everyone liked him and he will be missed by many.

Joey is survived by his father, Joseph Herman Cantrell III; his mother, Sondra Mullins Adkins, and stepfather, Brian Adkins; his brother, Chase; as well as many aunts, uncles, and cousins. Part of Main Street in Westwood, Kentucky, has been dedicated to his memory.



MATTHEW G. CONTE

Died: February 1, 2007

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Hospital Corpsman Matthew G. Conte was killed February 1, 2007, when an improvised explosive device exploded near his vehicle during combat operations in Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Funeral services were held on Saturday, February 24, 2007, at Grace Church of Rootstown, Ohio. He was cremated.

Inspired by patriotism, Conte joined the Navy in February 2004. He initially wanted to be a mason, but a long waiting list led him to become a medic, a path more suited to his compassionate and supportive side. He had served in Afghanistan, and a friend recalled it had a strong effect on him. After the military, he had planned to attend a radiology program and work at a hospital.

Matt graduated from Field High School in Mogadore, Ohio, in 2003. He liked to hunt and also enjoyed fishing in a pond near the family hunting camp. His childhood friend, Naser Rizek, who looked upon Matt as a brother, fondly recalls how "if you were down, he would put you up; if you needed help, he would be there." Matt's altruistic nature was evident years before he ever joined the Navy. Matt was an exceptional young man



who accepted people for who they were and always helped others to accept themselves for who they were. For all his simple kindnesses, his friends and family will forever remember him and be grateful for his love, encouragement, and kindness.



Those who knew him warmly remember Matt's huge smile and zest for life. Matt's mother, Lureen, remembers the last time she briefly spoke with her son. "He said, 'I don't have much time, but I love you; send us some cookies and chips,'" she said. "Then he talked to his dad and said 'I love you.'" Matt was innovative during his service as a hospital corpsman in Iraq, his mother recalled. He constantly asked her to send him useful supplies, including feminine hygiene products, which he used for dressing bullet wounds. "It was stuff like that that saved lives," she said. "He wanted stuff to take care of his guys. He was their 'doc.' He tried to keep them cheered up and go-

ing; that was my Matt." He even went as far as asking his parents to send letters to other military service members who weren't receiving mail. Despite any fears or concerns for his own personal safety, Matt knew his job was to support his platoon and bring them all home. A comrade remarked, "Even with your death, you helped us save two Marines' lives with the knowledge you passed on to us." Senior Chief Joseph Burds had the opportunity to help mold this exceptional young man into one of the Marine's and Navy's finest. Burds recalls how "he came to Hawaii ready to be a Fleet Marine Force Corpsman; as I recall, one of the younger in the bunch that arrived. He said he wanted to be with a line company, and I told him he would have to show me he could hang in physical training and the hikes. He promised he would; a little slow to start but he never quit. Matt was an exceptional young man and he was there for his men. His Marines were the most important part of his job. His efforts paid dividends that only his guys can speak to. I, however, will tell you he always put his Marines first. I want you to know it was a pleasure to serve with such a great young man."

Matt leaves behind a loving family, which includes his parents, Gale and Lureen Conte; a sister, Lora Conte, and her son, Ethan; brother and sister-in-law, Michael and Shana, and their children, Tristan, Cassandra, and Christopher.



ERIC D. COTTRELL

Died: August 13, 2007

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Staff Sergeant Eric D. Cottrell was killed on August 13, 2007, when an improvised explosive device struck his vehicle in Qayyarah, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 39-year-old served with the 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas. Cottrell was buried with full military honors at Fort Mitchell National Cemetery, Fort Mitchell, Alabama.

Cottrell joined the Army in 2004. A fellow Soldier and medic served with Cottrell in 2005, when he was a Soldier with the Alabama National Guard. Christian Ramirez and Cottrell were working together with the Iraqi Special Forces, training and providing support for combat operations and convoys. They worked side by side for approximately five months and became fast friends. Ramirez called Cottrell an honorable Soldier with a desire to do what he thought was right. He was a man of courage and commitment and you could trust him when things got bad.

Eric's brother, Norris Waters, feels the loss of his brother deeply. Many people have offered their thoughts and prayers to his family, who are comforted by all the support they have received from friends, family, and strangers around the world. They are proud to know how deeply Eric touched the lives of others and that he was able to live the life he loved.



What made Cottrell special to his comrades was that he was a great friend, fearless and determined. It made them smile to see him coming or turn around and see him standing there with a grin on his face. For those who served with Cottrell, their hearts are darkened by his loss, but their memories of him and the time they spent together will always put a smile back on their faces. Cottrell will be missed but never forgotten. His legacy lives on in the memories of his brothers-in-arms and all those who knew him.

In remarks read on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, California Representative Ken Calvert marveled at Cottrell's devotion to his fellow Soldiers. He had clearly earned their respect because they called him "Doc." Cottrell was right there on the front lines, ready to help his brothers-in-arms who had been hurt.

His awards and decorations include the Purple Heart, National Defense Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Good Conduct Medal, and Meritorious Unit Commendation. Posthumously, he was awarded the Bronze Star and a second Purple Heart.

Eric is survived by his wife, Sherri Cottrell; two daughters, Megan and Brandy; two sons, James Christensen and Eric Cottrell; his parents, Alan Waters and Mannie Cottrell; and two brothers, Norris Alan Waters and Christopher Waters.



CARLETTA S. DAVIS

Died: November 5, 2007

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1991-2007

Staff Sergeant Carletta S. Davis was killed on November 5, 2007, in Tal Al-Dahab, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near her Humvee during combat operations. The 34-year-old medic served with the 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), out of Fort Drum, New York, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was buried at a small family service at the Northern Lights Memorial Cemetery in Fairbanks, Alaska. She had received full military honors at several previous memorial services.

Davis joined the Army in 1991, and completed basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. She hoped to become a physician's assistant when her military career ended. Davis's first assignment was with Company B, 61st Area Support Medical Battalion at Fort Hood, Texas. In March 1999, she was reassigned to 54th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), Fort Lewis, Washington, where she served as a flight medic. She was assigned to 702nd Main Support Battalion at Camp Casey, South Korea, in January 2002, until she returned to the 54th Medical Company in February 2003. In April 2007, she arrived at Fort Drum and was assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT). Davis's deployment to Iraq with 1st BCT was her third. She had served in Iraq from April 2003 to March 2004 and again from



December 2004 to November 2005. She had also deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina from October 1996 to April 1997.

Davis was an accomplished medic, and always looked out for those under her protection. She was selected as lead medic in the brigade commander's

personal security detachment—an elite position that often took her away from her fortified base near Kirkuk. She received two awards for heroism: the first for rescuing two Soldiers who had fallen down a cliff near Fort Lewis, Washington, and the second for rescuing a wounded Iraqi police officer.



Carletta graduated from East High School in Anchorage, Alaska, where teachers remember her as a model student. She enjoyed volunteering at the computer lab at Mountain View Elementary School in Anchorage, as well as exercising and dancing. Her family believes that Carletta knew the dangers of returning to Iraq a third time. On her last return home, she made sure to spend more time with her husband and children as well as connecting with people she hadn't seen in awhile. When asked what her sons would say to their mother now, Treyton said, "I love you, Mom." Tyrique said, "I'll miss you." Theodore added, "You're the best mom in the world."

Fellow Soldiers remembered her as a consummate professional who excelled in every task and greatly appreciated the ability to treat and heal others. During a visit home between deployments to Iraq, she confided to her mother that "you just have to try to rescue whoever you can in the equipment you're in." She found joy in helping injured and wounded troops. She found her path in life and relished

being able to live her dream, even if it put her in harm's way.

Larry Dees, Staff Sergeant (Retired) from the 54th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), said of Davis, "You gave so many mothers, fathers, and families back their loved ones by doing your job. You will be missed by your family and by the Soldiers still in the battle, waiting on the bird with the red and white cross coming to get them, knowing that someone like you will be willing to give their life for them. There is life after death, and as long as you have people who still call out your name and love you in their hearts, you will live forever."

Adding to the tragedy of Carletta's death is the fact that her husband and sons did not have a chance to give her a hug and kiss before she deployed. They drove from Seattle to Fort Drum to say goodbye to her but missed her by less than a day.

During her distinguished Army career, Davis received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Combat Medical Badge, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon.

The Air Force combat clinic at Forward Operating Base Warrior in Kirkuk, Iraq, was dedicated to her memory. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph R. Novack, Jr., Brigade Support Battalion commander, said, "The dedication and naming of the Davis Combat Clinic is a small tribute to the sacrifice Staff Sergeant Davis gave in the defense and service to the nation, the Army, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, and the 10th Brigade Support Battalion's mission in Iraq." He said future patients would be greeted by the smiling image of Davis that adorns the entrance to the clinic and should be comforted to know they will be in good hands. "She would have it no other way."

Carletta is survived by her mother, Lavada Napier; husband, Thomas; and three sons, Treyton, Theodore, and Tyrique.



SCOTT E. DUFFMAN

Date of death: February 17, 2007

Rank: Technical Sergeant

Unit: 24th Special Tactics Squadron

Branch: U.S. Air Force

Years in Service: 1992-2007

Air Force Technical Sergeant Scott E. Duffman was killed on February 17, 2007, in a helicopter crash in eastern Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. The Chinook helicopter carrying Duffman and 21 other military personnel was en route from Kandahar to Bagram when it crashed in the Zabul Province in Afghanistan, killing 8 and injuring 14. Technical Sergeant Duffman was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. Mourners gathered to pay their respects to the fallen hero, upon whose casket lay a single blood-red rose amid a spray of white roses, a patch of a smiling Grim Reaper, and a Maroon Beret, inside which comrades placed medallions inscribed with the motto "That others may live." A Combat Talon aircraft flew overhead in a mark of respect for the late Airman.

Technical Sergeant Duffman was following in the footsteps of his retired Air Force medic mother, Rose, when he joined the Air Force in October 1992. He completed a series of intensive training schools before he finally earned the distinction of becoming an Air Force pararescueman and wearing the coveted Maroon Beret. He served as a pararescueman in the 56th Rescue Squad in Keflavic, Iceland, and in the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron. He joined the 24th Special Tactics Squadron stationed at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, in April 2001. The 24th Special Tactics Squadron falls under



the 720th Special Tactics Group, a unit in the Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field, Florida. According to Duffman's mother, the decorated Technical Sergeant had had a number of deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan in the years since September 11, 2001, but was on his first deployment to Afghanistan since his daughter's birth. He had been in Afghanistan only five days at the time of the fatal helicopter crash.

Scott Duffman was born in New Mexico and spent most of his

childhood in Albuquerque, where he was known for his adventurous and daring spirit. He loved adventure sports such as skiing, scuba diving, mountain climbing, and sky diving. He was a prankster who loved bets and dares and wanted to get the most out of his life and live it to the fullest. Scott graduated from La Cueva High School, in Albuquerque, in 1992, where he was a member of the wrestling team. He joined the Air Force in October of the same year. According to Ryan Stanhope, Scott's comrade, best friend, and best man at his wedding, "Duffman knew he wanted to be a pararescuer

since he was small," so joining the Air Force was a step toward fulfilling a lifelong dream.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Armfield, Commander of the 24th Special Tactics Squadron, described Duffman as "an exceptional pararescuer, friend, husband, and father" who "loved his profession and loved his family." He went on to say that "losing him is a tragedy, but we are all consoled by the fact that he died strong, doing what he loved: going into harm's way so others may live." Ryan Stanhope said that "Scott was just one of those people you just wanted to be around. He exuded life. He loved excitement. He loved what he did." In an Air Force recruitment video, Scott Duffman professed his love for his profession in his own words, stating, "I love saving lives and this is the most exciting way I can think to do it."

Scott's friends and family members remember him as a man who loved not only his job, but also his family. He was a devoted new dad who loved fatherhood. He greatly enjoyed the opportunity to "wear" his newborn daughter in a baby carrier at home and at work. Scott's mother, Rose, describes her fallen hero by saying, "He was a warrior and he loved what he did and why he did it. There's a sense of loyalty, duty, and honor to his country that was very much him. He couldn't think of anything else he'd rather be doing. He's a man that had convictions."

Duffman was a decorated Airman. Though his military career was cut short, he earned the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, and numerous awards of the Air Force Commendation Medals and Air Force Achievement Medals.

Scott leaves behind his wife, Mary Webb Duffman, his newborn daughter, Sophia, and his mother, Rose Duffman.



NICHOLAS D. EISCHEN

Died: December 25, 2007

Rank: Senior Airman

Unit: 60th Medical Operations Squadron

Branch: U.S. Air Force

Years in Service: 2003-2007

Senior Airman Nicholas D. Eischen of the United States Air Force died in his sleep on December 25, 2007, at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. The 24-year-old medic was assigned to the 60th Medical Operations Squadron based at Travis Air Force Base, California, and was bravely serving his country in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan at the time of his death. About 500 family, friends, and members of the community gathered on January 4, 2008, at the New Hope Community Church in Clovis, California, to say farewell before his burial with military honors in the Clovis Cemetery.

Eischen joined the Air Force on July 22, 2003, and trained as a medical technician. While he enjoyed his medical duties, he was initially hesitant about working with patients. In a letter to his grandfather, Nick wrote, "A lot of people hate blood and everything. But I work through that. I don't think about that. If I get squeamish, I fail them." In September 2007, he was deployed to the 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

Nick was born in Fresno, California, on July 6, 1983, and grew up in Clovis. He graduated from Buchanan High School in 2001, where he played varsity football and baseball. Known for his easy smile and gentle humor, he spent his leisure hours playing golf, fish-



ing, and enjoying music. Nick loved to make people laugh. Nick was remembered as a gentle giant, “strong and big, but wouldn’t hurt a fly.” His grandfather, Cliff Eischen, recalled that his grandson was “much loved, much respected.” Tim Rolen, the pastor of New Hope Community Church, had known Nick since he was about 12. He described him as well-mannered, with a mischievous side. Rolen said, “You knew he was kind of up to something by the smirk on his face.”

Comrade Richard Norton wrote about Nick in an online guestbook. He said, “I had the extreme privilege of knowing and working with Nick in the Bagram ER. He was one of the best medics that I have ever met. Truly a great man.”

Nick was preceded in death by his brother David. Sadly, tragedy struck the family again just three months after Nick’s death when his younger brother, Joey, died in the family home.

Nick Eischen was truly a great man—in stature and in his profession; but, most important, Nick was a great man of character. The loss of such a man, compounded by the senseless and premature loss of his brothers, is exponentially more than one family should have to bear. However, all three will remain in the memories of friends and family.

Nick leaves behind a loving family that includes his wife, Leah; a young son, Braeden; parents, Drew and Suzi; a sister; Jaime; and numerous extended family and friends.



LUCAS W.A. EMCH

Died: March 2, 2007

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 1st Marine Logistic Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Navy Hospital Corpsman Lucas W.A. “Luke” Emch was killed on March 2, 2007, in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. His death resulted from injuries sustained from the detonation of a makeshift bomb while he was conducting combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned as a hospital corpsman—or as his unit called him, “Devil Doc”—to the 1st Marine Logistic Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Pendleton, California. Funeral services for the 21-year-old Sailor were held on March 12, 2007, at the Donovan Funeral Home on the Historic Tallmadge Circle, Tallmadge, Ohio. He was buried with full military honors at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio.

Emch enlisted in the Naval Reserve in 2005; he went on active duty in 2006, overriding his parents’ strenuous objections. His motivation to serve involved his sense of responsibility to take care of his peers who were serving in Iraq. Luke’s father Wesley admitted, “When he said that, there was nothing else for me to say. He loved the United States.” Emch’s tour of duty in Iraq began in August 2006; he was due to return to California at the end of March 2007, within weeks of his death.

Luke was born in Akron, Ohio, on February 8, 1986. He spent most of his youth in Brimfield Township and graduated from Tallmadge High School in Tallmadge,



Ohio, in 2004. In high school, he played on the tennis team. After graduating, he attended the University of Akron for a year. His future plans involved returning to civilian life, finishing his education, and earning a degree in political science.

The essence of Luke's personality was captured by his mother when she said, "He was a wonderful person. He was extremely smart and had a great sense of humor." His father stressed Luke's humanity and compassion, noting that Luke believed it was incumbent on him to care for wounded American Marines who didn't have the

same opportunities as he had enjoyed. "He couldn't stand the idea that he had something they didn't," said Ian Psouts, one of Luke's friends. Psouts said that everyone who knew Luke was distraught about his death. He said, "I was so afraid for Luke...but I respected his decision because he said it was something he felt he had to do." Another friend, Allison Klusman, said she would miss Luke's quick wit and his concern and kindness, noting that "he was always there for me.... I could talk to him for hours about anything. He was just very giving."

Navy representatives brought the news of Luke's death to his father during the school day at Cuyahoga Falls High School, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, where he teaches biology and genetics. Wesley Emch then drove with the Navy representatives to Tallmadge Middle School, where Luke's mother teaches seventh-grade science and math. Luke's father recalled, "We were in a state of disbelief. ...When the realization set in that it was true, there were feelings of helplessness and grief." He concluded, "I just want people to understand that Luke did what he didn't have to do. He was proud of what he was doing to serve his country." Brokenhearted, he explained that Luke "didn't think we should be at war, but he had a sense of what was right. And he thought it was right to serve his country. Pride is not a strong enough word for how we feel about who Luke was and what he did for our country."

Emch was the epitome of the selfless, heroic American. He raised his hand and took the oath of enlistment, placing himself in the line of fire to provide assistance to his fellow man. He went where he was not absolutely compelled to go to fulfill what he viewed as his duty to his country. In doing so, he made the ultimate sacrifice. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said, "His noble pledge to our nation was unwavering. Lucas valiantly dedicated his work to improve the lives of others." The governor ordered the state capitol's flags to be flown at half-staff on March 7, 2007, in Emch's honor.

Surviving Luke are his parents, Wesley and Julie Emch; his sister, Samantha; and his grandparents, Albert and Jean Schroeder.



GLADE L. FELIX

Died: June 11, 2007

Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

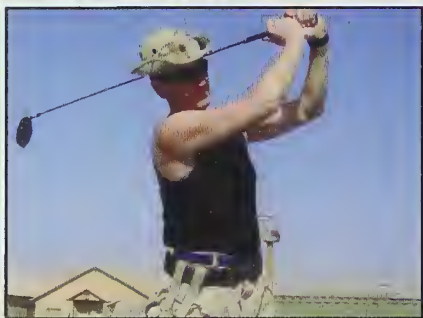
Unit: 622nd Aeromedical Staging Squadron

Branch: U.S. Air Force

Years in Service: 1976-2007

Lieutenant Colonel Glade L. Felix of the United States Air Force Reserve died of heart complications on June 11, 2007, at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. The 52-year-old officer was a reservist with the 622nd Aeromedical Staging Squadron at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia; he was in Qatar serving with the 379th Expeditionary Medical Group, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 31-year veteran of both the active and reserve Air Force was providing rehabilitation services at a staging area for American casualties awaiting medical evacuation. He was on his second tour in 18 months and had been in Qatar less than a month at the time of his death. He received a hero's farewell on June 21, 2007, at the Kolob Seventh Ward, Latter Day Saints Church in Springville, Utah, and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Glade was born in Springville, Utah, on August 4, 1954, to Leo and Utahna Felix. He graduated from Springville High School and attended Brigham Young University in Provo, where he received a bachelor's degree in sports medicine. He went on to earn a master's degree in physical therapy from Hahnemann University in Philadelphia. Glade moved to Lake Park, Georgia, in the early 1990s and worked in Valdosta as a physical therapist. He was very active in the local community—as a soccer coach, a scoutmaster, and a Sunday school teacher at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter



Day Saints—and was an avid golfer.

Felix enlisted in the Air Force in 1976 and accepted a commission in 1986. In addition to his deployment to Qatar, he deployed to the 755th Medical Flight at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan in 2005, where he was responsible for the physical training and rehabilitation of American troops and Taliban prisoners. He was a skilled physical therapist and a key member of the military management team. While with the 622nd Aeromedical Staging Squadron, he circled the globe, tending to the medical needs

of both military and civilian populations. Glade's son, Chris, also serves with the Army as a Captain and has deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, twice.

Glade was remembered by friends for his smiles and laughter. "We consider ourselves blessed to have been your friends. We will always remember the laughs, the lunches, the 'only Glade could get you this birthday present and get away with it' gifts, the hot political debates, your love of golf and Felix the Cat, your complete devotion to your

kids, and, most of all, the smile and confidence that caused so many people to love you."

Felix's military colleagues said that he truly loved his country and served it selflessly. Comrades at Robins Air Force Base described him as a person who could put a smile on the face of everyone he encountered. Diane Darden, a retired major who served with him, said, "You couldn't be around him and not enjoy life." She recalled that as a lieutenant colonel he wasn't compelled to deploy, but when an opening posted, he immediately volunteered to serve. She added, "He just cared so much about his fellow troops and...those who were injured." Lieutenant Colonel Ricky Stewart, commander of the 622nd Aeromedical Staging Squadron, described him as a "true asset, a leader. He would bring fun and smiles to everything he did." One thing Felix did take seriously was his unit's physical fitness program. A colleague credited Felix's leadership in his unit's physical training program with helping the unit attain the highest fitness compliance level of any medical unit in the Air Force Reserve Command.

Felix was a loving husband, a devoted father, a loyal friend, and an esteemed member of his community, eliciting great respect from his colleagues and comrades. His loss was deeply felt by many. For his exemplary service, the Air Force awarded him the Meritorious Service Medal with 1st Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

He leaves behind his beloved wife, Cathie, and their six children, Chris, Leo, Chelsea, Jim, Katie, and Sean; his sister, Geniel; brothers, LaVar, Jan, and Raymond; and numerous extended family and friends.



MICHAEL S. FIELDER

Died: August 19, 2007

Rank: Captain

Unit: 248th Medical Detachment, 44th Medical Command, XVII Airborne Corps

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1990-1994 U.S. Navy & 2000-2007 U.S. Army

Captain Michael Fielder gave his life in service to his country on August 19, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq. In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he proudly served with the 248th Medical Detachment, 44th Medical Command, XVIII Airborne Corps, out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He died in a non-combat-related incident. A celebration of Fielder's life was held at Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Fielder, a veterinarian, cared for military working dogs in Iraq. After serving in the Navy from 1990 to 1994, in 2000 he joined the Army, attending the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine on an Army scholarship. He received a doctorate in veterinary medicine in 2004 and also completed the Army Medical Department Officer Basic Course and the Veterinary Clinic Proficiency Course.

Before joining the Army, Michael graduated magna cum laude from North Carolina State University in 1999 with a bachelor of science in zoology. Michael was due to be discharged only a few months after his death and had already lined up a job in private practice. Michael's mother, Janet King, recalled that her son had a passion for animals from a very young age. When he was a boy, stray dogs seemed to sim-



ply follow him home, knowing they would be well cared for. His gentle and compassionate nature made becoming a vet a perfect fit. Michael's mother remembers how he knew from the time he was eight years old that he wanted to be a vet. Barret Gift, a friend and fellow student recalls how "I couldn't

ask for a better friend. One that always...just the simple things that people in passing would forget, he would remember." Michael took Barret under his wing and showed him all he needed to know to become a vet himself. He had a way of calming others that today is remembered with smiles and tears. "Michael, first and foremost, was a husband, and a wonderful and devoted friend," said Tonya Hinkle, a family friend. "He was a vet that absolutely loved his job and was quite a wonderful father to the Soldiers he had." Friend and fellow Soldier Sergeant Arthur Cameron wants Michael's wife, Mary, to know that he "talked of you daily, you were always closest to his heart, he loved you unconditionally and will be watching over you and caring for you just as much now as in life."

Fielder was not only a proficient veterinarian; he also served as a surrogate father to all the Soldiers who served with him. He was always handy with a joke, and could make anyone laugh, even when times were rough. At the same time, he was also always ready to mentor Soldiers who served under him, boosting both their technical skills and their confidence.

In an interview that Fielder did for the 28th Public Affairs Detachment on March 3, 2007, he said, "I especially dig the nice [dogs], but I enjoy the mean ones too, because you can work out an understanding with them a lot of times. It gives you a good sense of accomplishment." Fielder not only helped to heal his dogs, but healed several

people with his unconditional compassion. Captain Ann Parthemore was stationed just down the way from Fielder's clinic. One day, after having lost her own dog in Iraq, she knocked on the clinic's door hoping to be able to help out and walk one of the dogs. "He was kind enough to let me stop by and visit Conan, the Belgian Malinois. It was obvious how much he cared for the animals in his charge. On one visit, he showed me how he removed a tiny piece of shrapnel from a dog's wrist that would have caused serious problems if not removed." He is remembered as the compassionate healer of both animals' lives and peoples' hearts. Sergeant Thanisha Contes was Fielder's veterinary technician from September 2006 until the day he died. Her heart is filled with both honor to have served beside Fielder and grief over his passing. He was more than just her boss and captain, he was her mentor. She tells how he took her under his wing and taught her how to think like a veterinarian. "You are the best vet I have ever worked for. I never got to tell you thank you. Thank you for your wisdom, your humor, your trust in me, and your narration voice for Conan whenever you thought he was talking to me." To this day, Contes reflects how much Fielder made her a better person. Because of him, her life gained a new direction.

Among his many awards and decorations, Michael Fielder received the Navy Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and Army Service Ribbon. Michael's friends and family organized a vet school scholarship in his honor and memory called the Captain Michael Shean Fielder D.V.M. Memorial Scholarship.

Besides his loving wife, Mary, Michael leaves behind his three "furry" children: a pit bull-Rottweiler mix named Buckethead, a Rottweiler named Haley, and a domestic long-haired cat named Frankie. He also leaves behind his mother and stepfather, Janet and Jesse King; stepmother, Cathy Fielder; sister Allison Butler; and brothers John Fielder and Will Fielder.



GABRIEL J. FIGUEROA

Died: April 3, 2007

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Private First Class Gabriel Figueroa sacrificed his life for his country when he was shot by a sniper during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq, on April 3, 2007. He proudly served with the 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. When he was shot, this cheerful and caring Soldier was handing out candy and toys to Iraqi children. As testament to the love and impact Figueroa had on his community, more than 500 people gathered for his service. Figueroa's family laid their son to rest with full military honors at Rose Hills Memorial Park and Mortuary in Whittier, California.

Figueroa's Army career was brief but heroic. He completed his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and trained to be a medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The 20-year-old was proud and eager to be in the Army after graduating from Sierra Vista High School, Baldwin Park, California, in 2005. "He said he went so we wouldn't have to," his brother Xavier said. When he graduated from basic training, with his family gathered around, Figueroa was radiating with pride. When the time came to return from Iraq, Figueroa hoped to pursue a career in the medical field and continue this path of healing.



Gabriel was a thoughtful and funny young man, enjoying fishing and reading in his spare time. While in high school, he also volunteered at the local hospital, visiting the sick and assisting the nurses with their duties. He had volunteered as an explorer with the Baldwin Park, California, police force from 2001 to 2003. Baldwin Park Police Lieutenant David Reynoso remembers Gabriel as an eager learner and very capable. "He was very respectful to adults," Reynoso said. "He came from a good family." Not only was his immediate family affected by the death of this pa-

triotic and determined young man, but so was his close-knit community. To them, Gabriel was their son, too. His mother, Elsa, had spoken with her son just two days before he was killed. She asked him if he was still happy about his decision to join the Army. His answer was full of pride as he said, "Yes I am, one of the best things I have done so far." Just hours before Gabriel went on patrol that fateful day, he had the opportunity to call his father from a friend's cell phone. Javier told his son, "Be very careful, son. Don't forget to say your prayers."

His loving family feels the immense grief of losing their son and brother, yet they are very proud of his accomplishments and know the way to healing is through fond memories and laughter. They tell each other funny stories of how, when Gabriel was younger and trying to become a lifeguard with his brother Xavier, Gabriel failed the

course because he pushed his brother into the pool. Or the time he got lost in the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area on one of his fishing excursions. His sister Danica remembers how Gabriel was protective of her, and Sebastian described his brother as caring. Gabriel was a quiet man with a shy smile that hid a bright intelligence and at times a mischievous spirit. Beneath the jokes and the quiet demeanor lay a steadfast dedication to country and family. Captain Ramos shared these words with Gabriel's family about their friend and medic: "April third we lost him to sniper fire while on a dismounted foot patrol. As a medic, he could have easily stayed in the gun trucks and followed the dismounted patrol and only come out to treat wounded or injured. But anyone that knew Fig knew that he wanted to be on the ground with the rest of the platoon. He took it upon himself to distract the young Iraqi children with toys and candy, thus allowing his platoon leadership to focus on talking to the adults with little distraction. This is what he would do on a regular basis. Only a few days prior to his death, he treated a young Iraqi child who had recent burns on her foot and, after treating her, he instantly became a local hero, if only for a brief moment. We love him, we miss him, we are proud of who he was and everything that he did and accomplished."

Gabriel particularly enjoyed it when his fellow Soldiers called him "Doc," and they depended upon him for their well-being. He made many friends while in the Army and they all have the same sentiment for their battle buddy, their Doc, and their friend. He will forever remain in their hearts as the true American hero that he is.

Posthumously, Private First Class Gabriel Figuroa received a Bronze Star for his service in Iraq.

Gabriel is survived by his parents, Javier and Elsa; two brothers, Xavier and Sebastian; and two sisters, Danica and Tanya.



JOSEPH GILMORE

Died: May 19, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

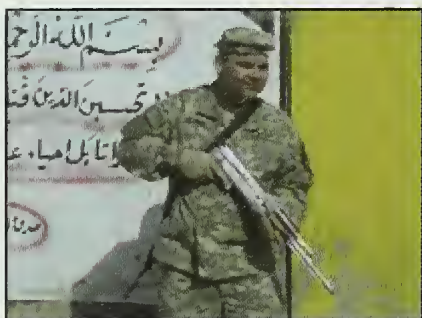
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Specialist Joseph Gilmore died from wounds received when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq, on May 19, 2007. The 26-year-old medic served with the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Gilmore chose to be cremated and his ashes were interred in Alaska.

The devoted combat medic joined the Army in 2005 to serve his country and to make a better life for his two small children. Gilmore attended basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and moved on to advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to become a medic. He served as a line company medic for several units, including the Scout Platoon.

Joseph and his six brothers grew up in Hartford, Alabama, but relocated after high school to Bushnell, Florida, where he lived with his grandmother, Bonnie Clinton. The drive to serve their country was strong in their family, with another brother, Sean, serving in the Alabama National Guard. "He's a hero, and I hope to someday be the man he was," Sean said. "Everything he did was for somebody else." Sean added that his brother enlisted to make a better life for his family, including his two children. "That



was his number one concern," he said. "He loved his kids."

Friends and family remember Gilmore as one of the most courageous men they ever met. He had a smile that would go on forever with a heart to match. He was a great friend, terrific husband, and wonderful loving father. While Gilmore was on patrol in 2007, an Iraqi man came running up to his patrol carrying a small child who had been struck by a bullet that went through the right temple and lodged in her neck. She was blue and her eyes were cloudy. The team immediately rushed her and her family to a

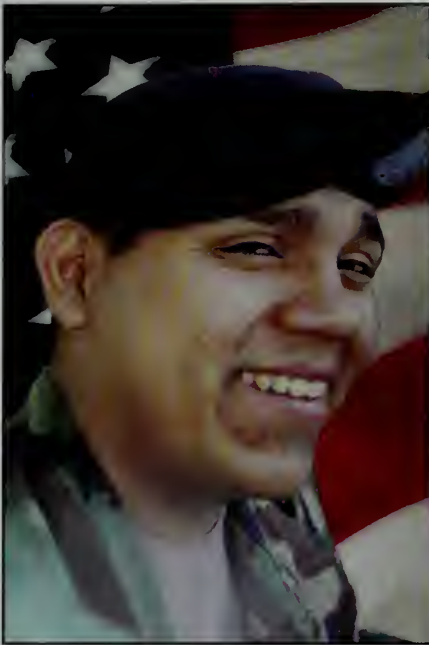
Combat Support Hospital while performing emergency medical aid en route. The Soldiers reassured the girl's father, Mohammed, that the United States would do whatever it could to help his little girl.

Several days later, the platoon went to check up with the family; Mohammed had tears in his eyes and expressed his thanks to the platoon. He said that he and his family would pray for their safety. The little girl, Saadeya, was alive and smiling, and her family was overjoyed.

Jerry Gross had the honor of serving with Gilmore. He fondly recalls that Specialist "Doc" Gilmore was a true warrior. "He was attached to our Military Transition Team for three months and took care of us all. I am proud to have known and fought beside a good man. He will always remain in our hearts and will never be forgotten by the Brute Squad and those that served with him." While Gilmore never took himself too seriously, he absolutely took his job seriously. "Doc saved lives. That's what he did. Iraqis and Americans are alive today because of him." Many speak of Gilmore as honorable, happy, and dedicated. They will never forget the great times they had together and are honored to have called him friend.

During his all-too-short Army career, Joseph Gilmore proved to be not only an excellent medic but a skilled Soldier. Among other honors, he had earned a Marksmanship Badge.

Joseph is survived by his wife, Eve, and two children.



DANIEL E. GOMEZ

Died: July 18, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Daniel E. Gomez gave his life in service to his country on July 18, 2007, when his vehicle was attacked in Adhamiyah, Iraq. The enemy employed a makeshift bomb and small arms fire against Gomez's unit. He served with the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, out of Schweinfurt, Germany, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. At Gomez's request, his family laid their eldest son to rest in San Antonio, Texas, close to where he had trained to be a medic. He was buried with full military honors in the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

Even as a boy, Gomez was drawn to the military. After graduating from high school in 2004, he attended Texas A&M University on an ROTC scholarship. He initially intended to enter the military as an Air Force officer, following in his father's footsteps. However, while researching a paper for school, he became impressed with the courage of medics and the tasks they accomplished. He left the university and enlisted in the Army to become a medic. This came as no surprise to his family, whose rich military history includes the Air Force and Coast Guard.

His parents remember their son as a "big-hearted person" who wanted to care for everyone, both American and Iraqi. They are grateful for the outpouring of support they



received from people around the world whose lives Daniel had touched. In an e-mail to his sister about a week before he died, Daniel stressed his role as a Soldier to protect all of the United States, and to see the mission through to the end:

*If I ever go to war, Mom,
please don't be afraid
There are some things I
must do to keep the prom-
ise that I made.*

*I'm sure there will be some
heartache, and I know that
you'll cry tears,
But your son is a soldier
now, Mom, there is nothing
you should fear.*

*If I ever go to war, Dad, I know that you'll be strong
But you won't have to worry, 'cause you taught me right from
wrong.*

*You kept me firmly on the ground, yet still taught me how to
fly.*

*Your son is a soldier now, Dad, I love you, hooah, even If I
die.*

*If I ever go to war, Bro, There are some things I want to say.
You've always had my back, and I know it's my time to repay.
You'll always be my daybreak, through all of life's dark clouds,
Your brother is a soldier now, Bro, I promise I'll make you
proud.*

*If I ever go to war, Sis, don't you worry about me,
I always looked out for you, but I can't do that anymore,
'Cause I am a big bro to all in America. I love you so much and
you know
That your brother is a soldier now, Sis,*

*So wipe your eyes, I'll be
fine even if I die.*

*If I ever go to war, my friends,
we'll never be apart,
Though we may not meet
again, I'll hold you in my
heart.*

*Remember all the times we
had, don't let your memo-
ries cease,*

*Your friend is a soldier now,
dear friend, and I'll die to
bring YOU peace.*

*And when I go to Heaven, and see that pearly gate,
I'll gladly decline entrance, then stand my post and wait.*

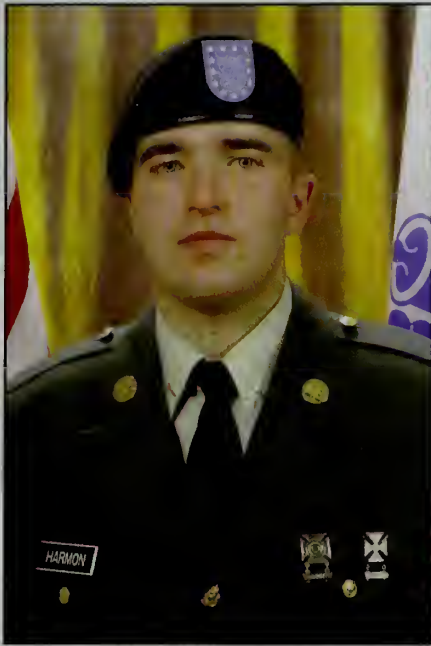
*I'm sorry, Sir, I can't come in, I'm sort of in a bind,
You see I'm still a soldier, Sir, so I can't leave them behind.*



Daniel was devoted to the care of those around him. Even when he was home on leave shortly before he died, Daniel spoke often to his family of his need to return to Iraq to care for "his men." His sister wants all to know, "Daniel is the true American hero and an angel to everyone he has ever touched; he is always around us here on earth, and we are blessed with his memories and love." First Sergeant Mike and Patrice Bush met Daniel while stationed at Robins Air Force Base. They remember him fondly as very smart and athletic, with a lead-by-example attitude.

Daniel Gomez led a short but distinguished Army career. His awards and honors include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Combat Medical Badge, and Expert Badge with Rifle.

Daniel is survived by his parents, Juan and Juanita Gomez; his sister Marian; and his brother Louie.



JOSHUA S. HARMON

Died: August 22, 2007

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Corporal Joshua S. "Josh" Harmon died on August 22, 2007, when his UH-60, Black Hawk helicopter crashed at Multaka near Kirkuk, Iraq. At the time of his death, Harmon was a combat medic assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, based at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. This was his first tour of duty in the Persian Gulf. Harmon was laid to rest in Mentor Municipal Cemetery in his hometown of Mentor-on-the-Lake, Ohio, where his family and friends can often visit him.

Harmon joined the Army in August 2005, shortly after graduating from high school. A born caretaker with a knack for relating to people and a passion for binding their wounds, he served as a combat medic attached to the Scouts Sniper Platoon, his first assignment following completion of basic training. He was an asset to the Army and the Army Medical Department. The young medic first deployed to Iraq in August 2006. His valor earned him an Army Commendation Medal after saving the life of a buddy who suffered a head wound inflicted by a sniper. His comrade lived because of Harmon's heroic actions. Harmon loved helping people and was dedicated to his work. In a letter to his family shortly before his death, Harmon wrote, "I just stay focused on my job as platoon medic to make sure my Soldiers are taken care of night



and day. Sometimes it is a tiring job, but I have found great pride and satisfaction in [it].”

Joshua found many aspects of life fascinating. Music was one such fascination. He was an accomplished instrumentalist on the guitar and drums. He also took great pleasure in bowling, soccer, and Kenpo karate. Joshua loved animals, especially his cat and two dogs. In addition, he enjoyed working on cars and was employed for a time as a master mechanic at the Classic Ford dealership in his hometown before joining the Army.

Family, friends, and fellow Soldiers recalled how valued a person Joshua was. His mother remembered her son with pride and love, saying, “He was the most fun-loving, honest, caring person you would ever meet....We’ll all get through this. Josh would’ve wanted us to carry on and not be sad. That’s the type of person he was.” Loved ones remembered not only his keen sense of humor and easy smile but also his attitude of caring and compassion. Childhood friend Kyle Fisher remarked that Josh’s love and caring approach made him

a perfect match for his job as an army medic: “It’s a very hard place to be. A very difficult position to be in. But he wouldn’t have it any other way, helping people.” “Josh was every bit a Soldier. He had a lot of compassion. He’s a truly genuine kid,” said Lieutenant Tim Serazin of the Willoughby Hills Fire Department, where Josh’s father serves as chief.

Shortly before his death, Joshua married the love of his life, Kristin Rathjen, who remembered her husband by saying, “There are no words to describe the pain I felt when I was notified of his death—a scene I can still clearly replay in my head a year later. But there is comfort in knowing that he was doing some good over there in the midst of all the chaos.”

While serving in Iraq, Harmon earned the Combat Medical Badge and the Army Commendation Medal with Valor. Posthumously, he was promoted to the rank of Corporal and awarded the Bronze Star and the Army Good Conduct Medal. The State of Hawaii also awarded him the Hawaii Medal of Honor. His fellow Soldiers and the men he worked with in Iraq formally named their aid station at Schofield Barracks the Corporal Joshua S. Harmon Aid Station. So significant was the impact Joshua had on those he worked with at the Air Force Hospital on Forward Operating Base Warrior that they painted and dedicated a wall in his honor.

Josh’s survivors include his wife, Kristin; parents, Donna and Richard Harmon; and his brother, Jason Harmon-Kriz.



ROSELLE M. HOFFMASTER

Died: September 20, 2007

Rank: Captain

Unit: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Captain Roselle M. Hoffmaster was killed on September 20, 2007, in Kirkuk, Iraq, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. She died of injuries sustained in a non-combat-related incident. As brigade surgeon, Hoffmaster was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, New York. Her family held a memorial service for her on September 29, 2007, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, that was attended by hundreds of people.

Hoffmaster attended Case Western Reserve University Medical School in Cleveland, Ohio, on a military scholarship. Partway through her studies, the university offered her a scholarship, but she opted to continue with the Army program. She was commissioned in 2004. She completed a residency in internal medicine at Brooke Army Medical Center and attended the Army Medical Department Officer Basic Course. Hoffmaster volunteered to go to Iraq to spare colleagues with children from separating from their families and putting themselves in harm's way. She had been in Iraq only 11 days before her tragic death.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Roselle attended Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, graduating in 2000. She majored in biochemistry and pursued laboratory



studies, but, unlike many “lab rats,” Roselle couldn’t wait to get outside. She enjoyed socializing and being outdoors, running track and hiking. After graduation, she hiked more than 1,000 miles of the Appalachian Trail.

It was her love of running that brought Roselle and her husband Gordon together. She was working in a Philadelphia research lab during the summer between her junior and senior years at Smith. Although she was a brilliant medical student, she didn’t have the best sense of direction. She wandered into the wrong lab, where she met Gordon, who was doing his own research. They talked, and, when Roselle mentioned that she was looking for places to run, he drew a map for her. They started dating and were married in 2000.

Friends remember Roselle as a very easygoing and approachable woman. Her concern for others was evident in everything she did. Her co-workers remember her as a completely natural doctor—extremely intelligent, diligent, hard-working, and caring. They say she made it all look easy.

Professors recalled her as highly intelligent—“off the charts”—but without intellectual arrogance. Her track coach said she brought a positive attitude every day: “You just don’t find people like that. She was the total package. You couldn’t find a more caring or compassionate person. She’s a giver. She’s the ultimate team person who gave her all.” Roselle often seemed to put the cares of others ahead of her own. Her untimely death is a tremendous loss to her family, friends, patients, co-workers, the Army, and our nation.

Laura Neff met Hoffmaster at a trauma training course in San Antonio, just prior to their deployment. Neff was “struck by how eager she was to learn, how she would ask all the right questions, and how engaged she was in the training.” Although their acquaintance was brief, Hoffmaster made an impression on Neff, one that she is proud to carry in her heart. Hoffmaster touched the lives of many Soldiers. They served with her proudly; she was a very special doctor who will be greatly missed.

Although Hoffmaster’s military career was short, she accomplished a great deal. She received the Army Superior Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon.

Roselle is survived by her husband, Gordon Pfeiffer, and her parents.



DARREN P. HUBBELL

Died: June 20, 2007

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Staff Sergeant Darren P. Hubbell gave his life in service to his country on June 20, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq, when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle. In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he served with the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Georgia. Hubbell was buried in the Christian Life Fellowship Church Cemetery in his hometown of Metter, Georgia. Residents of the small town lined the streets as the funeral procession brought his body back home from Savannah, Georgia.

A 14-year Army veteran, this senior line medic had also served tours of duty in Panama and Afghanistan. At the time of his death, he was on his third tour in Iraq. In fact, Hubbell was involved with the first wave of U.S. troops into Iraq. His brigade was one of the first to enter and take over Baghdad. Hubbell had initially served six years in the Army right after he graduated from Lee High School in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1986. In 2000, at the age of 30, he reenlisted as a medic. Hubbell set such a shining example as a Soldier that his son followed him into the Army. At the time of Hubbell's death, his 19-year-old son, Darren Hubbell, Jr., was also serving in Iraq. The week Hubbell was killed, their two commanders were trying to get dad and son reunited for a day or two.



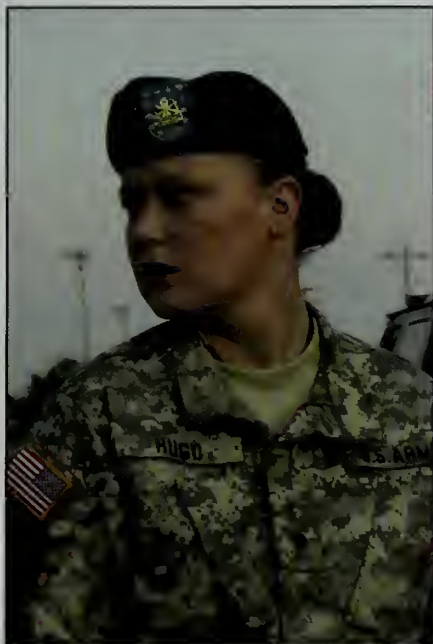
Darren was a patriot, a comrade in arms, a man who was compelled to do his duty even though it cost him his life. When his father expressed concern over the continual deployments and the danger, Darren replied very simply that it was his job to go: someone had to care for the others. Darren loved to laugh and is remembered as constantly joking around. He loved to play computer and video games. He was also a huge history buff. In the Hubbell household, the History Channel stayed on 24/7, much to the chagrin of his wife, Dana. When he wasn't

inside, Darren could be found outside at his fire pit. As devoted as Darren was to his children, he was even more so to his wife, Dana. She fondly recalls, "Darren taught me what love was. And that it was okay to love myself. Darren loved me unconditionally. I never had any doubt about his love for me." Their time together would be short. They met in March 2006, and were married January 13, 2007; Darren was deployed that May. Prophetically, Darren told Dana that if anything should happen to him she needed to go on living and be happy. To honor his memory, Dana plans on being there for homecoming whenever Soldiers from his unit without families return. She is their family now and they are hers.

The other love of Hubbell's life was the Army. He was extremely proud to be a Soldier. He is remembered as a man who ate, slept, breathed, and dreamt the Army. It was his life. Nothing made him more proud as to be there for his guys—to make sure they made it home back into the loving arms of their families. A fellow Soldier recalls, "Hub was a good man who will be remembered as a good friend. He was very lighthearted but took his job seriously and was sure to look out for his soldiers. That, added with two years of laughing at his sarcastic jokes, made him a pleasure to be around. His type of dedication to fellow Soldiers is what has caused for me to become an officer in the Army...to provide for my brothers on a larger scale." Over and over again, fellow Soldiers recall that Hubbell was the best medic they ever had. They depended not only on his life-saving skills, but also his ability to lighten the mood and make them smile no matter how treacherous or upsetting the situation. Because of him, they were able to laugh off the fear, the pain, the loneliness. To all those who served with Hubbell throughout his long career, he will be forever remembered as a true American hero, a brother, a friend, a medic, and a Soldier.

Darren Hubbell had a long, distinguished career in the Army. Among his many awards and decorations were two Combat Infantryman's Badges, the Combat Medical Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

Darren is survived by his wife, Dana; a son, Darren P. Hubbell, Jr.; a daughter, Marina; stepsons, Franklin and Nash Rigdon; his father, Gary Hubbell; and grandmother, Marion Hubbell.



RACHAEL L. HUGO

Died: October 5, 2007

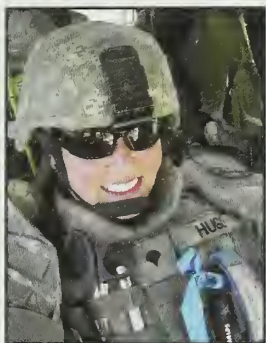
Rank: Corporal

Unit: 303rd Military Police Company, 97th Military Police Battalion, 89th Military Police Brigade, U.S. Army Reserve

Branch: U.S. Army

Corporal Rachael Lorraine Hugo was killed on October 5, 2007, when a roadside bomb hit her convoy outside Baiji, Iraq, just north of Baghdad, while they were on a supply run. Although Hugo was evacuated, she died at the hospital after receiving last rites. Hugo was a combat medic assigned to the Army Reserve's 303rd Military Police Company, 97th Military Police Battalion, 89th Military Police Brigade based in Jackson, Michigan, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was a "crossover"—a reservist assigned temporarily to the 303rd Military Police Company from her original reserve unit based in Madison, Wisconsin. She was buried at Roselawn Memorial Park in Menomonee, Wisconsin, on October 18, 2007, with full military honors.

Rachael was an energetic young woman. She learned to speak Russian and mastered the viola as a girl. She was an honor student and cheerleader in high school. She also participated in karate, gymnastics, and jazz dancing, all while working part time as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at Madison Meriter Hospital. Her brother Scott remembers Rachael as serious and caring, but also as one of the goofiest kids he knew, always playing pranks on family members. This combination of high spirits, optimism, and caring made her an excellent candidate to become a nurse. After graduating from Madison East High School in 2001, she continued to work as a CNA and enrolled



in Winona State University in Minnesota to study for a degree in nursing. After a year, she transferred to Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and also joined the Army Reserve. She hoped to participate in the Reserve Officer Training Corps while continuing her nursing studies. She made the dean's

list with high honors her first year. When she was called to active duty in September 2006, the 24-year-old still had two years of study to finish her degree. However, she was excited and proud to deploy to Iraq.

Hugo was a dedicated medic. From Iraq, she wrote her family, "This is what I choose to do, and being a medic is what I live to do." Her father remembered that she "was

always very adamant about volunteering and going out on missions with her guys. She told us countless times that she needed to be there with them. If somebody got hurt and they didn't have a medic, she was beside herself." Her mother said, "She felt that was her niche in life, helping people."

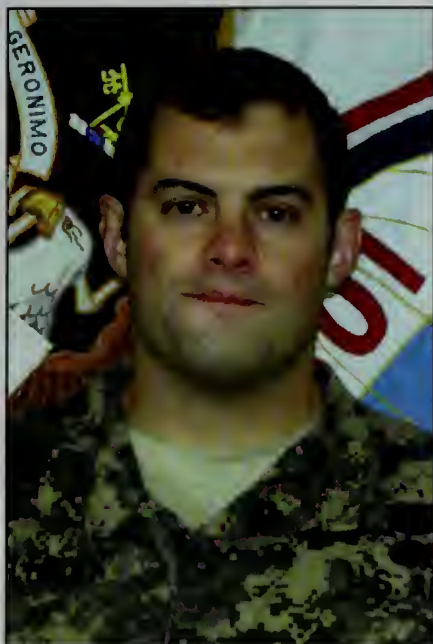
Nicknamed "Combat Barbie" by her fellow Soldiers, Hugo was renowned for assigning the highest priority to the needs of others. In May 2007, when her unit fell under insurgent attack, she leaped into

the fray, shouting "Cover me!" and racing to help the injured. She was credited with saving the life of at least one man thanks to her "quick thinking and excellent training" and received an Army honor coin, which she gave to her parents when she was home a few weeks later on leave. The coin now sits in a place of honor on their mantel. On the final day of her life, Hugo was again doing her job, working to save others who had been injured in the same incident that took her life.

For her valor and dedication, Hugo was posthumously promoted to the rank of corporal and awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Meritorious Service Medal. Her other decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Overseas Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" device, and Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal.

Although her family keenly misses her, they are extraordinarily proud of her contributions. After her death, her father announced at a press conference, "Rachael, I have always told you that you needed to be an asset to society, not a detriment, and to give back to your community. And you didn't disappoint me. You gave the ultimate sacrifice for your country, for your family's freedom, and we'll be forever in your debt."

Rachael is survived by her parents, Kermit and Ruth Hugo, and her younger brother, Scott, as well as a large circle of family and friends.



MICHAEL R. HULLENDER

Died: April 28, 2007

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1998-2007

Staff Sergeant Michael R. Hullender died April 28, 2007, when he stepped on a land mine while assisting a wounded Soldier in Iskandariyah, Iraq. The 29-year-old served as a Ranger and medic in the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division out of Fort Richardson, Alaska, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried with full military honors in Broadlawn Memorial Gardens in Buford, Georgia.

Hullender joined the Army in 1998, two years after graduating from high school. After completing basic training, he took advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and later moved on to Airborne School. His first assignment was as combat medic with the Rangers at Fort Benning, Georgia. While with the Rangers, Hullender deployed to Afghanistan with C Company and participated in a combat jump into Vengeance CZ in southern Afghanistan on October 18, 2001. In July 2002, he was reassigned to 4th Ranger Training Battalion at Fort Benning as the emergency care specialist. In May 2005, he was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry (Airborne) at Fort Richardson, where he served as combat medic. He deployed to Iraq with his unit in October 2006. Hullender's job was to prepare wounded Soldiers for medical transport.



While a student at Norcross High School in DeKalb County, Georgia, Michael played linebacker on the football team. He was also a member of the Civil Air Patrol. After high school, he attended West Georgia College, where he majored in business. Teachers and coaches remember him as a



mature young man who often looked out for those around him. He always intended to serve his country in the military.

Major Brian Vickaryous, surgeon, helped train Hullender at the famous trauma center at the University of Miami. "The first time I met my unit I went through every Soldier and introduced myself," he wrote. "The last was Mike, who let me know with a chewing-tobacco-in-the-lip grin

that he was not in my unit, but was there to learn as much as he could to make himself a better medic. He had traveled almost as far as my unit, coming from Ft. Richardson, Alaska." Vickaryous said Hullender mentored junior Soldiers, had an unassuming way and always-ready-to-help demeanor, and could hold his own talking politics or trash with officer and enlisted alike. Hullender was dedicated to saving his fellow man. "I am honored to have met this Ranger who just showed up with people he did not know because he took

it upon himself to make himself better at doing his job, saving his fellow Soldier," Vickaryous said. "The only regret that I had watching his face on the screen is that we could not run in and save him."

Hullender was promoted to staff sergeant posthumously. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, two awards of the Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal with Arrowhead, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon with numeral 2, Combat Medical Badge, Expert Field Medical Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, and Parachutist Badge with Bronze Service Star. He is also a graduate of the Jumpmaster Course.

The August after he died, the University of West Georgia awarded Michael a posthumous Bachelor of Business Administration degree. When he enlisted in the Army, he had attended the college for about two years, and he promised his parents that he would finish his degree. The college awarded the degree in recognition of that promise. His family requested that, instead of flowers, mourners make donations to the Freedom Alliance in his name. That organization provides scholarships to the children of fallen service members.

Michael is survived by his father, Ren and his wife, Tammy Hullender; his mother, Cindy Malmo; his two older sisters, Lisa Filkins and Amy Ford; and his fiancée, Kyle Harper.



SHIN W. KIM

Died: June 28, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Sergeant Shin W. Kim was killed on June 28, 2007, when insurgents using makeshift bombs in Baghdad, Iraq, attacked his unit. Only 23 years old, the young medic served with the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colorado. Kim's brother, Josh, said he did not die immediately from the attack. A doctor in Iraq held a telephone to Kim's ear as his family bid the unconscious Soldier goodbye from their Fullerton home. Brigadier General Butch Tate flew to California from Virginia to represent the Army at Kim's funeral. At his gravesite, hundreds of mourners released white balloons into the sky in his honor. He was buried with full military honors at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, California.

Kim was moved to enlist in the Army after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He chose to become a medic from a desire to help people, not hurt them. During his short period of service, Kim served in South Korea for a year before he deployed to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. At the time of his death, he had only six months left in his 15-month deployment.

Shinwoo, as he was known by his family and friends, was born in Seoul, South Korea, in 1984. His family immigrated to the United States when he was a small child. He graduated from Sunny Hills High School in Fullerton, California, in 2002, and attend-



ed Fullerton Junior College. He enlisted in the Army in January 2005, devoted to his adopted country and wanting to serve in a time of need.

An adventurer at heart, Shinwoo intended to go backpacking through Europe after he finished his Army service. He

then planned to go to college to become a pharmacist. His older sister, Shinae, says of her brother, "He had a smile that could brighten up the room. He was caring. He was hilarious. He was loyal. He was adventurous." Even in his official military photograph, Kim was smiling. During leave a few months before his death, Shinwoo visited a memorial to Iraq's dead on a Santa Monica beach and left the name of a fallen friend on one of the crosses. "It was something he just had to do," said his girlfriend, Tammy Cho.

Kim had a presence that brought comfort to his buddies. He was the kind of guy you'd wake at 2:00 a.m. with an injured ankle or infected wound, and he would instantly help you. His comrades knew that if Kim said, "You'll be all right. I got you, dude. I can fix you," you could believe him. He was the medic who saved Private First Class James Oppelt's life on Memorial Day 2007. An in-

surgent grenade exploded just as Oppelt tried to kick it away, injuring his feet and legs. Six Soldiers carried Oppelt into a courtyard, where Kim put tourniquets on his legs, inserted a breathing tube, and started IVs. Kim then ran to aid five other wounded Soldiers.

"He saved my life," Oppelt says. "There's not a doubt in my mind. If he had frozen up, I would've died." In his actions on that day and many others days, Kim saved the lives of many of his fellow Soldiers and friends. Through these deeds of humanity and dedication, Kim proved that he is a true American hero; one his comrades will never forget.

A distinguished and dedicated Soldier, Kim received several honors posthumously. A grateful country showed its appreciation by granting the young South Korean native U.S. citizenship, as well as the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. He was also promoted to sergeant. During his short time in the Army, Kim also received the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Combat Medical Badge.

Shinwoo is survived by his father and mother, Yoo Buk and Kum Ok; brother, Josh; sister, Shinae; and girlfriend, Tammy Cho.



GARRETT C. KNOLL

Died: April 23, 2007

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Private First Class Garrett C. Knoll died on April 23, 2007, of wounds he suffered when a suicide car bomber detonated an improvised explosive device next to his patrol base in As Sadah, Iraq. Eight other paratroopers were killed and 20 more were wounded in the deadliest single incident for the 82nd Airborne since the Vietnam War. The 23-year-old combat medic served proudly with the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Knoll had been serving in Iraq for only two short months at the time of his death. Hundreds of family, friends, and members of the close-knit community of Bad Axe, Michigan, gathered on May 4, 2007, at the Bad Axe High School gymnasium to honor their fallen hero. He was buried in the Verona Cemetery in Verona, Michigan.

Knoll had an enthusiastic and adventurous attitude toward life, and this outlook followed him into the Army. Though enlisted for less than a year, he had become a person other Soldiers relied on for their lives. He loved being a combat medic, Soldier, and paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne. As a medic, this compassionate and caring young man was more concerned with saving lives than taking them.

Garrett was raised by his grandparents. He graduated from Bad Axe High School in



2001, where teachers and classmates remembered him as an energetic and hard-working student. He ran both cross-country and track, and participated on the wrestling, softball, and golf teams. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, and working on automobiles. In the summer (unlike the stereotype of teenage behavior), he got up as early as 4:00 a.m. for his job at the Verona Hills Golf Club. However, his grueling schedule did not prevent him from being

a fun-loving person and well-liked by friends and teachers. In fact, high school was an exciting change for this small town boy who had attended a rural one-room school through eighth grade. After high school, Garrett attended Ferris State University in Michigan for three years. In 2005, he transferred to Baron Institute in Connecticut. He joined the Army shortly after graduation.

Troy Ziehm, Garrett's second cousin, spent a lot of time with him when they were younger. Ziehm affectionately recalled of his cousin: "He always kept his chin up. No matter how bad things seemed to get, it never seemed to affect him." Bad Axe High School principal Wayne Brady remembered him as "a happy-go-lucky kid. He

was very friendly. One thing I remember is his sense of humor. He was very sharp, very witty. And he had a nice circle of friends." Garrett's high school coach, Lee Kahler, said, "He was a guy who was always full of energy. He was very enthusiastic. He was a really neat kid." Like many others, Steve Kennedy, a teacher at Bad Axe High School, remembered Garrett's great personality and sense of humor. He recalled, "He was a funny kid; a good, solid kid. And he seemed excited about being in the military." His friend Josh Roggenbuck said that Garrett "never seemed to know what he wanted to do with his life, but when he went into the Army, he had a whole new conviction."

Garrett's life was cut short before he had the opportunity to experience the joy of being married and having a family of his own. However, his legacy of honorable sacrifice remains.

Although Knoll's military career was brief, his service earned him the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Combat Action Badge.

Garrett is survived by his grandparents, Robert and Ruth Knoll.



NICHOLAS J. LIGHTNER

Died: March 21, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Nicholas J. Lightner was wounded on March 15, 2007, when a makeshift bomb detonated near his unit on combat patrol in Baghdad, Iraq. He succumbed to his wounds on March 21, 2007, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. The 29-year-old served with the 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. On his deathbed, the dedicated medic worried about the Soldiers he was unable to save. Even after he was wounded, Sergeant Lightner was able to save one other Soldier long enough for him to get to a hospital; tragically, that Soldier died three days later. Hundreds of mourners attended Lightner's funeral services which were held at Bateman Funeral Parlor in Newport, Oregon, on March 30, 2007.

Lightner joined the Army out of a deep sense of patriotism and a desire to help others. He was inspired to join by the terrorist attacks upon the United States on September 11, 2001. His father Bill recalls, "It was really important to him. Right after 9/11 he decided he had to do something and make a difference some way—so that's what he did." Those who knew him well were not surprised that he chose to become a medic. Nick, as he was called by friends and family, proved himself to be a caretaker from an early age. When a close friend of his died in a car accident during their senior year



of high school, it was Nick who supported his friend's family as they grieved. Friends remembered thinking that his enlisting as a medic brought together his strong, athletic side with his compassionate side.

Nick was born on February 17, 1978, in Portland, Oregon, to Cynthia May and William Lightner. He was a 1996 graduate of Toledo High School, Toledo, Washington. Always athletic, Nick played high school football and wrestled. An avid outdoorsman, Nick also enjoyed hiking, mountain biking, and fishing. Friends recalled him as big, quiet, and strong. He did

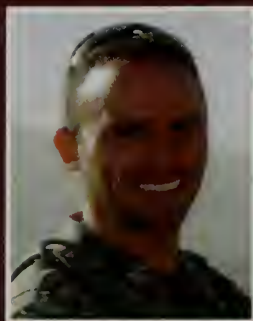
what he could to serve his community, including serving as a member of the volunteer fire department.

"There is no one in a unit more respected and honored than a combat medic," Governor Ted Kulongoski said of Nick. "In combat, when the chaos begins, everyone's looking for someplace to duck and hide. But when the call comes out for a medic, there's one person who cannot hide." Fellow Soldiers remember Lightner as a very genuine person highly respected for his sincerity and compassion.

Lightner was and always will be considered one of the great men that have stood up to defend this country and died for it. Words cannot describe his sacrifice, but fellow Soldiers hope his father's pride swells each time he thinks of his son. Those who knew Lightner are honored to have served alongside such a brave young man, the epitome of a true American hero and brother. Hundreds of mourners attended Nick's funeral. Toledo Mayor Sharon Branstiter was among those who eulogized him, stressing how he rose above the loss of his mother at the tender age of three. Brigadier General Sheila Baxter also attended the funeral, where she praised all that medics do to help their fellow Soldiers survive the chaos of battle. Hundreds lined the streets of Newport, Oregon, as the Lightner family brought their son's casket to the funeral home, lighting their way with candles. The Patriot Guard Riders escorted the procession to the young medic's final resting place.

Sergeant Lightner posthumously received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Combat Medical Badge for his heroic actions in Baghdad. During his time in military service, Nick also received the Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Parachutists Badge and Expert Weapons Qualifications Badge.

Nick is survived by his father and stepmother, Bill and Sheryl Lightner; brothers, Joshua and Nathan Lightner; stepbrothers, Justin, Alex and Cory Lake; and fiancée, Ginger Warfield. In keeping with Nick's desire to help others, the Lightner family requested that donations be made to the Fisher House Foundation to assist other families of wounded service members.



PATRICK MAGNANI

Died: September 4, 2007

Rank: Master Sergeant

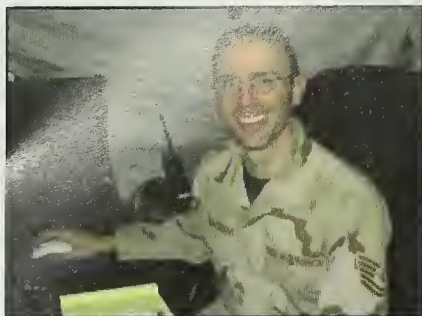
Unit: 31st Medical Support Squadron

Branch: U.S. Air Force

Years in Service: 1989-2007

Air Force Master Sergeant Patrick D. Magnani, a biomedical equipment technician, died on September 4, 2007, in a non-combat-related incident near Bagram Air Base, 25 miles north of Kabul, Afghanistan. The highly respected 38-year-old was assigned to the 31st Medical Support Squadron from Aviano Air Base, Italy, and was in Afghanistan supporting his country in Operation Enduring Freedom. Friends and family gathered on September 12, 2007, at Christ the King Catholic Church in Pleasant Hill, California, to celebrate his life. He was buried in the Sacramento Valley Veteran's Administration National Cemetery.

Magnani enlisted in the Air Force in 1989, following in the footsteps of his father, a Marine and Korean War veteran. In 2005, he deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, with the 31st Squadron. His unit was located in the Green Zone supporting numerous medical units and setting up hospital facilities. In May 2007, Magnani was transferred to Fort Riley, Kansas, to support the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division as part of a team that advises military officers and civilian officials in Iraq and Afghanistan. He deployed in July 2007 as an advisor in Afghanistan. In addition to his Middle East deployments, Magnani's 18-year military career included tours in Spain, England, Greenland, California, Germany, Washington, DC, South Korea, and Italy. He planned to retire from



the Air Force when he reached 20 years of service.

Patrick and his brother Christopher were born on March 16, 1969, to their pleasantly surprised parents, who were not expecting twins. He was raised in Pleasant Hill, California, and graduated from College Park High School in 1987. He set two records as a hurdler on the track team, both of which still stand. Growing up, Patrick enjoyed baseball, playing Frisbee, and riding his bike. After high school, he attended Diablo Valley College for a year before enlisting in the Air Force. He was a world traveler who loved

visiting and photographing foreign lands and showering his family with gifts from his travels.

Friends and family recall Patrick's quick smile, love of adventure, knowledge of history and various cultures, and love of Belgian beer. They remember him as an avid traveler who always found time to devote to them and was always available if they needed anything. His mother said, "He died in the service of his country. He was very happy about what he was doing." She praised his commitment to his career, saying that he "worked very hard to get where he was. It's not easy to be a master sergeant. He had a goal, and he wanted to accomplish it." Patrick's twin, Christopher, reflected on his brother's eagerness to serve, observing, "He just never had a bad attitude. He always looked forward to places he was going. He volunteered for places that most people probably wouldn't, without hesitation and without apprehension."

Friends Rob and Autumn Lombardi, who were stationed with Patrick in Italy, wrote, "He was the kind of person who knew how to light up a room with his personality...You just couldn't be in a bad mood in his presence." In a letter to the family, Lieutenant Colonel Troy McGilvra, Patrick's commanding officer, wrote that he was well-acquainted with Patrick and personally knew the scope of his accomplishments. He said, "Patrick always had a smile, no matter how daunting the task, and he always exhibited a contagious optimism." Patrick's mother said that with his death she lost her heart. She said his twin, Christopher, "lost half his soul" and his older brother, Michael, a quadriplegic, "lost his best friend."

Patrick's death is an unfathomable heartache and insurmountable loss to his family, friends, and fellow comrades, but what have not been lost are the memories of him and his spirit. Patrick left a legacy of love, compassion, and true greatness, and that legacy endures in the lives of those he left behind.

Master Sergeant Magnani was posthumously awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of his dedicated and outstanding service. Other awards and decorations include the Air Force Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, seven awards of the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, five awards of the Air Force Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Air and Space Campaign Medal, the Air Force Overseas Ribbon Short, the Air Force Overseas Ribbon Long with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border, and the Air Force Longevity Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters.

Patrick is survived by his parents, Thomas and Jeanne; brothers, Michael and Christopher; sister, Katie; niece, Jessica; and nephew, Colton.



CONOR G. MASTERSON

Died: April 8, 2007

Rank: Corporal

Unit: B Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Corporal Conor G. Masterson died on April 8, 2007, when an improvised explosive device detonated near the patrol vehicle in which he was riding in eastern Afghanistan. The 21-year-old was serving with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment out of Hohenfels, Germany, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. He was laid to rest in Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Masterson joined the Army in February 2005, and was assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment. During its six-month deployment in Afghanistan, the battalion worked with a Romanian battalion in the International Security Assistance Force. The young Soldier represented the fifth generation in his family to serve in the U.S. military. His father was in the Army and his mother served in the Army Reserve.

Conor was born on March 22, 1986, at Hahn Air Base, Germany. He grew up in Vadnais Heights and Woodbury, Minnesota, and graduated in 2004 from Woodbury High School. In high school, Conor studied Spanish and developed a desire to study other cultures. He wanted to see the world and have new experiences before pursuing a college degree. Conor was deeply devoted to his wife, Lorena, and spoke often of her to his fellow Soldiers and friends. He was very proud to be a medic and intended to



pursue a career in medicine once he was back from Afghanistan. His mom, Sandy Masterson, recalled that Conor was excited about each new medical procedure he learned and that he took great pleasure in being able to aid others. Conor's mother saved the last text message she received from him: "Just getting ready to leave, will call you

when I can, tell all that I love them." His little brother Evan recalls how Conor was always available for brotherly advice and guidance. Conor was very proud of his little brother, but advised him to go to college before joining the military. "He was the greatest person I have known and ever will know," Evan said.



The year after her son's death, Sandy Masterson began raising money to support the troops and their families with two other women who were similarly affected by the war in Iraq. A portion of the proceeds from their "Scoops for Troops" event will be donated to Tribute to the Troops,

an organization that raises money and donates the funds to charities that benefit Soldiers and their families. Each year, the weekend after Labor Day, Tribute to the Troops volunteers embark on a motorcycle ride to visit the families of fallen Soldiers from the previous year. Many of Conor's friends and family remember his wonderful sense of humor that could bring out the laughter no matter how bad a situation was. He had a natural ability to know just what to say and do to make a person feel better.

Specialist Crystal Witte, who attended advanced individual training with Masterson at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, recalls how he kept in touch with her after she was severely injured in Iraq. "He kept me looking at the bright side of things and always made me laugh when I thought things couldn't get any worse," she said. "He truly was an angel to me when I needed one the most." Sergeant First Class William Neill, stationed in Hohenfels, Germany, said the loss of Masterson "has left a void in our platoon, but a bigger hole in our hearts as he will be deeply missed." Without hesitation, the Soldiers with whom he served called him Doc Masterson. He was their friend, their brother-in-arms, and their guardian angel.

Conor is survived by his wife, Lorena; parents, Sandy and Mark; and siblings, Evan, Adam, Abbie, Christopher, Matthew, and Justin.



MARQUIS J. MCCANTS

Died: May 18, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Specialist Marquis J. McCants was killed in Baghdad, Iraq, on May 18, 2007, when his unit was attacked with an improvised explosive device and small arms fire. He was serving with the 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was buried with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas, on Memorial Day weekend.

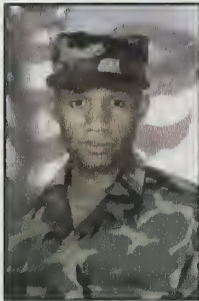
McCants joined the Army in 2005 and pursued advanced combat medic training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. "I want to be able to save my friends," he said. McCants' colleagues remembered him as a dedicated medic who "always had your back." Their "Doc" loved life and responded to each day with a quick grin and a true passion for experiencing life to its fullest. During his time in Iraq, McCants was credited with providing lifesaving care to several members of his unit, the Red Falcons, as well as to Iraqi civilians. His medical knowledge, grace under pressure, and care of his men earned him respect far beyond his rank and experience.

Marquis was born August 4, 1983, in Abilene, Texas, to Savage and Belinda McCants. He graduated in 2001, from O'Connor High School in Helotes, Texas. His father said,



"He had a great love for books, music, and chess." He was a very talented musician and wrote both lyrics and music. After the war, Marq hoped to earn a degree in music, but his father said, "I noticed a change in him. He really loved being a combat medic. I saw him grow as a man, father, and Soldier.

We are proud of the man Marquis became."



Like many people, he wanted to make his mark in the world. He wanted his voice to be heard and to have an impact on the lives of others. He had hoped it would be through his music, but his life's path led him elsewhere. The impact he had is etched on the hearts and minds of all those who knew him. His compassion, humor, and skill helped heal the hearts, souls, and wounds of many friends and Soldiers. His cousin, Romero McCants, said, "When he said he was your friend, he was your friend. If he said he had your back, he had it all the way to the end."

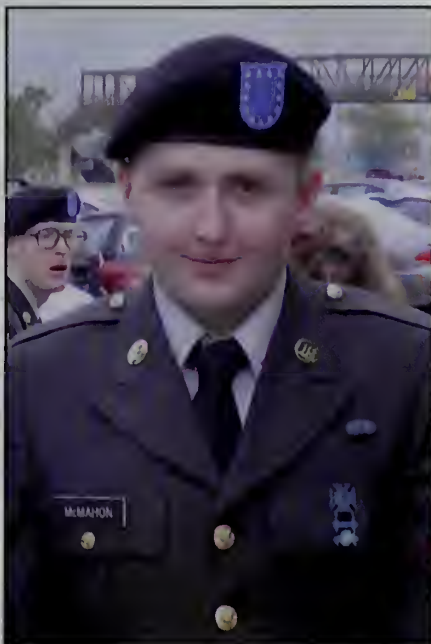
"He was one of the most caring guys I knew, as far as caring for his brothers in arms," said Specialist Chase Walden, who served three years with McCants. "It was a pleasure serving with him." Many

of his comrades expressed the same sentiment about their friend and devoted Doc—they will remember the good times and the bad. They will celebrate the life he led, instead of the sadness his death has brought.

The rain cleared just as the flag-draped coffin arrived at the gravesite after a slow and somber procession, carried by a horse-drawn caisson and accompanied by an honor guard. A rifle volley, followed by a lone bugle sounding Taps, echoed over a sea of white headstones, each decorated with a small American flag, as is the custom for Memorial Day. The commander of the U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School, Major General Russell Czerw, said, "This is the home of the free because of brave men like Marquis. He will not be forgotten."

McCants' awards and decorations included the Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Combat Action Badge, and Parachutist's Badge. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, and Combat Medical Badge.

Marquis is survived by his wife, Andrea; children, Azaria and Micah McCants and Deja Martinez; parents, Savage and Belinda McCants; brothers, Savage McCants III and Isaiah McCants; and sisters, Patrice Williams, Lisa Basch, and Brandi McCants.



GRAHAM M. McMAHON

Died: September 19, 2007

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

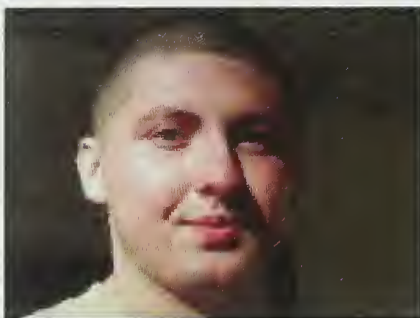
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Corporal Graham M. McMahon died September 19, 2007, in Balad, Iraq, from a non-combat-related illness. The 22-year-old medic served with the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Lewis, Washington, to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. After returning from patrol with his unit, Corporal McMahon suddenly became ill and died en route to the hospital. A public memorial service was held in the auditorium at the Benton County Fairgrounds in Corvallis, Oregon.

McMahon received his advanced individual training as a healthcare specialist at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, on his way to be stationed at Fort Lewis. As an Army medic, McMahon provided care for his fellow Soldiers while accompanying them on combat missions and was proud to be called "Doc." His family recalled that he did not have a clear direction in his life when he enlisted in the Army, but later decided he wanted to return to school, pursuing a career in sports medicine.

As a child, Graham moved from Fort Collins, Colorado, to Corvallis, Oregon, with his family. He attended Crescent Valley High School and graduated from Corvallis High School in 2003. He then attended Oregon State University briefly before enlist-



ing in the Army in 2004. From the time he was a small child, Graham always wanted to face the world and venture out into it. Even his choice of sports was adventurous: snowboarding in the Oregon mountains. His father Bill proudly recalls, "He was smart. He was a really sharp kid. He was perceptive," adding, "He never got a chance to see what he could do." His wife of one year, Angelique, remembers him as energetic and fun-loving, with beautiful blue eyes. "He had a great voice," she said. "That's the thing I

just constantly hear in my head—youthful and energetic." He was a strong, bold, bright, young man, with a future full of promise ahead of him. Graham's brother Dylan said, "He would call me and tell me he was treating gunshot wounds, staph infections, all this stuff. It takes a lot of guts to do that.... I was always so proud of him."

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski spoke at Graham's memorial service, calling him "a young hero who walked into harm's way." He noted that the state has lost a rising star. Representative Darlene Hooley also attended the memorial service.

Corporal McMahon's honors and awards include the National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and Army Service Ribbon.

Graham leaves behind his wife, Angelique; his father, Bill; and his brother, Dylan.



PHILLIP D. MCNEILL

Died: January 20, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2007

Sergeant Phillip D. McNeill died when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee in Karmah, Iraq, on January 20, 2007. Three other Soldiers perished in the same incident. The 22-year-old combat medic was serving with the 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division out of Fort Richardson, Alaska, to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was laid to rest in Owingsville Cemetery in Owingsville, Kentucky.

A proud Soldier from a military family, McNeill was four months into his second tour of duty in Iraq. He had joined the Army in January 2003. Phillip's older brother served in the Marine Corps for five years, including a deployment to Iraq. His grandfather had been an Air Force colonel. McNeill told family members that he was in Iraq to get the job done, and he was proud and honored to be part of the effort.

Phillip came from Sunrise, Florida, and graduated from J.P. Taravella High School in Coral Springs, Florida, in 2002. He also spent parts of his childhood in Lexington and Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio. He was a voracious reader with widely ranging tastes from the classics to children's books. He also taught himself to play guitar, and raised money for children's causes. Phillip loved spending time outdoors, of-



ten climbing the large pine tree near his grandmother's house and snacking on peanut butter sandwiches while sitting on its branches. As a child, he was so interested in snakes he wanted to become a herpetologist at one time.

Phillip and Cassandra were high school sweethearts. "I knew I loved him since I saw him," she said through tears. "I have never connected with someone so deeply. He was my best friend." Phillip's father recalled that his son "celebrated and embraced life to the fullest." He insisted that care packages from his family include enough

cookies or clean bed sheets for everyone in his unit. Many of Phillip's friends remember his incredible sense of humor. He loved to make people laugh and was always cracking jokes.

This sense of humor also kept his fellow Soldiers in stitches. Tommy Torres-Brent served alongside McNeill and fondly reminisces, "A regular comedian, I remember him telling me, in full detail, how aliens from outer-space could very possibly abduct us, while we were making security rounds during a field problem at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was always making someone laugh, he could make a rock smile if he felt like it." Many knew McNeill as a wonderful guy whose exuberance and energy would fill up any room. McNeill's fellow Soldiers nicknamed him "Doc," signifying that he would be on hand in a moment's notice to tend the wounded, heal the sick, or hold the hand of a dying comrade. McNeill impressed his first Platoon Sergeant, Armando Torres, with his enthusiasm over his newly acquired medical skills—he was more concerned to help his men in Iraq than worried about deploying. McNeill will always be remembered for his compassion and devotion to his fellow Soldiers and country.

Phillip is survived by his father, David McNeill; his mother, Angela Fiely; his brother, Chris; his grandmother, Lillian McNeill; and his fiancée, Cassandra Burress.



HUGO V. MENDOZA

Died: October 25, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Specialist Hugo V. Mendoza died on October 25, 2007, from wounds received during an ambush in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan. The 29-year-old combat medic died under a hail of rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns, and small arms as he tried to save a wounded Soldier being dragged away by Taliban forces. Specialist Mendoza threw grenades at the enemy, preventing them from taking the Soldier, who also was killed in the attack. He was laid to rest with full military honors at Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso, Texas.

Mendoza enlisted in the Army in 2005. He completed basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina; advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas; and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. His first duty station was at Caserma, Ederle, Vicenza, Italy, assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne)—The ROCK. Mendoza was then assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company with duty as a combat medic in Bravo Company, and immediately found his home among the combat warriors of 1st Platoon (The Celts). Mendoza trained, deployed, and fought side by side with his brothers in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



A native of Harbor City, California, Hugo was raised in El Paso, Texas, until he moved to Phoenix as a teenager to live with his brother Carlos. He graduated from Trevor Browne High School in 1997. He intended to use his service benefits to pay for schooling to become a civilian firefighter after he left the Army. His devout faith saw him through the worst parts of his service in Iraq.

Friends and family recalled Hugo's infectious laugh and how giving he was of himself and his time. "He liked to bowl and liked to play with my kids," his brother Carlos said. "Even

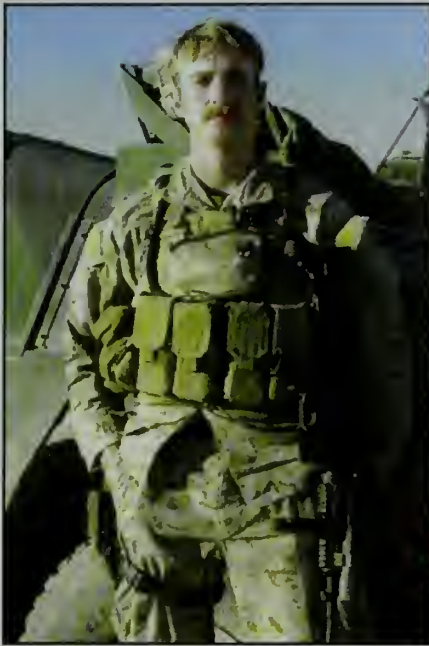
though I'm the oldest brother, he was my hero." Hugo's family has found solace in remembering the good times they shared; all find ways to maintain a little piece of their beloved brother and uncle, whom they called "Bobo." They will forever hold the memory of his big smile and hugs and will celebrate his compassion and the legacy of his life. Hugo's friends in El Paso remember him as a person who loved to discuss philosophy. "He loved religion and trying to find the answers to age-old questions," said Christi Ramirez, a childhood friend. "He was a very loving soul."

Mendoza's fellow Soldiers knew that the infantryman would stand beside them until the call for medic was heard. Then he became

"Doc," the man who would run out into the fray to care for a wounded comrade with no concern for his own safety. Doc also knew that he couldn't always be there, so he made sure his platoon was medically proficient and had the self-confidence to preserve the life and health of fellow Soldiers. They recall that Mendoza spent his downtime studying medical books and pushing himself physically in the gym to make himself the best of the best when he heard the call for medic. Sergeant Rob Lemon served alongside Mendoza and recalls a fierce warrior who was dedicated, and destined, to leave a legacy in Battle Company. He proudly says, "I'll never forget when I had talked to him before we had left Italy for Afghanistan, he had told me that he didn't want to be 'just a medic,' that he wanted to be a fearless warrior that doesn't shun in the face of imminent death. Well he was a testament of that when he gave his life protecting one of his fallen brothers." To Mendoza's family, Lemon speaks for all his fellow comrades, "Thank you for allowing us to have had the opportunity to have known him; he will forever inspire us all."

Mendoza has been honored posthumously with the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart. He also received the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, Combat Medical Badge, and Basic Parachutist Badge.

Hugo is survived by his parents Jesus Carlos Mendoza, Sr., and Sara Mendoza; his brother and sister-in-law, Jesus Carlos, Jr., and Gloria Mendoza, and their three children, Luz Crystal, Carlos Joaquin, and Sarai; and his brothers, Carlos and Esteban "Stevie" Mendoza.



CHARLES LUKE MILAM

Died: September 25, 2007

Rank: Petty Officer Second Class

Unit: 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1999-2007

Petty Officer Second Class Charles Luke Milam, a Navy Hospital Corpsman, died September 25, 2007, while serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The 26-year-old Sailor was killed in an apparent ambush rocket attack while patrolling an opium poppy-growing area with coalition forces in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Milam was assigned to the 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He was laid to final rest with full military honors at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.

Milam enlisted in the Navy on June 14, 1999, just two months after the tragic Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colorado, where he was a senior. After boot camp, he attended the Naval Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Illinois, graduating in December 1999. He then attended Field Medical Service School, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, as well as the Navy Diving and Salvage Training Center in Panama City, Florida. He also trained at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center in North Carolina until he was assigned to II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune in May 2005, later receiving his assignment to the 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion. Milam had served three tours in Iraq since 2001 and had deployed to Afghanistan just a few months before his death.



Born on May 14, 1981, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Luke moved with his family to Colorado in 1992, where his "life revolved around backpacking, mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, scuba diving, and sky-diving," says his brother Keith, who described Luke as "a real outdoorsy guy." Family members believe the trauma his classmates at Columbine High School endured may have inspired his decision to become a corpsman, while family tradition led him to join the Navy, following two grandfathers and his older brother. Driven by a passion to help the injured and

traumatized, Luke was the first in his family to enter the medical field and planned to make the Navy his career.

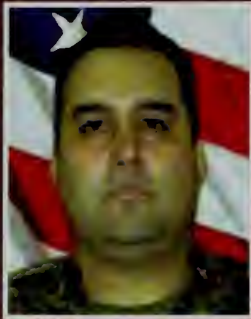
It is clear that Luke was devoted to his calling. "He had served three tours in Iraq, and would have gone back however many times it took

to get the job done," his brother Keith said. "He felt it was his duty to do whatever he could to help people in the military. He was a hero in every sense of the term." Luke's sister Jaeme affectionately recalled, "He loved what he did. He loved his guys and would have done anything for them."

Petty Officer First Class Amy Chase, who worked with Milam in Panama City, recalls, "He...was so excited to be not only a Hospital Corpsman, but working with the Marines!!" His fellow Sailors and Marines remember Milam as a great friend, a great corpsman, and a true American hero, always looking out for others in their time of need. Milam's compassion and dedication has left a legacy that they will carry on for all times.

Milam's awards include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, two Combat Action ribbons, two Good Conduct Medals, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and two Sea Service Deployment Ribbons. He was also named Special Operations Command Operator of the Year.

Luke's surviving family members include his parents, Michael and Rita Milam; his brothers, Keith and Andrew; and his sister, Jaeme.



GILBERT MINJARES, JR.

Died: February 7, 2007

Rank: Petty Officer First Class

Unit: Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 1994-2007

Petty Officer First Class Gilbert "Beto" Minjares, Jr., a Navy Hospital Corpsman, died on February 7, 2007, when his helicopter was shot down by enemy fire while his unit was conducting operations in Anbar Province, Iraq. Assigned to the Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, in Cherry Point, North Carolina, the 31-year-old Sailor had been in Iraq only seven days at the time of his death. Funeral services were held on February 20, 2007, at Saint Raphael's Catholic Church in El Paso, Texas, with internment following at Fort Bliss Cemetery, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Inspired by his grandmother, a nurse, to study medicine, Minjares joined the Navy in 1994. He completed his training at the Basic Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Illinois, and was later assigned to the Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing in Cherry Point, where he volunteered for Operation Enduring Freedom. Hospitalman Chief Michael Felton recalls how his friend and fellow Sailor volunteered "not to win medals, not to be a hero, but he truly wanted to save lives. He was just that 'Big Brother' who had to go to take care of all his little brothers and sisters serving in Iraq." Minjares also worked as a recruiter in El Paso, Texas.

Born on March 19, 1975, Beto graduated from Hanks High School in El Paso, Texas, in 1994, where he was a starting fullback and quarterback on the football team.



Family and friends fondly recall his hearty smile and talent as a salsa dancer. Beto was passionate about serving his country and protecting his family. His brother Jose described him as “happy-go-lucky, loved his family and his home and had no doubts about his service or heading to Iraq to do his duty.” Before leaving for Iraq, Beto told Jose that, if anything happened to him, he wanted his children to know that he served so that they could grow up free and without fear. “He said he’d rather go fight over there than have to fight (terrorism) over here,” Jose said. “Beto was in

Iraq because he always wanted to help people. That’s why he was a medic. He was a great man. I looked up to him. He was my inspiration, my hero.”

Minjares also loved the Navy and this country with commitment and devotion. He believed in the Navy heart and soul, and he always stood tall in and out of uniform. Minjares projected all that the Navy embodies and he stood for what he believed, never wavering. He represented the Navy with incredible pride and honor. Minjares’ impact on the lives of his fellow shipmates and Marines will not soon be forgotten. They will forever remember his warm smile, compassion, integrity, and his absolute devotion to his family and his country for which he proudly served. He is a true American hero for now and all time.

On March 19, 2008, Beto’s family got together to celebrate what would have been his 33rd birthday. Jeannie helped little Gilbert and Miranda make a birthday cake and sing “Happy Birthday.” Jeannie said she tells their children everyday about Beto.

Beto leaves behind his wife, Jeannie; a son, Gilbert III; his daughter, Miranda, just a newborn when her father died; his parents, Gilbert and Rosa; sisters, Zonia, Aurora, and Laura; and his brother, Jose.



DAN H. NGUYEN

Died: May 8, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Specialist Dan H. Nguyen sacrificed his life for his country and his combat brothers when he was fatally wounded during an attack by enemy small arms fire in Tahrir, Iraq, on May 8, 2007. He died while trying to rescue a fellow Soldier during the gun battle. The 24-year-old medic served with the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas. Mourners gathered to remember him on May 26, 2007, at the Christ Incarnate Word Catholic Church in Houston, Texas. Specialist Nguyen was laid to rest with full military honors in the Houston National Cemetery as dark skies gave way to a spring rain—a Vietnamese symbol of God's blessing.

Nguyen enlisted in the Army in 2004, choosing combat medicine as his career. He chose this field because it was an honorable profession and because of his enthusiasm for saving lives, which his commander, Captain Alexis Rivera, said he did "gladly and accomplished every mission without complaint." Nguyen's "ability to save lives is a tribute to his skill," she said. Nguyen was also known for his searching intelligence and curiosity about all aspects of being an infantryman, beyond his scope as a medic. Fellow Soldiers recall that he was always available for mounted patrols and was especially eager to patrol the streets with his dismounted team. Nguyen deployed for Iraq



in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in October 2007, and served his country with such commitment that he chose to extend his enlistment with the Army.

Dan was born on May 29, 1982, to Vietnamese immigrant parents, Sony and Huong

Nguyen. He graduated from Madison High School in Houston, Texas, in 2000. He went on to further his education at the University of Houston before heeding the call of his country. He found enjoyment in all kinds of sports. Dan excelled at his role as the oldest brother of four siblings, who depended upon him to listen to their troubles, after which he would act "goofy" to make them laugh. They called him "the greatest brother a person could have." Dan's brother, Phi, said, "He loved kids. He loved to play with the kids [in Iraq] and give them candy." Phi described how Dan would often call his family asking for candy for the Iraqi children: "He would ask for it in emails and phone calls home....He was always the life of the party." Dan's family was just about to send him 30 pounds of candy at the time of his death.

The young medic was highly respected by his fellow Soldiers, who remembered Dan as quiet and respectful. They recall how he used each traumatic experience to shape himself into a better medic and Soldier. Captain Alexis Rivera fondly described Nguyen: "He was,

without a doubt, a great asset to his unit and was loved by his comrades in [Company B] 'Bone Crusher' and his Hellraiser family....I'll always remember him as living his life so honorably. He was the epitome of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, but most of all, his personal courage." Friend and fellow Soldier Specialist Clint McCollough recalled Nguyen's experience with his first real-world casualty, who happened to be Nguyen's platoon leader. He said, "He treated his platoon leader with the poise and skill of a much more experienced medic. As my fellow medics know, your first causality can either make you or break you. Specialist Nguyen recovered from his first experience with determination and drive I've seldom seen....Specialist Nguyen's love and concern for infantrymen was enormous....He was always ready for a mounted patrol but he lived to run the streets with his dismount team....He was a happy person who loved life. The Army has lost a great Soldier and a medic, and I have lost a great friend." Dan welcomed the opportunity to serve his country, considering it repayment for what the United States did to make it possible for his family to flee South Vietnam 30 years earlier. Although Dan's adopted country didn't expect Dan to repay any sort of "debt," Dan was a person of integrity and chose to do so anyway. Dan paid the ultimate price to settle that debt, and in return Dan's country owes him and his family an eternal debt of gratitude.

Dan is survived by his parents, Sony and Huong; his fiancée, Hau; and his brothers, Phi, Vu, and Van.



DANIEL S. NOBLE

Died: July 24, 2007

Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: Kilo Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force Pacific

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Hospital Corpsman Daniel S. Noble was killed on July 24, 2007, by an improvised explosive device (IED) while conducting security operations in the Diyala Province of Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to Kilo Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force Pacific out of Camp Pendleton, California. His family and friends paid their final respects to him on August 1, 2007, at the Rose Hills Memorial Park and Mortuary in Whittier, California, where he was buried with full military honors.

Noble was a 21-year-old native of Whittier, California, who graduated from La Mirada High School in 2004. He was a good student whose favorite classes were science and math subjects. Inspired by his grandfather and godfather, and following in their footsteps, he joined the Navy on October 4, 2005. He initially intended to go to Seabees training and follow that career path, but he broke his hand before entering boot camp. By the time the fracture healed, Seabee positions were no longer available, so he decided to become a hospital corpsman, a choice he never regretted. "He just thought about helping people," his uncle, Kelly Thomas, said, "and he was not fearful about joining the military at the height of the Iraqi conflict." Family members said, that at the time of his death, he was considering either reenlisting in the Navy or pursu-



ing a career as a policeman or firefighter.

Navy spokeswoman Lieutenant Cindy Moore said Noble had achieved the rank of hospital corpsman three months before his death and was "specifically trained to treat wounded or sick Marines and Sailors." Three weeks before his death, Noble acted with outstanding bravery on the battlefield. During an insurgent attack on July 7, 2007, his escort convoy detonated an IED. Noble, without regard for his own safety, ran through the kill zone under small arms fire, providing medical care and triage to the wounded. He con-

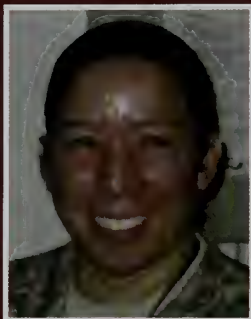
tinued to extend care to those who were hit until reinforcements arrived, then competently directed the loading and transportation of casualties. In recognition of his valorous performance under fire, the Department of the Navy awarded him the Navy and Marines Achievement Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device. By the time the decoration was approved through official channels, it had to be awarded posthumously.

Everyone who knew Daniel paints a portrait of a young man who had wisdom beyond his years and a kind, generous spirit. His mother

said, "Daniel loved what he was doing, and he was always willing to learn as much as he could....My son didn't talk much about what he did or saw in Iraq. He was only there a short four months before his death....Here at home we always knew that he was a special person. We have since heard stories from people who served with him, telling what a great guy he was. His easygoing nature, sense of humor, and big smile left a lasting impression with the men he served with. But, most important, I've heard he made a big difference. These are simple words, but for Daniel it was an important part of the man he was. He received honors for doing his job above and beyond the call of duty. This is just the kind of thing Daniel would do. As his parent, I have always been proud of my son. But he was the kind of person that this country could be proud of, too."

Referred to as "Devil Doc," Noble was a big man at 6 feet 7 inches and 260 pounds; and he had a heart to match. Sent to Iraq to minister to sick and injured Marines, he carried out his mission with pride, honor, and devotion. While all gave some, Noble gave his all. A comrade, a Marine lance corporal from Kilo Battery, said he was "very proud to have served by his side; he was a great man and friend, one who would do anything for anyone to make them feel better."

Daniel is survived by his parents, Barry and Julie Noble; his brother, Andrew; and his sister, Katlin.



MARIA I. ORTIZ

Died: July 10, 2007

Rank: Captain

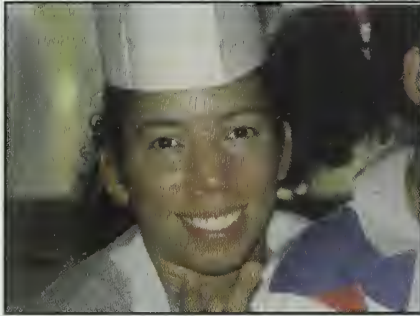
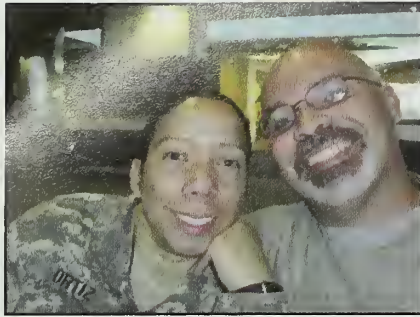
Unit: 28th Combat Support Hospital

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1991-2007

Army Nurse Corps Captain Maria Ines Ortiz was returning to her barracks after physical training on July 10, 2007, when she was killed by shrapnel from a mortar attack. The 40-year-old was the first female Army nurse killed in combat since the Vietnam War. At the time of her death, she was assigned to the 28th Combat Support Hospital, located in the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Colleagues held a memorial service for her there and shared poignant examples of how she touched their lives. Another ceremony took place on July 18, 2007, at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, where Maria formerly served. A pair of combat boots, a helmet, and Ortiz's dog tags were arranged prominently on the Post Chapel's altar. Many came forward to salute the display. Hundreds of mourners bid farewell to this esteemed Army nurse at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, on August 9, 2007, where a horse-drawn caisson carried Ortiz to her final resting place. An honor guard then rendered a 21-gun salute in a tribute to her.

Ortiz enlisted in the Army Reserve in 1991. In 1993, she entered active duty and served in enlisted status for eight years before completing her bachelor's degree in nursing in 1999 from the University of Puerto Rico. She then was commissioned as an officer. Ortiz subsequently served in Honduras and later in Korea. Her next assign-



ment was as a dialysis nurse at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC from 2001 to 2003. She received her master's degree in quality management from the Massachusetts National Graduate School in 2004. Ortiz was the chief nurse of the Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic at Aberdeen Proving Ground for 18 months before volunteering to deploy to Iraq, where she arrived in September 2006. Colleagues said Ortiz was eager to do her part in Iraq.

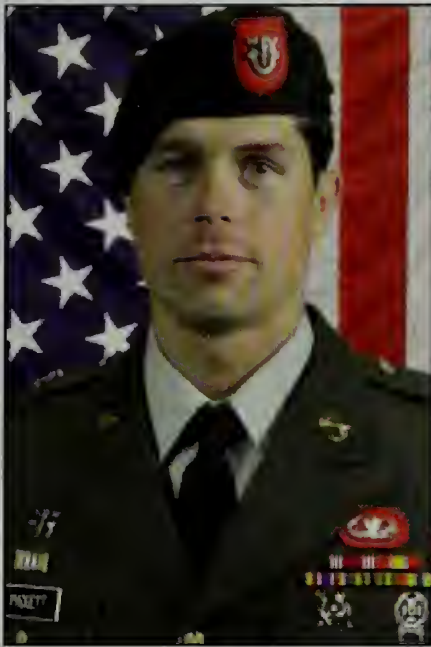
Maria was born in Camden, New Jersey, on April 24, 1967, but moved with her family to

Bayamon, Puerto Rico, when she was five years old. Maria's father recalled that his daughter devoted much time to studying and said he remained proud of her sacrifice. Her twin sister described Maria as "the person that I want to be like, not because she was a Soldier or a nurse, but because she accomplished her purpose in life." Maria's fiancé said he found solace knowing that his future wife died while carrying out a mission that she believed she was destined to fulfill, saying, "It was her calling. I saw in her what everyone else sees, a beautiful person who brings joy to everyone she touches."

Fellow Soldiers remembered Ortiz as an extraordinarily dedicated nurse who cared for her patients' physical and emotional health. Colleague Renee Smith referred to Ortiz as the "jewel of the clinic" in Baghdad. She reflected on her dedication, sharing that Ortiz's "work wasn't finished until everybody was cared for." Wanda Schuler, a coworker at Aberdeen, remarked that Ortiz "was very proud of the fact that she was going to go over to take care of Soldiers," adding that whatever Ortiz did, "she always had a smile. Even if she had a bad day, she always had a smile." Wanda confirmed that everyone at the Kirk Clinic was "devastated" upon hearing of Ortiz's death. Major General Gale Pollock admitted that "having one of the family go down is very, very hard. You feel like a piece of your heart is gone."

A grateful nation posthumously bestowed the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart on Ortiz. New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine also acknowledged Ortiz's "patriotism and dedicated service to her country and her fellow Soldiers." He ordered all flags in the state to fly at half-staff in her memory. Maria Ortiz willingly served her country with honor, integrity, and pride. True to her calling, she attended to her patients' comfort, recognized their psychosocial needs, and always provided the highest level of nursing expertise.

Maria's survivors included her parents, Jorge Ortiz and Iris Santiago; her four sisters, including her twin, Maria Luisa Medina; and her fiancé, Juan Casiano.



TIMOTHY P. PADGETT

Died: May 8, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

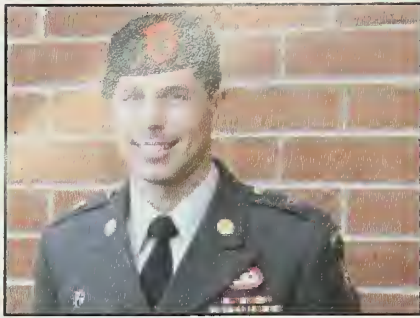
Unit: 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1996-2007

Special Forces Sergeant Timothy P. Padgett died for his country on May 8, 2007, while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom, when Taliban fighters fired guns, grenades, and mortars at his Special Forces team while they were conducting a combat patrol in Tarin Kwot, Afghanistan. Padgett died from wounds he received during the firefight. The 28-year-old Green Beret was assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Funeral services for the fallen hero were held on May 16, 2007, at the First United Methodist Church in DeFuniak Springs, Florida, after which he was laid to rest with full military honors in the Glendale Natural Preserve Cemetery in Glendale, Florida.

Driven by a desire to serve his country, Padgett joined the National Guard on January 19, 1996, and enlisted in the active Army in 2003 as a Special Forces recruit. He attended basic training, advanced individual training, and airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was then assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for further training. He completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 2006 and received his assignment with the 7th Special Forces Group. He deployed to Afghanistan in March 2007. Padgett's military education includes the Special Operations Combat Course, Airborne School, Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Training, Warrior Leader



Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Combat Diver Qualification Course, and Diver Medical Technician Course. He was also an Army Ranger medic.

Timothy was born on January 13, 1979, in Geneva, Alabama, but was raised in DeFuniak

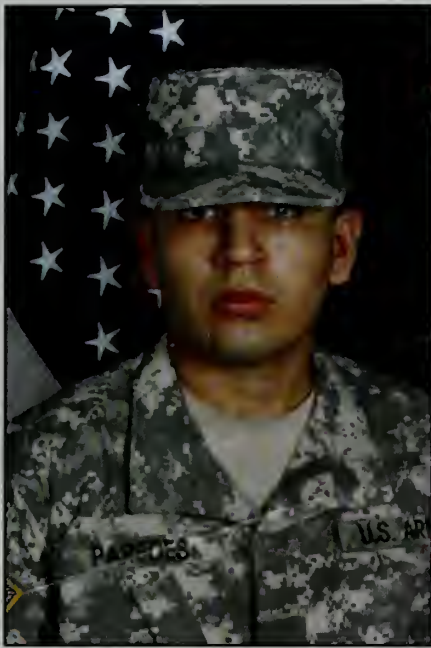
Springs, Florida. While still in school, Tim volunteered at the Argyle Volunteer Fire Department. He graduated from Walton High School in 1997, and worked with the South Walton Fire District as a firefighter and a paramedic before going active duty. Tim was a popular man whom most knew for his big smile. His fellow firefighters called him "Smiling Tim." Family members describe their warrior as a man who died fighting for something he believed in. His mother recalls, "He loved what he was doing; he believed in what he was doing; and his doing, what he was doing, was his choice. He believed in what he was doing!" A spokesperson for the South Walton fire district described his former colleague: "Tim was a much-loved and respected firefighter with our department. Tim enjoyed helping others, and it was this attribute that led him to the fire service and then on to bravely serving his country as a member of the United States military."

About 800 Airmen paid their respects to Padgett at Hurlburt Field, Florida, before Padgett's funeral services in DeFuniak Springs. Staff

Sergeant Keith Batchelder, who served with Padgett, stood among the mourners at the DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport. He said, "It was an honor to serve with him." Comrade and fellow Special Forces teammate Don Scott remembered that his friend had a "great sense of humor and zest for life," and fondly recalled, "Anyone who knew Tim, knew Tim never complained, only smiled and was always willing to help. He would do anything to help anyone. Honor this great man and his life." While the hearts of Timothy's family are broken at the untimely and tragic loss of a great son, a loving father, and a devoted brother, their hearts also swell with pride knowing that he was an American hero who dedicated his life to helping others. Tim lived an admirable life and served his country with honor. Now this country honors him with the deepest respect and the most sincere gratitude.

Tim's awards and decorations with the United States Army include the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Parachutist Badge, Special Operations Diver Badge, and the Special Forces Tab.

Timothy is survived by his daughter, Summer; his mother, Glenda; his father, Tommy and his wife, Marilyn; his sister, Serena; his brother, Rex; and his fiancée, Stacey.



JAVIER G. PAREDES

Died: September 5, 2007

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Corporal Javier G. Paredes was killed on September 5, 2007, by a rocket-propelled grenade in Baghdad, Iraq. The 24-year-old medic served with the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Benning, Georgia, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Family and friends paid their last respects on September 14, 2007, at the St. Patrick Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas, before Paredes was laid to rest with military honors at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

Paredes found a home in the Army in 2004 and became a dedicated Soldier after having overcome an abusive and neglectful childhood, passing through a series of foster homes, and often separated from his four brothers.

Nicknamed "Niño," Javier was born June 11, 1983, and graduated from Ingram High School in Ingram, Texas, a significant accomplishment given the trauma and instability he endured throughout his young life. Yet, he always remained amazingly innocent and positive. After his high school graduation, he worked construction and other odd jobs. His coworkers and friends remember him as a hard worker who often volunteered for night and holiday shifts. Niño was an avid San Antonio Spurs and Dallas

Cowboys fan. Friends were initially surprised when he joined the Army, but agreed that he truly found his calling in helping people as a medic. Javier's family described him as "proud and strong and loved his job." Javier's aunt described her nephew as "a good kid," and says, "His mother would have been proud of him." Javier's brother, Pedro, remembered that at some point his brother considered attending college. Instead, he joined the Army. He described Javier's resolute decision: "When he makes up his mind about something, he does it, and he does it all the way."

Gary Priour, the executive director of the Hill Country Youth Ranch where Javier resided during his high school years, made the following comments about Javier: "When he found his way into the Army and became a medic, he found something that really fit. He loved to help people....He gave his all to everything and became something in spite of his beginning. Unfortunately, he made the ultimate sacrifice. He had so little in life, but made the best of it." Coworker and friend

Victoria Hernandez remembered Javier: "He was our little baby. Every morning when we got to work he would give everyone a hug. He always had a smile on his face. There wasn't a person he didn't touch." San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger and City Councilwoman Lourdes Galvan attended Javier's funeral, honoring the young man who did not have enough time to achieve his full potential. Javier Paredes was a young man who overcame enormous obstacles with determination. Javier didn't allow his circumstances to define him; he defined his circumstances as the stepping stones that paved his way to a bright and better future—a future that, while all too short, proved him noble and worthy of this country's honor.

Paredes's courageous service earned the young and dedicated Soldier the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Javier is survived by his aunt, Maria, and his four brothers.



JUAN S. RESTREPO

Died: July 22, 2007

Rank: Private First Class

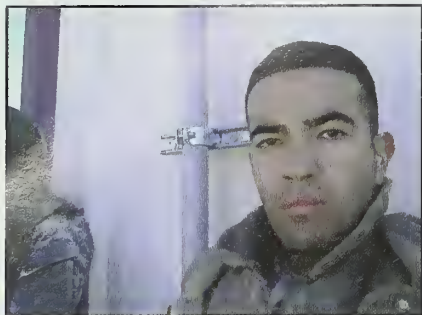
Unit: 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Private First Class Juan S. Restrepo made the ultimate sacrifice for his adopted country on July 22, 2007, in Korengal Valley, Afghanistan. The 20-year-old airborne combat medic died of injuries he received when his dismounted patrol came under small arms fire. Restrepo served with the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, out of Vicenza, Italy, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Funeral services for the fallen hero were in his native Colombia.

Juan was born October 7, 1986, in Neiva, Colombia. When he was a young boy, Juan's family moved to the United States in search of a better life. They settled in Pembroke Pines, Florida, where Juan graduated from Charles W. Flanagan High School in 2004, and enlisted in the Army shortly afterward in order to provide for his daughter. Neighbor Micki Cochran remembers Juan as an avid musician who played in a band and was all-around a "good kid." He said he was a "typical teenager with dreams of becoming a musician." Pembroke Pines resident Juan Garcia recalled his young neighbor: "Juan...always will be one of the most beautiful kids I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. He held all the good qualities that a person can have, including kindness, courtesy, always a big smile on his face, happy, and so many more, I can't list them all."



Comrade Raul Padilla memorialized Restrepo in an online guestbook: "I served in Afghanistan with Juan Restrepo. He was my platoon's medic and in the short time I knew him I knew he was a special kind of person. I guess Jesus thought the same. I am very proud to have known Juan and

lived beside him." While those who knew him are devastated by the loss of this young man, his family and friends can be assured that the citizens of this country are exceedingly grateful for the sacrifice their

beloved Juan made. Private First Class Juan Restrepo was a true hero and America is indebted to him and his family forever.

In addition to the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Combat Medical Badge awarded to Restrepo posthumously, his unit named a bunker at a firebase in the Korengal Valley after their fallen medic and comrade in gratitude for all that Private Restrepo had sacrificed.

Juan leaves behind many family and friends to cherish his memory.





JONATHAN RIVADENEIRA

Died: September 14, 2007

Rank: Specialist

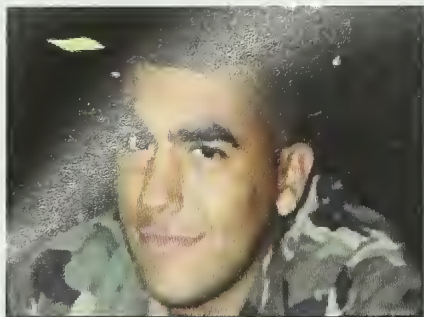
Unit: 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Specialist Jonathan Rivadeneira was killed on September 14, 2007, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle while conducting combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq. The 22-year-old combat medic was assigned to the 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas. Rivadeneira served his unit with dedication and valor, volunteering to accompany his unit on the front lines rather than remaining in the safety of the aid station. About 200 friends and family gathered to say their final farewells to their beloved husband, son, friend, and Soldier on September 25, 2007, at St. Joan of Arc Church in Jackson Heights, New York, after which the young Soldier was laid to rest in St. Michael's Cemetery in Astoria, New York.

With aspirations of someday making medicine, specifically anesthetic nursing, his career, Rivadeneira enlisted in the Army soon after graduating from high school. He deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on October 2, 2006, his fourth year in the Army.

The only child of Martha Clark, Jonathan was born March 22, 1985, and raised in Queens, New York. He graduated from St. Joan of Arc School in Jackson Heights,



New York. While attending basic training in March 2004, he met the woman who would become his wife, Heather Nied. They were married in April 2005. Fellow medics described Jonathan as courageous and inspiring, while friends and family described him as "a very happy and well-liked person—a good

friend and a good husband to his wife, Heather." They recount how Jonathan told them that "life was nothing but a gift and not to take anything or anyone for granted." His wife, Heather, said of her devoted husband, "He was my hero and he always will be. He was always really courageous. He inspired me and taught me so much. I will never meet anyone else like him. He was everything to me." She described her husband as "bright and caring" and said, "He was always really interested in just taking care of his Soldiers....It was his strength I loved the most." Martha Clark said of her son, "I want to remember him like the last time I saw him; handsome and smiling.... All the Soldiers who died should not be called heroes; they should be called martyrs."

Sergeant Nate Tormala, a medic who served alongside Rivadeneira, memorialized him this way: "You had an awesome sense of humor, a great personality, and you always brought a smile to other Soldier's faces whenever you spoke with your character. I am extremely honored to have had the chance to serve with you in our country's Army, served with you side by side in training as medics, and to deploy with you to Iraq and serve with you there doing what medics do best... helping others. You are a true combat medic!" Two other comrades, Sergeant Lisa Pantin and Sergeant Odell Pantin, recall Rivadeneira fondly: "We were stationed in the 27th Main Support Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division with 'Riva,' and never a day went by that we didn't enjoy his wonderful sense of humor and jokes. Our 'Riverdance' as we called him, gave us so much joy and laughter, and he will forever be sorely missed by his fellow Soldiers. He was an exceptional Soldier medic and friend; the Army has truly suffered an irreplaceable loss, as have we all."

Heather Rivadeneira told her husband's family and friends to "remember to hold on to the good times." Jonathan's life produced many memories for his wife, for his mother, and for his extended family and friends. Jonathan is survived by his wife, Heather, and his mother, Martha Clark.



LESTER G. ROQUE

Died: November 10, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Specialist Lester G. Roque died on November 10, 2007, as a result of wounds sustained in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Direct enemy fire hit Roque's patrol in Aranus, Afghanistan, on November 9, 2007. Several Soldiers lost their lives in the same incident. The 23-year-old medic served with the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, based in Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Italy. Lester's family held a viewing of his casket on the 22nd and 23rd of November, 2007, with a funeral service the next day at the Church of Our Fathers, Forest Lawn, Cypress, California. Lester was laid to final rest with full military honors in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Cypress.

A native of the Philippines, Specialist Roque served his adopted country with dedication. He enlisted in the Army on February 2, 2005, completed basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and medical advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and graduated from airborne school at Fort Benning, Georgia. His first and last duty station was with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team as a trauma medic. While in Afghanistan, Roque's maturity and leadership led to his selection as senior medic of Chosen Company, a responsibility he handled with distinction. He established two aid stations at combat outposts, conducted numerous combat patrols, and set

up a local national clinic to provide health care for the surrounding populace. At the time of his death, the young medic was concluding his 15-month deployment in Afghanistan. Roque intended to serve in the Army for five years and then leave the service to study nursing in California.

Lester was born on December 4, 1983, in Obando, Bulacan, Philippines, and graduated from the Claret School of Quezon City, class of 2001. He immigrated to the United States with his family in 2003. While waiting for his green card so he could enlist in the Army, Lester attended Harbor College. He also worked at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, in a Honda parts warehouse, and at his father's architecture office. Lester was devoted to his family and never missed a chance to call home. He planned to marry his fiancée, Leikathryn Garcia Rivera, in January 2008. Lester is remembered by family and friends as "funny, outgoing and cheerful, and sometimes...a daredevil." He was "talkative and curious," and a huge movie buff who never missed an action flick. He also loved video gaming, playing basketball, snowboarding, and traveling. Lester also had a caring and generous side. He sent money home to his mother, gave his car to his younger brother when he went overseas, and showered his fiancée with gifts and flowers. Lester's father noted, "Soldier: that was his life. And he was a good soldier. A good son." He recalled that Lester called home twice a week. "When I talked to him I told him always,

'Watch your back. You are in a war.'" A fellow platoon member, Staff Sergeant Creighton, paid this tribute to Roque:

"When he was my platoon medic, Doc Roque was worth his weight in gold....As a squad leader I knew I could go to him and get what I needed any day....Doc Roque...worked his heart out making sure that all the company's medics were squared away. He would gladly put on his kit and go on a mission with his brothers. And if we can be thankful for anything, we can be thankful that Doc Roque died out there, surrounded by his surrogate family, the boys of Chosen Company."

Roque's commendations demonstrate his exemplary service. The Army awarded him the Bronze Star Medal posthumously, the Purple Heart posthumously, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, the Combat Medical Badge, the Expert Field Medical Badge, and the Parachutist Badge.

Lester is survived by his parents, Antonio and Clarissa Roque; his brother, Leo; his fiancée, Leikathryn Garcia Rivera; and an array of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.



MANUEL A. RUIZ

Died: February 7, 2007

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Petty Officer Third Class Manuel A. Ruiz died on February 7, 2007, in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, from injuries he sustained in a helicopter accident. He was a passenger in a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter that experienced difficulties about 20 miles northwest of Baghdad. Seven military personnel died in the crash. The failure of the aircraft was attributed to either mechanical malfunction or hostile fire. Ruiz was assigned to the 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group in support of the II Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

On February 21, 2007, a viewing was held at the Frampton Funeral Home in Federalsburg, Maryland, followed by a reception at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall. On February 22, the 21-year-old was laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

Ruiz joined the Navy in May 2005. He attended the Hospital Corpsman School in Great Lakes, Illinois, and subsequently reported for duty at the Field Medical Service School at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. At the time of his death, Ruiz was only two weeks into his second tour in Iraq as a helicopter medic. He had volunteered to return in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom because he wanted to help people, and he



knew he was making a difference. His patriotic fervor knew no bounds.

Manny was born on March 19, 1985, in Rota, Spain. He graduated from Colonel Richardson High School in Federalsburg, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, in 2003. After his Navy service, he hoped to work with the state police as a helicopter paramedic and had aspirations to further develop his artistic talents at the Art Institute of Washington.

Manny's relatives and friends reminisced and grieved his passing. His parents recalled

that "he was proud of what he was doing. He was happy. He loved his job." Other family members remembered Manny as "an energetic, fun young man." They referred to him as Little Manuel, because he was his father's namesake. His mother characterized him as a very sociable, engaging boy. She said he was enthusiastic about running and derived great pleasure from that pastime. His brother, Jacob, remembered his last conversation with Manny on his visit home two weeks before his death. Manny assured Jacob that he loved the family and would miss them, and he predicted that he'd see them "one more time." His high school principal, Christine Handy-Collins, remembered Manny as an energetic student who was eagerly looking forward to becoming a Sailor and serving his country. On several occasions after graduation, Manny returned to the school on recruiting visits, formally garbed in his dress whites. Marjorie Scott, his former art teacher, said, "The kids

really respected him." She mainly remembered her gifted student for his artistic abilities, observing, "When Manny would pick up a pencil and draw, there was so much emotion, so much power in his drawing. He could make a pencil and paper sing." On his last visit, Manny shared photos of a wall mural he was painting in his barracks in Iraq. "So, you see, he carried his talent not just through school, but into the service," Scott said.

Hospital Corpsman Second Class Tommy Fejarang remembers Ruiz as a tall, lanky kid, always smiling and slouched at his desk at Hospital Corpsman School. As his platoon leader at school, Fejarang would have Manny stand hand dryer watch while they had a head break. He said Manny's sense of humor was much appreciated during those stressful days, and he would often talk about the war with his fellow Sailors, and about what it meant to him to be there to provide support. Fejarang remembered how excited Manny was to be doing what he was doing. He said, "I am so proud to have known such a person...my brother, a hospital corpsman, a Sailor. You will never be forgotten." Ruiz's compassion and quiet intelligence had an effect on many of his comrades, both at school and on the battlefield. They carry his memory in their hearts and are honored to have known such a brave and noble man.

For his extraordinary contributions, dedication to duty, steadfast service in the line of fire, and willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice, the Navy recognized Ruiz with the Purple Heart and the Navy Achievement Medal. His family set up two memorials in his honor, one with the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society and the other with the Fallen Soldiers Fund. The memory of Manuel's spirit will shine brightly in the hearts of his family, friends, and comrades.

Manuel is survived by his parents, Manuel and Lisa Harris Ruiz; his brothers, Joshua and Jacob Ruiz; his paternal grandfather, Tito Bermudez Caromona of Palma, in Spain's Canary Islands; and many loving relatives and friends.



RYAN D. RUSSELL

Died: March 5, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Specialist Ryan D. Russell sacrificed his life for his country on March 5, 2007, while caring for wounded fellow Soldiers in Baqubah, Iraq. The 20-year old medic was serving with the 1st Squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, based at Fort Hood, Texas, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was providing lifesaving assistance to his injured comrades after an improvised explosive device (IED) hit one of his unit's Humvees. Russell was struck and killed when a second IED detonated. A memorial ceremony was held in Russell's honor at the Nashville Praise and Worship Center, Nashville, North Carolina, and he is buried in Ayden Cemetery, Ayden, North Carolina.

The men in his family inspired Ryan to join the Army. His grandfather, an Army veteran, was a Soldier for 21 years. His stepfather also served in the Army as a radiology technician. Ryan took the oath of enlistment in 2004 and graduated from basic training at Fort Hood, Texas, which was also his first permanent assignment. He deployed to Iraq in August 2006 and served there until his death. A short time before, he had reenlisted for a five-year term of service and was on orders to report to Walter Reed Army Medical Center as his next assignment. Ryan went above and beyond the call of duty in extending his care and interest to the children of Baqubah. During his deploy-

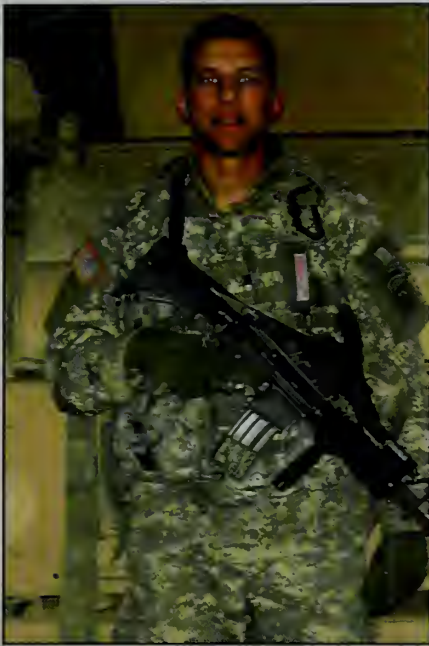


ment, he contacted a hometown organization, Give2TheTroops, asking them to send him school supplies, shoes, socks, clothes, toys, and sporting equipment, which he then distributed, much to the children's delight. Ryan's actions did much to brighten the lives of these children who were growing up in a nation ravaged by war.

Ryan was born on June 11, 1986, in Elm City, North Carolina. He grew up in Nash County, North Carolina, and attended Southern Nash High School. While a student there, Ryan was known as the class

clown—a title he took great pride and pleasure in and always did his best to live up to. As children, Ryan and his brother Robert belonged to a church youth group, the Royal Rangers, that church's counterpart to the Boy Scouts. Very active and engaged, both he and Robert earned a reputation as accident-prone, constantly incurring injuries of one sort or another when the group went out camping. According to their mother, Ryan visited so many emergency rooms that she was astounded when he chose to become a medic. Family recalled the young man as always unpredictable and often shocking. For instance, Ryan was notorious for turning up with a Mohawk haircut or shaving his head entirely. He loved to create a sensation. Friends noted that he left Nash County a boy just out of high school and returned home on leave a man.

Ryan is survived by his mother and stepfather, his brother Robert, and numerous relatives and friends. As a tribute to Ryan, his family has established a memorial fund and ask his family and friends to donate to Give2TheTroops in Greenville, North Carolina, in his name. Although Ryan's life was brief, it scintillated with pure joy, youthful frivolity, and worthwhile achievements!



BENJAMIN L. SEBBAN

Died: March 17, 2007

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1998-2007

Sergeant First Class Benjamin L. Sebban died on March 17, 2007, while serving in Baqubah, Iraq. In his Memorial Day 2007 radio address, President George W. Bush described Sebban's heroism. He said, "In Iraq's Diyala Province, Ben saw a truck filled with explosives racing toward his team of paratroopers. He ran into the open to warn them, exposing himself to the blast. Ben received severe wounds, but this good medic never bothered to check his own injuries. Instead, he devoted his final moments on this earth to treating others." Assigned to the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the 29-year-old was serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A memorial service in his honor took place on March 28, 2007, at Christ Church in South Amboy, New Jersey. He was buried the following day at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

Sebban joined the Army in 1998. He completed basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and moved on to become a combat medic, completing advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. A career Soldier, he attended airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Benjamin carried his knowledge and skills around the world in



whose wife was expecting a baby. He offered to deploy so the Soldier could be present at his child's birth. For Sebban, all the Soldiers who were in his care were his "children." Just two days before his death, he was promoted to sergeant first class.

Benjamin called Chattanooga, Tennessee, his home. However, he was born on July 14, 1977, in Tunisia, as an American citizen, while his mother was serving as a missionary in North Africa. He moved to South Amboy, New Jersey, with his mother as a four-year-old. Benjamin grew up in South Amboy, attended St. Mary's School, and graduated from Middlesex County Vocational-Technical High School in 1996. He completed studies at the Word of Life Bible College in Schroon Lake, New York, graduating in 1998. Unconditional selflessness, dedicated thoughtfulness, and a rare sense of humor were hallmarks of Benjamin's character. On one occasion, he lent a large sum of money to a fellow Soldier in need. Another time, he sent a gift certificate to Major Brad Rather, his physician assistant colleague, who was on leave in the States, specifying that it be used for a romantic dinner for Rather and his wife.

Fellow medics praised Sebban's willingness to train and develop beginner medics. He often bared his arm and good-naturedly allowed

service to his country. Among his assignments abroad, he trained medics in the Republic of Georgia during two separate deployments and served as a Special Forces medic in West Africa. Always extremely considerate of his comrades, Sebban volunteered to serve in Iraq in place of another Soldier

a new medic to practice venipuncture or improve intravenous skills. A flood of accolades arrived at his mother's home after his death, all expressing grief and praising Sebban's engaging personality, unquestioned integrity, and unstinting benevolence. He inspired many with his compassion, humor, and devotion. His fellow Soldiers vow that, although Sebban may be gone from their lives, he is not gone from their hearts and prayers. He lives on as an inspiration and the epitome of a true American hero.

Sebban's character, performance, and devotion to duty earned him a number of awards and decorations. These included the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Army Good Conduct Medal with one clasp, the Army Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Combat Medical Badge, the Expert Field Medical Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. President George W. Bush personally presented Sebban's mother with the Silver Star, a symbol of his service and sacrifice.

Grieving family and friends created a scholarship fund in Benjamin's honor—the Benjamin L. Sebban Warrior Fund. It is intended to subsidize scholarships for persons who follow in his footsteps—medics who enter the medical field after their service.

Benjamin is survived by his mother, Barbara Filik Walsh; his brothers, Daniel and David, both Army veterans; and a host of good friends and close comrades.



ASHLEY SIETSMA

Died: November 12, 2007

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 708th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), 108th Medical Battalion, 108th Sustainment Brigade, Illinois Army National Guard

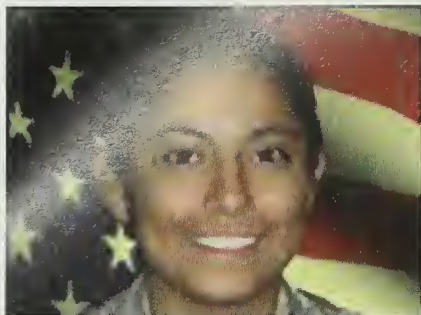
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Specialist Ashley Sietsema died while she was serving her country in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on November 12, 2007, in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Specialist Sietsema, an Army health care specialist and ambulance driver, was conducting a routine medical transfer of a patient from Camp Buehring to Camp Arifjan when she was involved in a single-vehicle accident. The patient was unhurt. The 20-year-old combat medic was part of the Illinois National Guard out of North Riverside, Illinois, and was assigned to the 708th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), 108th Medical Battalion, 108th Sustainment Brigade. Mourners gathered on November 18, 2007, to say their farewells at the Ronan-Moore-Finch Funeral Home in DeKalb, Illinois, after which Sietsema was laid to rest with full military honors in Fairview Park Cemetery.

Driven by a love of volunteering and helping others, Sietsema joined the Army National Guard in December 2004. She completed her basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and her advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. She deployed for Kuwait September 3, 2007.

Ashley was born September 14, 1987, in Chicago, Illinois, the daughter of proud mother Olivia Alvarez. Ashley graduated from East Leyden High School in Franklin Park, Illinois, in 2005, and briefly attended Northern Illinois University in pursuit of



a nursing degree. While still in high school, Ashley met Max Sietsema in her English class, and on April 27, 2007, Ashley and Max were married. Ashley enjoyed helping people in need, teaching Bible classes, and volunteering for community service projects.



Ashley was described by her community as “bubbly,” “vibrant,” and “patriotic.” Her family commented that her life was full of promise and recalled how her generous spirit led her to volunteer in her church and the community from an early age. A family member said, “We are proud of the woman Ashley became and so is her husband, Max.... She is truly our hero and will always be in our hearts.”

As more than 500 of Sietsema’s fellow Soldiers attended a memorial service in her honor at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, commander of the 708th Medical Company, Captain James Dodd, warmly remembered Sietsema: “Ashley has left her handprint on our hearts, and

she touched each and every one of our lives. Even though today she is not physically with us, she will never leave our hearts or our minds. Ashley will not be forgotten, and we will keep her spirit with us forever.” He described Sietsema as “a Soldier who always wanted to help others and who looked for the positive in every situation.” He continued, “Her compassion and dedication for her fellow Soldiers could be seen in the work she completed on a daily basis. Ashley’s time was limited in the Army, but the impact she had on hundreds of Soldiers will be felt daily.” Close friend and fellow Soldier Specialist Jessica Bibeau recalled the plans her friend had for the future: “Upon returning home, she planned to continue school, remarry in Mexico to include her family [there], and start a family of her own. She had so many goals, and just barely got started.”

Although Specialist Sietsema’s brave and committed military career was all too short, she accumulated a number of awards and decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with “M” device, National Defense Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon. She was also promoted posthumously to the rank of Specialist.

Ashley is survived by her devoted husband, Max; her mother, Olivia; and her brother, Kyle.



LANCE C. SPRINGER II

Died: March 23, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Sergeant Lance “Craig” Springer II died on March 23, 2007, from wounds he received when an improvised explosive device detonated near his unit. At the time, he was on a combat patrol in Baghdad, Iraq. The 23-year-old was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division out of Fort Richardson, Alaska. Friends and family said their final goodbyes to their fallen son, brother, and comrade at the Lakeside Church of God in Fort Worth, Texas. He was buried with full military honors at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery in Dallas.

Springer became a member of the Army Medical Department unexpectedly. When he enlisted in the Army, he envisioned putting his automotive repair knowledge and skills to work for his country. Color blindness prevented him from working as a mechanic, but the Army recognized his talents in another area and trained him as a combat medic. His father said that Craig savored this role because it gave him the opportunity to be on the front lines. After graduating from advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Springer completed airborne school and was sent to Fort Richardson, Alaska. When his first tour of duty was complete, he reenlisted for another four years, hoping to spend them all in Alaska, a part of the country that he had come to love. He



had been serving on his second deployment in Iraq for five months when he was killed.

Craig was born November 6, 1983, the oldest of three children. He graduated from Western Hills High School in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2002. He played saxophone in the school's marching band and was deeply involved in Scouting. He was also an active member of the Church of God in Fort Worth and later in Anchorage, Alaska. Craig furthered his education at Tarrant County College in Texas, earning an associate degree in automotive repair. He took great pleasure in playing video games and off-roading in his Jeep.

Springer connected with the people of Iraq, often passing out candy, crayons, toys, and stuffed animals to appreciative children. When his store of handouts was depleted, he called home and asked for more supplies. A number of churches and a bank in his hometown responded to his plea, sending the donations they collected from generous members.

His family says that Craig had a childhood dream of becoming a Soldier and was extremely proud of his military service. His father recalled that he "always wanted to be a Soldier. He's always loved the Army, his whole life." Lance added that his son supported his coun-

try in its efforts to help the Iraqi people. "His attitude was, 'We're the army for the Iraqi people until their own army is strong enough.' He firmly believed that the United States was meant to be in Iraq." Describing Craig's duties as a medic, his father said, "That was his ministry." Craig's unstinting service and commitment to his beloved country and to his comrades is exemplified in this excerpt taken from a communication from his parents:

"Doc Springer was very proud to be an airborne combat medic. He took his job very seriously and excelled at his position. On his very first combat patrol, he exposed himself to enemy fire to treat two comrades wounded by sniper fire. This action earned him the coveted Combat Medical Badge. On another foot patrol, a roadside bomb exploded near his position, knocking him flat on his back and giving him a concussion. Ignoring his own injury, he immediately began treatment of another Soldier who had been wounded in the shoulder by a piece of shrapnel. Those he treated on the battlefield said that his calm professionalism helped them remain calm during their painful ordeal. And everyone knows that Doc Springer never lost a patient. At the time of his death, Doc Springer had reportedly treated more wounded Soldiers than any other medic in his squadron."

Springer was promoted to sergeant posthumously. He was also awarded the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, and the Combat Medical Badge. His family especially treasures the last accolade, as they knew how important it would have been to Craig. In honor of his valor, the aid station at Forward Operating Base Falcon now bears his name.

Lance is survived by his parents, Lance and Evanna Springer; his brother, Christopher; and his sister, Michelle.



DAVID A. STEPHENS

Died: April 12, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2007

Sergeant David A. "Alex" Stephens gave his life in service to his country on April 12, 2007, when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device during combat operations in Miri, Afghanistan. The 28-year-old medic served with the 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team with the 82nd Airborne Division, out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Tennessee native was laid to rest in Pennington Cemetery in Franklin County, Tennessee.

Stephens enlisted in the Army in March 2005 and joined the 82nd Airborne in February 2006. Previously, he had earned a bachelor's degree in abnormal psychology from the University of Tennessee Chattanooga in 2002. This promising young Soldier had been selected for Officer Candidate School, but he chose instead to train as a medic to help people. Stephens was inspired to help others after his mother, Ginger, died from a heart attack.

Alex's family and friends remember a young man who loved to laugh and had a strong sense of family. Although they miss him greatly, their sense of pride softens their sense of loss. Alex could make anyone feel as if he had been their best friend forever. His



humor and wit were incredible. He made everyone around him smile. His aunts April and Darlene both say how privileged they feel to have watched him grow from a baby into a brave and compassionate man and a loving and devoted husband and father. His family is moved by the outpouring of love and

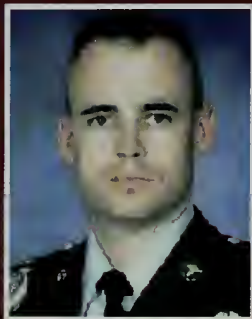
support they are receiving from friends and strangers alike. Becky Burt Smith knew Alex through high school and college. She warmly recalls, "He could make anyone laugh and so he was very charming....He had a wonderful heart and would have done anything for anyone. He was a very loyal friend. I was in a bad car accident right after high school, and he made a point to visit me, which really meant a lot to me. He was a very special person that I thought a great deal of. I was privileged to know what a wonderful person he was."

Stephens was also a Bob Dylan fan. He brought an iPod full of Dylan's music with him to Afghanistan to get him through the experi-

ence. "Sergeant Stephens was an inspiration to all the paratroopers of his unit," said First Lieutenant Dennis Curry, 2nd Battalion, 508th Rear Detachment commander. "He always volunteered to help others."

As the funeral procession headed to Pennington Cemetery, Alex's family saw their wonderful community honor him respectfully as the hero he was. People lined the streets; 1,000 flags flew along the beautiful roadside; men, women, and children covered their hearts and waved flags or held banners in Alex's honor. Veterans on motorcycles were carrying flags or standing outside at the funeral home waving flags. This display helped Alex's family realize the true meaning of community: "In our time of tragedy, we felt comfort and blessed to witness all this."

Alex leaves behind to cherish his memory his wife, Megan and his three-month-old daughter, Sienna; his father, Charles Stephens; and an extended family of aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.



JOHN S. STEPHENS

Died: March 15, 2007

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1985-2007

Sergeant First Class John S. Stephens was killed when his patrol came under enemy attack in Tikrit, Iraq, on March 15, 2007. He was serving with the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kansas. Stephens was driving a command vehicle when it was hit by an improvised explosive device. He died from the wounds he received in the blast. Stephens' funeral service took place in his hometown of La Grande, Oregon, on March 26, 2007. He was escorted by the Patriot Guard Riders to his final resting place in Grandview Cemetery.

Stephens enlisted in April 1985. During his long and distinguished Army career, he served in Operation Desert Storm in 1991 and two tours in the Balkans. At the time of his death, the 41-year-old was on his third tour in Iraq, having been posted there in 2003 and 2006. Scott, as he was known to family and friends, had earned an associate's degree in computer science from the University of Phoenix and was planning to work towards his master's degree. As he reached the end of his Army career, he was preparing to continue serving his country in a civilian role, preferably in the CIA.

Devoted to caring for others, Stephens was a line medic, medical trainer, and team medic for a brigade-level military transition team. He epitomized what it means to be



a medic. He took younger Soldiers under his wing and taught them all that he had learned in his 20-plus years in the Army. Stephen's family and friends remembered him as "100 percent military." They say he completely believed in what he was doing. He was able to live the life of his dreams, do-

ing what he wanted to do and becoming who he wanted to be. He loved sports (especially the Bengals and the Braves), hunting and fishing, and his country. He was known to get tears in his eyes when he heard the National Anthem.

Scott's sister, Michelle, was distraught over the death of her brother, but she was able to find comfort and solace in knowing that her brother touched so many lives and affected even strangers with his compassion and devotion. Because of their appreciation for his sacrifice, he lives on in all their hearts and thoughts.

Staff Sergeant Miller says Stephens was not just his platoon sergeant, but also his friend, hero, and mentor. After Stephens died, Miller carried the bulletin from the memorial service at Fort Riley inside his body armor. He says he will never forget Stephens' sacrifice: "I love you as a brother from one medic to another." Staff Sergeant Ryan Sattelberg said that Stephens was like a father to him. From the first day they met, Stephens accepted Sattelberg into his family and made him one of his "sons." Sattelberg said Stephens taught him about "life, the Army, and everything in between." He has many great memories and knows they will meet again. "So thank you for your steadfast leadership, your amazing personality, and your friendship."

Stephens posthumously received a second Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, and a Meritorious Service Medal. He had previously received the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, and two NATO medals.

Scott is survived by his wife, Beate; his children, Darren, Brian, and Cheryl; his parents, Gene and Eva Jo Stephens; and his sister, Michelle Flowers.



DAVID T. TOOMALATAI

Died: January 27, 2007

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Private First Class David T. Toomalatai gave his life for his country on January 27, 2007, when the ambulance he was riding in rolled over a land mine in Taji, Iraq, while on a mission to pick up injured Soldiers. The 19-year-old combat medic was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, Texas, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He had been in Iraq for only a few months at the time of his death. Family and friends laid him to rest in Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes, California.

Following in the footsteps of his retired Army father, and motivated by the education benefits the Army has to offer, Toomalatai saw the Army as a way to provide for his young family. He enlisted shortly after high school and completed boot camp at Fort Benning, Georgia, before training as a medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He chose to train in the medical field as a platform to jump-start his chosen career as a physician's assistant. Toomalatai's battalion was sent to Iraq on November 1, 2006.

Born in Torrance, California, David was raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, until the age of nine, when his family returned to California. In 2005, he graduated from Banning High School, Wilmington, California, where he played varsity football and let-



tered in volleyball. He was an excellent student who took Advanced Placement classes. After high school, David went on to further his education at Harbor College in Wilmington and work at a pharmacy until he learned he was going to become a father. His son, Damien, was born March 28, 2006, while David was in Iraq. The two wouldn't meet until September of that year, when David was allowed a 10-day leave home, but it was love at first sight. David dedicated his time to the baby, singing to him, changing diapers, feeding him, and putting him to sleep. He was thrilled to be a father.

David was known for his sense of humor and his smile. He made an impact on his teachers and classmates during his time at Banning High. Much of the 2005 graduating class, teachers, coaches, and counselors reunited for the Soldier's funeral. Teacher Mary Bane remembered David as a young man who joked around but was well-mannered. She recalled, "He had so much potential. Just tons. I always had a sense he was one of those students who was really going to go somewhere and do something." David's former football coach and fellow players scrawled farewell messages on a football and set

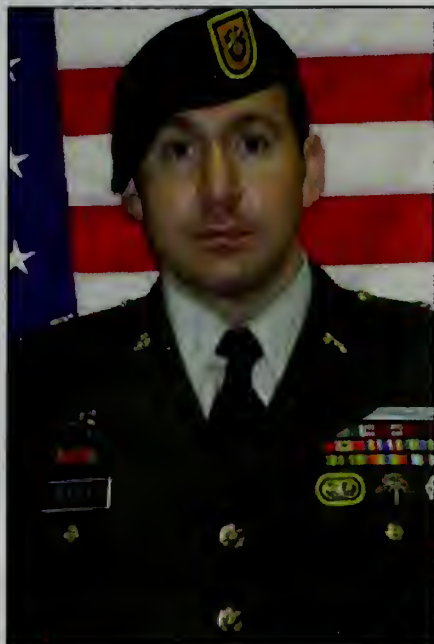
it on his coffin during his burial service, while others honored his Samoan heritage by placing leis. Banning High School retired David's number 80 football jersey as a tribute to their fallen teammate.

David was a devoted father to his newborn son, Damien. He proudly posted photos of his son and wrote, "I've got a beautiful baby boy named Damien, who's my life." Family described their son and brother as charismatic and sarcastic, but also loving and intensely competitive. They say he wouldn't think twice about spending \$20 to try to beat his sister at air hockey. His sister recalled, "He wanted more kids. He wanted a lot of things. I would say it wasn't his time, just because he had a lot of plans after he came back from Iraq."

Comrade and fellow medic Allen Chase said of David, "[He] died defending freedom and saving lives of his fellow Americans and the Iraqis that we protect. David will live in our memories and be respected by all who served with him." Poet Robert Orr wrote, "To live in the hearts of those you leave behind is never to die." While David is no longer with us physically, he lives on in the hearts of his loving family and numerous friends and colleagues. Most assuredly, David lives on in his son.

Private Toomalatai's Army career was cut short far too soon, but his country honored him with the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, awarded posthumously.

In addition to his young son, Damien, David is survived by his loving parents, Vai and Sally; his brothers and sisters, Savali, Doreen, Elizabeth, Mara, James, and Michael; and a large extended family.



MICHAEL J. TULLY

Died: August 23, 2007

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: C Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1993-2007

Sergeant First Class Michael J. Tully was killed on August 23, 2007, at Al Aziziyah, southeast of Baghdad, Iraq, when a makeshift bomb exploded near his vehicle. Tully was assigned to C Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) out of Fort Lewis, Washington. His body was escorted home by his brother John, also serving in Iraq. He was buried with full military honors at Beechwoods Cemetery in Falls Creek, Pennsylvania.

Tully was a proud Soldier with a long and distinguished career. He joined the Marine Corps in 1993, shortly after graduating from high school, and trained to become a scuba diver. After four years in the Marines, Tully wanted a new challenge, so he transferred to the Army and completed airborne training. He served as a Ranger for four years. In 2004, he was accepted into the Special Forces Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, where he trained as a combat medic. Upon receiving his Green Beret in December 2006, he was assigned as a medical sergeant to the 1st Special Forces Group at Fort Lewis, Washington. At the time of his death, he was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq.

Michael had diverse interests and excelled in many areas. He was an avid sportsman—he enjoyed hunting, fishing, scuba diving, running, and swimming. He also enjoyed



watching car racing. Michael was extremely intelligent and compassionate. He was a member of the National Honor Society at Brockway High School, Brockway, Pennsylvania, from which he graduated in 1992. His ability to learn quickly easily allowed him to excel in all the military training courses he took and to master the difficult Indonesian language, which he spoke fluently.

Michael is remembered by friends and family for his caring and compassionate nature. His father treasures a recent photograph of his son comforting a young Iraqi girl suffering from

burns: "You could see his hand reaching for her to say, 'Honey, don't be afraid.'" Jack Tully also remembers that during Michael's training in U.S. hospitals, he delivered a baby one night. "That night represented one of the happiest moments of Michael's life," his father

said. This deep caring for others contributed to Michael's excellence as a Soldier and as a combat medic. On Michael's career and sacrifice, his father said, "People have to understand there are a lot of people out there like Michael who do this every day. We've got to be proud of people like that."

Tully was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. His exemplary service record is evident in the number of medals and honors he received during his career. These include the Army Commendation Medal Second Oak Leaf Cluster, the Good Conduct Medal Second Award, the National Defense Service Medal Second Award, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon, the Meritorious Unit Citation, the Expert Infantryman Badge, a Parachutist Badge, a Military Free Fall Parachutist Badge, a Scuba Diver Badge, the Ranger Tab, and the Special Forces Tab.

Michael is survived by his wife, Heather; his son, Slade; his father and stepmother, Jack and Marilyn Tully; his mother, Dolores Newman; his brother, John; and his sister, Heather Farkas.



DUSTIN SCOTT WAKEMAN

Died: August 4, 2007

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division

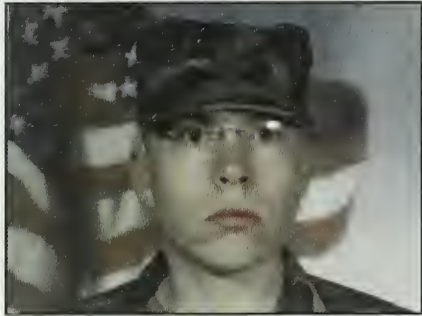
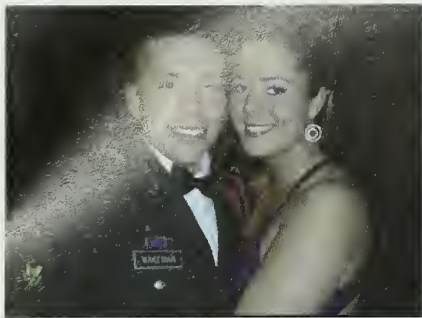
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2007

Sergeant Dustin S. Wakeman died on August 4, 2007, in Hawr Rajab, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device struck the vehicle he was riding in during combat operations. He was serving with the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, based at Fort Richardson, Alaska. He was laid to rest with full military honors on August 13, 2007, in the Laurel Land Memorial Park in the Garden of the Apostles in Fort Worth, Texas.

Wakeman joined the Army in 2004 at the age of 25. He completed basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He became a medic, and afterwards attended airborne school at Fort Benning, Georgia. His dedication to the medical service before and during his deployment to Iraq impressed and endeared him to his comrades. When he was killed, he was assisting Soldiers injured by a bomb that had exploded a few minutes earlier.

Dustin was born and grew up in Fort Worth, Texas. He graduated with honors from Everman High School in Fort Worth in 2000. While in high school, Dustin enjoyed a wide variety of interests, participating in the math and science clubs, the drama program, the band, and the National Honor Society. After graduation, he attended



Tarrant County College and the University of Texas at Arlington to study engineering. His father remembered, “[Dustin] told me he had to start listening to somebody. [Joining the Army] was something he felt like he needed to do to make a better life for himself.” He hoped eventually to pursue a career in medicine. “[Dustin] liked helping people,” his father remembered. “He found that fulfilling.” His natural attributes of vivacity, love of life, and a great sense of humor complemented his chosen career path. He used his wit to lighten tough

situations. A fellow Soldier recalls that, just before the explosion that took his life, they “were joking like always in the midst of chaos.” He wanted to make those around him, even on a combat mission, breathe a little easier.

Wakeman is remembered not only for his compassion, but also for his dedication to his profession. His Army career was brief, but he received a number of medals and honors, which testify to his skill as a medic and a Soldier. Among these are the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, two Overseas Service Ribbons, a Combat Medical Badge, and a Parachutist Badge.

Dustin is survived by his parents, David and Margaret Wakeman, and his brother, Zack.



ROWAN D. WALTER

Died: February 23, 2007

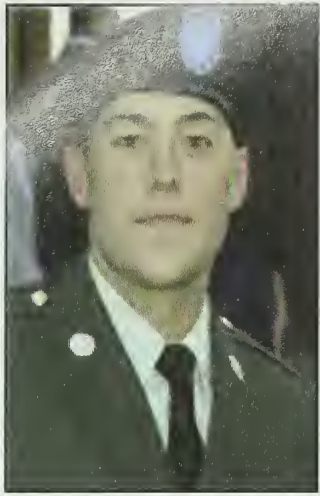
Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Private First Class Rowan D. Walter paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country on February 23, 2007, when he succumbed to wounds suffered on February 22 when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee during combat operations in Ramadi, Iraq. The 25-year-old medic served with the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colorado, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Two other Soldiers perished alongside him. A dedicated medic to the end, Walter had left his vehicle to assist Soldiers wounded in an earlier attack. Private Walter was buried with full military honors in Clovis Cemetery, Clovis, California.

A peace-loving, easygoing young man, Walter felt called to become a medic in order to help his fellow Soldiers. He hoped to pursue a career in the medical field. Friends recalled that he could often be found reading medical dictionaries and memorizing body parts for fun. Learning came easily to him, and he quickly became known as his unit's best "doc." Similarly, Walter was quite proficient in learning other languages. While in Europe after high school, he learned French in only a few weeks. In Switzerland, he taught a man who spoke no English to speak French; in turn, the man taught Walter to speak Chinese. While in Iraq, he began learning Arabic.



Rowan's mother recalled that her son joined the Army to serve his country and to fight for freedom, wherever that might take him. She attested to the family's support of Rowan's mission: "Our family supports [serving one's country and fighting for freedom]. He went in an honorable and heroic way into the next world. He has a continuing mission to fulfill there."

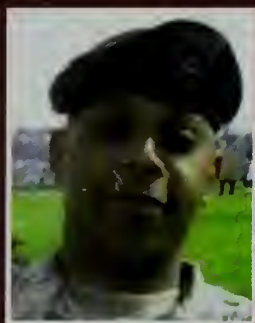
Rowan was quite adventurous and always in search of the next thrill. He enjoyed boxcar racing and camping, among other activities. After graduating

from high school, he traveled in Switzerland and France while fulfilling his mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Upon his return from his mission trips, Rowan attended several colleges before enlisting in the Army. Friends remembered Rowan for his gregariousness. He drew people to him and made all those around

him smile and feel better, no matter the situation. Rowan's childhood friend Michael Soldani remembered Rowan as "the one"—the one everyone flocked to, who is the unspoken center of the group of friends. His friends remembered that, in high school, Rowan would wear his hair crazy and unkempt, and wear "out-of-date" eighties clothing. He excelled in difficult classes, like AP chemistry, without studying, and befriended everyone he met. "Even then, when we would make fun—not maliciously, but just kid around about people—he wouldn't take part in that. He was always watching out for people," Kevin Healy, another childhood friend, said.

Posthumously, the young medic was awarded a Bronze Star for valor and a Purple Heart. Rowan's death inspired the senior class of 2007 at his alma mater, Buchanan High School in Clovis, California, where he graduated in 1999, to create a memorial garden honoring the four Buchanan graduates who gave their lives for their country in Iraq.

Rowan is survived by his wife, Priscilla; his parents, Bryan and Adele; sisters Hailey Cohen and Hanni White; brother Rome; and a wide circle of family and friends.



DAVID L. WATSON

Died: September 22, 2007

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1997-2007

Corporal David L. Watson died on September 22, 2007. He served as a medic with the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, based at Fort Lewis, Washington. Watson died when he succumbed to non-combat-related injuries in Baqubah, a city northeast of Baghdad, Iraq. He touched so many lives that his funeral had to be held in a high school auditorium to accommodate everyone. Hundreds came to pay their respects. He was buried with full military honors at New Hope Cemetery in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Watson began his Army career in February 1997. He dedicated himself to helping others and educated himself accordingly, earning a bachelor's degree in 2002 and completing the Health Care Specialist advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, in 2006, after which he reported for duty at Fort Lewis. Watson was a dedicated Soldier and medic and, at the time of his death, was on his third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As his duty and education record shows, David always strove to be the best. In high school, he excelled in academics and athletics. He was named student of the year at Tuckerman High School and also won the school's Mr. THS competition. He is



remembered, however, not for what he was able to do, but for who he was. Gloria Walker, a friend, remembers, "[David] had an infectious smile, and always wanted you to know he was glad to meet you. Every time I'd see him he'd give me a smile or wave." Others remember his bright, beaming smile. A music teacher from his high school, Kaye Person, remembers, "He was a handsome young man and always had something nice to say to cheer you up." This compassionate and caring nature and optimism complemented his

education and helped him do his job even better. It also meant that his death has caused a sizable void in his community. "He had a great attitude toward life. He just did his job," remembers Specialist Foad Samsami.

During his all-too-short Army career, Corporal David Watson received a number of honors and awards, including the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon. Watson was promoted posthumously to the rank of Corporal.

David is survived by his wife, Lisa Powell Watson; two sons, Dayton Xavier and David Caelan; his mother, Linda; two brothers, Bryant Watson and Derek Robinson; two sisters, Christal Hill and Nikki Moore; his grandparents, O.C. and Velma Bobo; his grandmother, Ernestine Watson; and in-laws, Johnny and Brenda Powell.



NATHAN L. WINDER

Died: June 26, 2007

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: C Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1993-2007

Green Beret Sergeant First Class Nathan L. Winder perished on June 26, 2007, from wounds sustained from enemy small arms fire in Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq. The 32-year-old Special Forces Soldier had been assisting a quick reaction team engaged in combat. He was assigned to C Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Lewis, Washington, serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a member of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force—Arabian Peninsula. His family held a memorial service in his honor on July 6, 2007, at the North Latter Day Saints Chapel in Blanding, Utah. His parents, wife, son, and 14 of his siblings attended the ceremony. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, on July 13, 2007, with full military honors.

Following in the footsteps of two of his brothers who also served in the Army, Winder enlisted in the Army on August 31, 1993, as a mechanized infantryman. He completed basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and subsequently served at Fort Riley, Kansas, and Fort Hood, Texas. He also completed an assignment at Camp Hovey, Korea. He earned the coveted Green Beret at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 2006 and then signed in to his final assignment at Fort Lewis, Washington.



Nathan was born on December 26, 1974, in Seoul, South Korea, where he was abandoned and then adopted at age two. His parents, Terri and Tom Winder of Blanding, Utah, adopted eight children, several of whom have special needs, in addition to their ten biological children.



Nathan grew up in Blanding, in southeast Utah. Nathan's mother noted that the "fact that he was abandoned at such an early age affected him all his life." She added, "He was very tender, even though he had created a hard shell on the outside. And he laughed a lot."

Once, while visiting an Iraqi hospital, Nathan spotted a young girl with a facial laceration that would potentially be disfiguring. The plight of the youngster touched Nathan's caring heart. He arranged his fellow Soldiers around the girl for privacy and then sutured her wound.

Then he comforted the tot and gave her a stuffed toy. Nathan's father remarked, "He loved kids." At the time of his death, Nathan was working to set up transport for two other injured Iraqi children so they could travel to the States for medical attention.

Nathan's mother, Terri, affirmed that all of her three military sons were positive about their contributions in Iraq. They believed that

the press failed to represent the "good things that happen there." Terri said that Nathan "felt like they were making a difference" in Iraq. He told his mother, "They don't know what we're offering them. They've never tasted freedom before." Almost every day, Nathan phoned his wife, Mechelle. However, one day Mechelle didn't receive a call. The ominous silence was worrisome. Then the official, dreaded knock came on the door. While she was talking with the survival assistance team, Nathan's last e-mail glowed on the computer screen. "After they left, she wrote him a note, just in case," his mother said. "That's kind of how you feel about something like this. It just seems so unreal."

Sergeant Nathan Winder's awards and decorations paint a picture of an ideal Soldier and a model patriot. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. Other awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Driver/Mechanics Badge and the Special Forces Tab.

Nathan is survived by his wife, Mechelle; his son, Logan; his parents, Terri and Tom Winder; and a loving array of brothers and sisters.



JONATHAN D. WINTERBOTTOM

Died: May 23, 2007

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2003-2007

Corporal Jonathan D. Winterbottom gave his life for his country on May 23, 2007, in Al Nahrawan, Iraq, just outside of Baghdad, when a makeshift bomb hit his vehicle while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Winterbottom, just a week shy of his 22nd birthday, was serving as a medic with the 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), out of Fort Benning, Georgia. A fellow Soldier, Corporal Victor H. Toledo Pulido of Hanford, California, was also killed in the explosion. Winterbottom is buried next to his mother in Oakwood Cemetery in Falls Church, Virginia.

The 21-year-old medic had joined the Army shortly after graduating high school in 2003, and was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq. Winterbottom had initially sought a position in the Special Forces, but, after completing basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and combat medic training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, he decided to devote himself to being a medic since he felt that he could improve the lives of others following that path. "[Jon] told me he felt committed to really learn his stuff, because the lives of his fellow Soldiers would be dependent on him," his father, Robert Winterbottom, remembers. Winterbottom enjoyed helping others in his chosen career and had begun to plan his life after the military; he hoped to attend medical



school and one day become a paramedic.

Jonathan was born in the District of Columbia and grew up in Falls Church, Virginia. Because of his father's job, he lived in Africa as a child, for two years in Rwanda and three in Niger. This experience instilled in him both a sense of adventure and fluency in French. When his family moved back to the United States, bookish Jonathan initially had difficulty settling into an American school, but he soon made friends with a group called the "Fab Four" and blossomed into an outgoing young man who believed

in living life to its fullest. At Falls Church High School, Jonathan participated in wrestling, track, cross-country, football, and lacrosse. In addition to leading an active sporting life, he led an active social life, putting friends and family first. Jonathan's best friend's father, Nathan Vervalin, notes, "It's a testament to Jon that the people who knew him and loved him, when they talk about him, there's always a big grin on their face."

The people touched by Winterbottom remember him with love and miss him greatly. His huge personality and smile lit up every room he

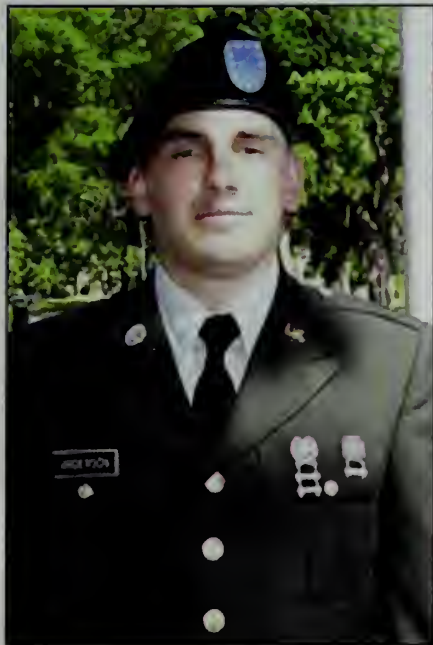
entered. Winterbottom reached out to comfort not only the friends and comrades, but also the families of fellow Soldiers who died during his first tour of duty in Iraq. The mother of one such Soldier, Private First Class Steven Sirko, a good friend of Winterbottom's in Iraq who was killed in April 2005, says of him, "I can't say enough about how much I loved [Jon] and how much I respected him and how much peace he brought me." Many of his fellow Soldiers remember him as one of the most impressive medics they've ever known. He was a pleasure and inspiration to work with and they knew they were in good hands and trusted his abilities. Although sometimes our destinies lead us into directions others cannot follow nor can they change, Winterbottom will always be remembered for his compassion, his humor, his friendship, and his brotherhood. This is the legacy he leaves behind for others to follow and achieve.

Among Winterbottom's many honors and awards, he earned an Army Commendation Medal with valor during his first deployment for treating the wounded "before the smoke had settled," according to his platoon sergeant. The commander of his Humvee the day of Winterbottom's death also calls Winterbottom a "true hero."

Jonathan is survived by his father, Robert; his daughter, Lilly; his sister, Sarah; his brother, J.J.; and a large circle of friends. His father says of Jonathan's daughter, "Lilly's always going to have a big family because of Jon. He's created a lasting bond between us and his friends." For a man who valued friendship and relationships with such intensity, this legacy is perhaps the most important of all.

2008

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JOSHUA R. ANDERSON

Died: January 2, 2008

Rank: Private First Class

Unit: 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

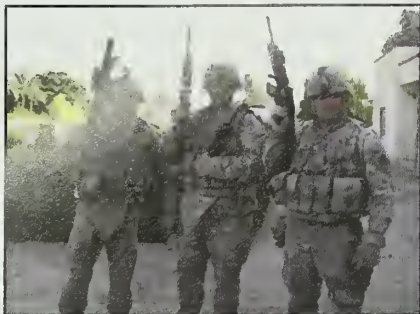
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2006-2008

Private First Class Joshua R. Anderson died following the detonation of an improvised explosive device on January 2, 2008, in Kamasia, Iraq, near his unit's base outside Baghdad. A combat medic, Soldier, and respected member of the Army Medical Department, Anderson was assigned to the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Georgia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 24-year-old medic had been serving in Iraq for only two months prior to his death. He is buried at the Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

While Anderson's military career was brief, his service was honorable. He entered the Army in 2006, wishing to serve his country and to provide a better life for his family. Upon entry to active duty, Anderson attended basic training and subsequently took part in advanced individual training at the Army Medical Department Center and School at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, graduating as a combat medic. From there, he received orders assigning him to the 6/8 Cavalry. Anderson deployed to Iraq with his unit in October 2007.

A native of southern Minnesota, Joshua was born, raised, and educated in Jordan and played for the Jordan High School football team. Family members recalled that



Joshua had a talent for reaching out and helping family, friends, and acquaintances. Soldiers who shared his service in Iraq commonly referred to him as “Doc Anderson” and thought of him as an uncommonly caring individual.

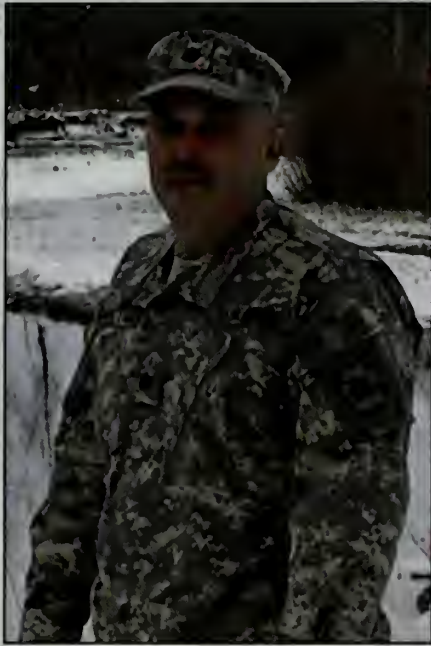
An endearing portrait of Josh-

ua’s life and personality emerged from the remarks and observations shared by his family, friends, and fellow Soldiers. His mother, Lynn Anderson, noted that Joshua had a “cheerful demeanor that was contagious.” She recalled that Joshua “was always loving and caring...he had a quick smile and helping hand,” adding that he would “give you the shirt off his back.” When his family mailed him care packages full of homemade cookies, candies, and colorful Band-Aids, he handed them out to the children of Kamasia, providing them a few moments of joy and innocent diversion in the midst of war. Specialist Aaron Holt, a comrade in arms, wrote to Joshua’s wife and parents follow-

ing his death, “Doc was one of my best friends in the platoon. I don’t think I could have gotten through our first couple of months in this place without him. He was always there for me...whether it was to share a cigarette, share knowledge, or share complaints. He will be sorely missed. We are all better people for having known him. He was a man whose kindness knew no limits. I am so sorry for your loss, and know that I share your grief.” Joshua’s wife, Hannah Anderson, confided that the couple frequently discussed their future plans, and Joshua “talked about having more kids.” Hannah noted that, in their last exchange, he “said he loved me, and I said I loved him, and those were our last words.” Joshua’s mother, Lynn Anderson, added, “He was doing something he was proud of, and we were proud of him, too.”

Joshua’s acts of selfless service, so typical of his approach to life, will live forever in the hearts of his family, friends, and comrades.

Joshua’s surviving family members include his wife, Hannah Anderson; his three-year-old daughter, Savannah; his parents, Keven and Lynn Anderson; and his siblings, Michael and Jennifer Anderson.



RICHARD J. BERRETTINI

Died: January 11, 2008

Rank: Lieutenant Colonel

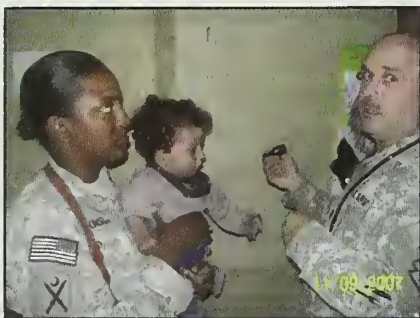
Unit: Pennsylvania Army National Guard Medical Detachment

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1973-1976 & 1984-2008

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Joseph Berrettini died on January 11, 2008, from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device hit his Humvee on his way back to his home base from the Khowst Province in Afghanistan. The attack occurred on January 2, and he was evacuated by air from Afghanistan through Landstuhl, Germany, to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. A dedicated Army Nurse Corps officer, Richard was the first Army nurse to die in Afghanistan, the third to die in the Global War on Terrorism, and the first nurse practitioner to perish from wounds suffered in combat. Berrettini's comrades honored his life at a memorial ceremony on January 15, 2008, at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan. On January 18, 2008, a Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Pittston, Pennsylvania. His burial, with full military honors, followed at the Mount Olivet Cemetery in Wyoming, Pennsylvania.

Berrettini's military career spanned 27 years of service in the Navy and the Army. After high school graduation in 1973, Berrettini enlisted in the United States Naval Reserve as an internal communication specialist. In 1984, he joined the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as an operating room nurse. When Berrettini completed his advanced practice nursing graduate degree, he specialized as a family nurse practi-



tioner. As a nurse in the Guard, Berrettini was assigned to the National Guard Medical Detachment, Erie Clinic. After volunteering in February 2007 to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as part of the Logistical Task Force, he initially served at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan, and was subsequently transferred to Camp Clark, where he provided primary care for the troops and the local citizenry.

A native of Dupont, Pennsylvania, Richard earned an Associate Degree in Applied Science from Luzerne City Community College and a bachelor's degree from St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia. He later graduated from State University of New York at Stony Brook with a Master's Degree in Nursing. In his civilian career of 14 years, Richard served as a school nurse at an elementary school and at Port Allegany High School in western Pennsylvania.

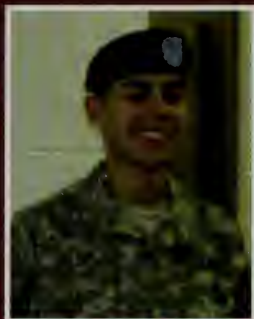
The Camp Clark Warriors wrote an especially poignant tribute to Berrettini, stating how much they would miss him, adding, "We

know that he fought hard to stay, but God has other plans for him. We called him our 'Italian Stallion'...a little Italian man with a lot of heart. So angels in heaven beware, our Italian Stallion will be there making sure that each of you feel as special as he made us feel."

Chaplain (Captain) Iris Dickerson added, "If I had one word to describe 'Doc' Berrettini, the word would be 'inspiring'...his memory will be in our hearts, his walk, his talk, his laughter, his presence... his inspiration."

In tribute to this citizen Soldier's service and sacrifice, the Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners founded the Richard Berrittini Scholarship. The Wounded Warriors Project and the United Service Organization established two additional funds in Berrettini's honor. As a testament to his extraordinary service, Berrettini was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, two Army Achievement Medals, two Overseas Service Ribbons, two National Defense Service Medals, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, Afghan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Badge, and Pennsylvania Commendation Medal.

Richard is survived by his wife, Jane; his son, Vincent, an Air Force Academy graduate and pilot deployed in the Persian Gulf when his father was injured; his son, Christopher, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point; his mother, Doris; and his brother, Nello.



ALBERT BITTON

Died: February 20, 2008

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2008

Corporal Albert Bitton died on February 20, 2008, in Baghdad, Iraq, from injuries sustained while riding in a Humvee that encountered a makeshift roadside bomb. He was 20 years old and had been serving in combat for seven months with the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Hundreds of friends and family members crowded inside Congregation Adas Yeshurun Synagogue in the West Rogers Park community of Chicago, Illinois, on February 26, 2008, to honor his memory. At his burial, carried out with full military honors, Major General Robert Radin presided over the Honor Guard that rendered a 21-gun salute in tribute to his service. Internment was at Memorial Park Cemetery, Skokie, Illinois.

A native of West Rogers Park in Chicago, Illinois, Albert earned excellent grades as a student at Ida Crown Jewish Academy and actively participated on the school's wrestling team. He joined the military in 2005 following high school graduation, both to serve his country and as a stepping-stone to a better future. After completing his military commitment and earning educational benefits, Albert hoped to attend medical school and become a surgeon.



Photographs and reminiscences offered by Albert's family, friends, and colleagues reflect his stellar personal qualities. A friend, Tal Kohn, shared that Albert was totally dedicated and committed to the life of an Army medic, adding, "He knew it was something that was going to contribute to his future." Rabbi Leonard Matanky noted that, while he was overseas, Albert kept in close contact with family and friends via the Internet. As time passed, Albert was increasingly challenged in his efforts to cope with the stresses of combat, but he glossed over the difficulties he faced in e-

mails to his parents, sparing them as much anxiety as possible. Rabbi Matanky said that Albert met everyone with a cheerful face and a winning smile. "His interactions with others drew them in." He said Albert had both strength as a warrior and spiritual vigor.

Rabbi Zev Cohen affirmed that Albert's life was an inspiration to his community and that "his memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew him." Rabbi Cohen concluded that perhaps "Albert's last lesson is to teach us not to waste any second of life." A former classmate and close friend, Max Saltzman, said that Albert "had a great

smile, it's true. But it was not his smile alone that made him so great. It was the kindness behind that smile." Benjy Kandelman, a fellow student, revealed that Albert asked his father to send him as many one dollar bills as he could spare. Albert then would give the dollars to the Iraqi children he met, "because he loved making them happy." Albert's wife Melissa said that she just couldn't adjust "to the fact that I'm not going to talk to him ever again. My immediate reflex is to remember...things for the next time he calls." Elie Bitton, Albert's father, provided the definitive salute to his son's life, verifying that Albert "loved his country very much."

Mark "Doc" Edgington became fast friends with Bitton when they served together at Fort Benning. Edgington said, "I remember him needing someone to go to Jewish services with him, and I would go because he was my buddy. I was so proud of the day when he was in charge of the service. As he said a prayer for us, I remember having tears in my eyes. ... I loved him with all my heart, and I'll miss him forever. He was my buddy, a fellow medic, and, most of all, a wonderful person."

Bitton's service to his country was sustained by a deep conviction of patriotism and bravery in the face of extreme danger. At his burial service, his country acknowledged and celebrated his service and sacrifice on the field of battle by awarding him the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Those who survived Albert included his wife of just a few months, Melissa Handelman; his loving parents, Elie and Silvia Bitton; and two sisters, Jackie and Elizabeth Bitton.



DUSTIN K. BURNETT

Died: June 20, 2008

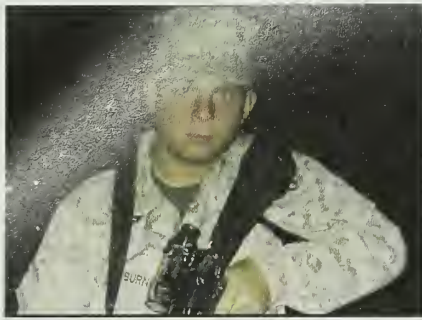
Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: 1st Marine Division Detachment

Branch: U.S. Navy

United States Navy Hospital Corpsman Dustin Kelby Burnett was killed on June 20, 2008, in the Farah Province of Afghanistan, when the vehicle he was riding in detonated an improvised explosive device. The 19-year-old was a "Devil Doc" with the First Marine Division Detachment at Twentynine Palms, California. At the time of the incident, Burnett had been serving in Afghanistan for three months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. On July 4, 2008, Burnett's ashes were interred at the Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, California, with full military honors.

Dustin graduated from Mohave High School in Bullhead City, Arizona, in 2006. From his earliest days, Dustin was fascinated by the military and clearly articulated his intent to pursue a calling of patriotic service. He expected to dedicate his life to the preservation of the nation's freedoms. His Aunt Beeper confided that Dustin clearly "was wise beyond his 19 years!" She reminisced that, when he was 14 years old, a priest posed a hypothetical question. He asked Dustin to choose a saint he would like to be. Dustin readily responded that he would prefer to be a "Saint of Armed Forces." He added, "I will uphold freedoms to people who have none. I [would] seek out those who wish to bring hate and terror to our country; I want to be a soldier not only of America, but of God!" Debbie Nuchols, Dustin's mother, affirmed that her son "wanted to go over



there and fight to make sure we keep freedom here and spread freedom to other people." She acknowledged, "Americans are split on their impressions of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but those who serve in the military deserve support." Finally, she observed, "War is not pretty and war is not a black-and-white issue. My son was a true patriot." His family finds a measure of comfort in their faith and solace in their conviction that Dustin is in heaven. One retired hospital corpsman who called himself "Old Doc" ruminated and wrote a final accolade to Dustin:

"There is no higher calling in life than to tend the wounded, heal the sick, and comfort the sad heart. These magnificent sailors who volunteer to serve their country as Marines are the very finest expression of "duty, honor, country" the nation has to offer the world. May God watch over all those he touched and give comfort to his family and fellow Marines. My heart aches."

Another Devil Doc, Hospitalman Eric Garneau of Jacksonville, Florida, wrote in tribute, "Dustin, you were a great friend and buddy of mine during our time in corps school...your jokes always made me laugh and got me through those school days." Garneau mused, "It seems like only yesterday we were there in the cold winter of Great Lakes...I feel an empty place inside me reading that you have passed. A great person and a great DOC will be missed." He concluded, "I know somewhere in heaven [you are] making someone laugh."

Dustin's casket traveled through Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, and arrived in Bullhead City, Arizona, in the company of a military escort. Dustin's remains continued on to their final destination accompanied by an honor guard consisting of the Bullhead City Police, the Patriot Guard Riders, and state troopers. As the procession moved down the thoroughfare, motorists pulled off the road, stopped, and paid silent homage to Dustin. Family, friends, and neighbors recited a rosary and celebrated a requiem mass for Dustin at St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Church in Bullhead City. A ceremony celebrating his life then took place at the Avi Resort and Casino Convention Center in Laughlin, Nevada. The family established a memorial fund in Dustin's honor with the Military Moms of Bullhead City, Arizona. This group provides and mails care packages to military men and women serving overseas.

Dustin is survived by his parents, Donald and Debbie Nuchols, and a brother, Devin.



ANTHONY CARBULLIDO

Date of death: August 8, 2008

Rank: Petty Officer Second Class

Unit: 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group

Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2000-2008

Navy Petty Officer Second Class Anthony Mark Fejeran Carbullido was killed on August 8, 2008, in Sangatesh, Afghanistan, when his convoy encountered an improvised explosive device. The 25-year-old corpsman was working as an instructor at the Navy Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Illinois, when he deployed to Afghanistan with the 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group. He was buried with full military honors at Guam Veterans Cemetery in Piti, Guam, on the day after what would have been his 26th birthday.

Carbullido, affectionately known as “Tony” or “Tony Boy of Chicago,” was following in his father’s footsteps when he chose to join the U.S. Armed Forces at the age of 18. According to his brother, Austin, Anthony was also following his own “childhood dream of becoming a doctor” when he enlisted in the Navy in the fall of 2000. After completing his basic training at Great Lakes, Illinois, Carbullido was stationed at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, California, where he proved to be an excellent Sailor. Described by his brother as “a real doer,” Tony ascended the ranks of the military through his hard work and dedication to military service and had recently been promoted to Petty Officer Second Class.



He first deployed to Iraq in 2004 as a corpsman. Not long before his second deployment to Afghanistan, he was assigned to the Naval Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes as an instructor. He is remembered by former student Jonathan Arroyave as “a

great corpsman, a great instructor and a great man.” Arroyave attests to Carbullido’s prowess as an instructor by stating, “Everything I know as a corpsman...I can honestly and proudly say I learned from him.” In honor of Carbullido’s exemplary service to his country, a Troop Medical Clinic was renamed in his memory.

Tony graduated in 2000 from Southern High School in Guam, where he grew up. While a student, Tony ran on the cross-country team. He also served in the 21st Guam Youth Congress, and was elected vice speaker in the 22nd Guam Youth Congress. He was an altar server in his village parish, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, and enjoyed running, fishing, diving, and spending time outdoors. Tony is remembered fondly not only as being wild, full of life, and a prankster who loved to have fun, but also as an individual who valued hard work and dedication and who approached challenges head-on. Jermaine Alerta, Tony’s friend since kindergarten, described Tony as “a very funny guy...always talking. He was fun to be around. He was... just a great guy.”

Carbullido’s military comrades remember him as a great instructor and leader. Christopher Rollins, who knew Tony from Corps school, remembered that “he wasn’t just a Sailor or a corpsman, he was a mentor, someone to follow and emulate.” Darrell Crone, a retired corpsman who worked with Carbullido at the Corps School, said that

Tony “was an honest-to-goodness good person. He put the command and his students first.” Jose Torres, who deployed with Tony to Iraq in 2004, remembered Tony fondly by saying, “He always knew how to brighten people’s days and make them smile.”



Tony’s father, Anthony, said of his son’s service to his country, “He was over there so we can have the way of life we always believed in. He was the kind of kid that always made the ultimate challenge, and he made this ultimate challenge so we can have freedom anywhere in the world.” Tony’s mother, Aurora, who was surrounded by supportive friends and family as she prayed the rosary, asked her community to pray for her family and for all the families whose loved ones are serving on active duty.

On his last trip to Guam before his death, Tony affirmed that he and his wife intended one day to return home to Guam to raise their family. Just as Guam remained a special place for Tony, he, too, is held dear by his native land, whose officials ordered government agencies to fly all flags at half-staff in honor of their fallen hero and whose acting governor, Mike Cruz, said, “Anthony will rest in the hearts and minds of a grateful people who are humbled by his ultimate sacrifice.”

Tony is survived by his wife, Summer Chaney Carbullido, and his daughter, Lexie; his parents, Anthony and Aurora Carbullido; his brother, Austin, and his sister, Ashley; and countless friends and family members.



RYAN J. CONNOLLY

Died: June 24, 2008

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 173rd Special Troops Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2008

Sergeant Ryan J. Connolly was killed on June 24, 2008, in Khogyani, Afghanistan, when a land mine exploded under a vehicle carrying Connolly and three other Soldiers. Even though he was mortally wounded, he directed others in efforts to save the lives of his grievously injured companions. The 24-year-old Soldier served with the 173rd Special Troops Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, out of Bamberg, Germany. He was buried with full military honors in Santa Rosa Memorial Park in Santa Rosa, California. Hundreds of mourners lined the streets as his funeral procession made its way to the cemetery.

Connolly joined the Army in 2005. He attended basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. On completion of his training, he was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Armored Division, in Baumholder, Germany. In November 2006, he moved to Bamberg, Germany, where he was assigned as a combat medic to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion (Airborne). Connolly deployed to Afghanistan in July 2007 and was assigned to support Alpha Company "Wolverine," 173rd Special Troops Battalion (Airborne) Assault and Barrier Platoon as a combat medic. He trained, deployed, and fought side by side with brothers and sisters in support



of Operation Enduring Freedom and distinguished himself as a member of the Wolverine family. He was a strong, courageous, charismatic trooper and a loving person. The Army had recently recognized Connolly's expertise and skill and promoted him to sergeant. He had only 14 days left in his tour in Afghanistan. Upon his return home, he was scheduled to report to the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California. He was considering pursuing a career as a helicopter pilot.

Ryan had a passion for baseball, classic muscle cars, and

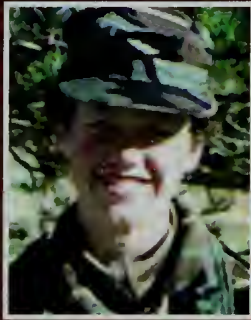
NASCAR racing. During his leave in April 2008, he had purchased a 1970 Chevy Nova and was excited about restoring it. However, nothing excited him more than the two loves of his life: his wife Stefi and his beautiful baby girl Kayla. Whenever Ryan received packages from home, he couldn't wait to show off the new pictures. His brother and sister, Mike and Kelly, remember their little brother as being very protective and always looking out for their best interests. This protective instinct extended from his family to his country. In high school, Ryan was greatly affected by the 9/11 terrorist attacks

on the United States. He joined the Army after graduating from high school to serve his country and "keep the bad guys at bay."

On one occasion, Connolly was one of the first medics on the scene of a suicide bombing. He was credited with saving 17 Afghans. Even the ongoing high level of violence did not dim his enthusiasm for being a medic. He loved being able to help others, both military and civilian. He had remarkable concentration of effort and earned the Expert Field Medical Badge on his first attempt, a feat that has been accomplished only by a select few. His drive and determination were reflected throughout his military career, and he motivated fellow Soldiers to follow his lead in acquiring infantry and leadership skills. Sergeant Bohl recalls, "I know if it hadn't been for Doc pushing me all the time to study, I wouldn't have passed the board."

Connolly's awards include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, Expert Field Medical Badge, Expert Marksmanship Badge (Rifle), and, posthumously, the Combat Medical Badge, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart. His colleagues honored the skilled and dedicated medic by naming the forward operating base in Afghanistan where he was stationed and the aid station on the main base after him.

Ryan is survived by his wife Stefanie and their daughter, Kayla, as well as his father, James Connolly, and his mother, Robin Nelson; his brother, Mike; and his sister, Kelly.



JESSICA A. ELLIS

Died: May 11, 2008

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

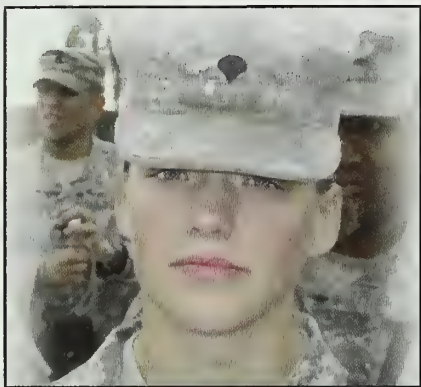
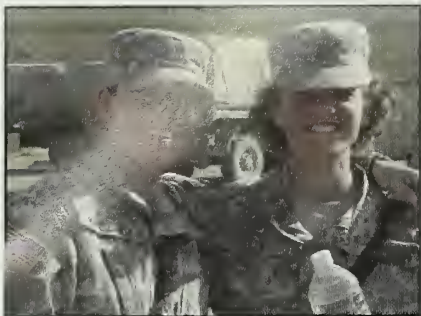
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2004-2008

Corporal Jessica A. Ellis was killed on May 11, 2008, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near her vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq. The 24-year-old medic was serving with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, with full military honors. A funeral mass was held at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral in Baker City, Oregon. As a testament to her impact on her platoon, her battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Miguel B. Hobbs, and her platoon leader, Sergeant First Class Joseph Johnson, traveled from their posts in Iraq for the service. More than 300 of her fellow Soldiers also held a memorial service in Iraq.

Ellis was on her second tour of duty in Iraq when she died. After her first tour, this dedicated young woman described to her parents an intense need to be with “her guys.” She had trained with them at Fort Campbell, and went to war to watch over them. Dedicated, hard-working, and caring, Ellis truly enjoyed her job as medic to her fellow Soldiers.

This was not the first time Ellis had been exposed to the lethal IEDs so common in Iraq. She often went out on patrol with the combat engineers who cleared away road-



side explosives. During her first deployment, this brave young woman had experienced IEDs firsthand at least twice. Three weeks before her death, she escaped with only cuts and bruises when the vehicle in which she was riding was destroyed by an IED. Her family praised her bravery of immediately going back out on patrol, even before her wounds had healed.

Jessica's family recalled a cheerful child who grew into an intelligent, highly motivated woman with a sunny, easygoing disposition. Her childhood was filled with family fishing and camping trips to places like the Sawtooth Mountains

and Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. Jessica was also an athlete, participating in cross-country, swimming, and track and field in high school. Her athletic background enabled her to obtain the high fitness scores that earned her a place as an airborne medic. Jessica graduated from Lakeview High School, Lakeview, Oregon, in 2002, and attended Oregon Community College in Bend for two years. She was studying education, but her nature pulled her toward a life of adventure. Before joining the Army in 2004, Jessica worked for three summers as a U.S. Forest Service firefighter in the Fremont-Winema National Forest in Oregon. Her brother Cameron said that

many people across Oregon and the nation have come to know his sister as a courageous hero. "She couldn't care less about how much wealth she accumulated," he said. "Her interest was in the human aspect of the game."

Her Army buddies described "Doc Ellis" as a beacon of sunshine, offering comfort, a helping hand, and a sympathetic ear. They noted that she was an aspiring country singer.

William Quigg was treated by Ellis when she was helping the physician's assistant of his unit. He had had a bad reaction to some medication and was "about as miserable as a person can be." Quigg remembers that "anyone who was around her couldn't help but be touched by her zest for life. She just always knew how to get someone to smile." Thanks to Ellis, Quigg left the clinic with a smile. Many of her comrades spoke of her unconditional friendship and support, her practical jokes, and her sweet nature. Her loss leaves them with a tremendous emptiness in their hearts, but they know their lives are a little better for having known her.

Ellis's awards and decorations include the Combat Medical Badge, which she received during her first deployment to Iraq. She also earned the Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Meritorious Unit Citation, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and Weapons Qualification, M4, Expert. In recognition and gratitude for her service, the Army promoted her to corporal posthumously.

Jessica leaves behind a loving family that includes her parents, Steve and Linda Ellis; her brother, Cameron; and her sister, Mandy.



ERROL M. JAMES

Date of death: August 4, 2008

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 527th Military Police Company, 709th Military Police Battalion

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2000-2008

Army Sergeant Errol M. James died on August 4, 2008, from injuries sustained at Forward Operating Base Torkham, Afghanistan, during Operation Enduring Freedom. The 29-year-old Sergeant was a member of the 527th Military Police Company, 709th Military Police Battalion, based in Grafenwoehr, Germany. He was remembered by his military comrades in a ceremony held at Katterbach, Germany, where he had lived since October 2004. Sergeant James was buried on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, following a funeral at Friedensberg Moravian Church in Estate Glynn, St. Croix. He was laid to rest in full military uniform in a casket draped with the American flag.

Sergeant James, the man remembered by a comrade as having “the ability to make friends with anyone,” enlisted in the Army in 2000. He served valiantly during his deployment to Iraq as a combat medic in March 2003. He then deployed to Afghanistan in February 2005 to serve as a trauma specialist. He deployed for his second tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2008.

A long and winding road brought Errol M. James from his homeland far from American soil to his post as a Sergeant in the United States Army. Described by his friends as “dependable, loving and easygoing,” Sergeant James was born in Antigua in 1979.



He moved with his family to Anguilla at the age of 12 and, after graduating from high school, he relocated to the island of St. Croix, where he enlisted in the United States Army in 2000.

In a ceremony held in Germany honoring the fallen Soldier,

military friends and personnel paid their respects to Sergeant James. Captain Michael Capps, Commander of the 527th Military Police Company, said, "There is no doubt that the experiences he had on those deployments contributed to defining the man. What Sergeant James brought to us during his life was perfectly clear. He was a hero." Specialist Jacob Adams, who served with Sergeant James as a member of the 527th Military Police Company and who considered Errol one of his best friends, said that "there was a spark about him that drew people to want to be his friend. He truly cared about people and helping others."

Sergeant James is remembered fondly by many as a funny guy who knew how to laugh and how to make others laugh. He loved to

dance, sometimes quite enthusiastically, and he was always there for his friends and family. Whether he was giving a friend a ride to the hospital on the day of surgery or dancing and joking with pals, Private First Class Hetty-Mae Unciano said of her comrade, "He was caring. He was always willing to do more than his fair share."

The governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, John P. de Jongh, Jr., expressed his condolences to Sergeant James's family and friends. The governor stated that "the Virgin Islands has lost another young man who sought out a career in the Armed Forces and was doing his part to protect the freedoms we all enjoy as American citizens." As expressed by Virgin Islands Senator Shawn-Michael Malone, "Sergeant James will always be remembered as a Virgin Islands and national hero. Even in death, he displayed the patriotic spirit [on] which our country was founded."

Errol is survived by his wife, Eva James, his son, Elijah James, and his unborn child. He is also survived by his mother, Jermaine Gumbs-Dempster; his stepfather, Lambert Dempster; his grandparents, Norma Gumbs, Avis James, and Melvin Gumbs; his sisters, Josette, Lucinda, and Kerrien James and Nisa Joseph; his brother, Jules Frederik, and his sister-in-law, Yvonne Ziegler; along with many other family members and friends.



JANELLE F. KING

Date of death: August 14, 2008

Rank: Private

Unit: 115th Combat Support Hospital

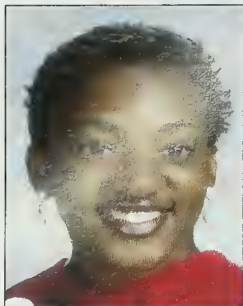
Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2007-2008

Army Private Janelle F. King died in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 14, 2008, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 23-year-old Private was serving as a medic with the 115th Combat Support Hospital from Fort Polk, Louisiana, on her first tour of duty. She was stationed at Camp Cropper, a military detainee center near Baghdad International Airport, at the time of her death. Private King was buried at Fort Sill Post Cemetery in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Private King followed in the military footsteps of her parents when she enlisted in the Army in May 2007. Her father, Brian King, is an officer in the Air Force, and her mother, Jamecia Jackson, spent a decade in the Air Force as well. After joining the Army, Private King graduated from basic training and advanced individual training (AIT) and became a combat medic. She arrived at Fort Polk in January 2008, and deployed to Iraq with the 115th Combat Support Hospital in May 2008.

Described by her cousin, LaVeta King, as "a ball of hilarity," Janelle was born in Altus, Oklahoma, in 1985. Her father remembers her as an aspiring emergency medical technician who devoured books in three days that others would take weeks to read. She had wide interests, including sports, playing the violin, and cooking, and was



known affectionately as a “Food Network Guru” by her friends and family for her ability to cook up delicious meals without a recipe. She moved several times during her youth, and lived in California, Panama, and Hawaii before graduating from Rancocas Valley High School in Mount Holly, New Jersey, in 2003. Her father describes her as a “chameleon” who was able to relocate easily, make friends easily, and get along with all types of people.

This ability served her well in the Army, where, according to LaVeta, “[Janelle would] run around making people laugh. During her time in service, she lit everyone up, from what I heard. That’s Janelle in a complete nutshell. She lived her life from one passionate whim to another. You knew when she stepped into a room.”

Colonel John McGrath, commanding officer of the 115th Combat Support Hospital where Private King served as a medic, said, “In this day and age, Private King was a rare person. She was a dedicated combat medic who treated each of her patients with compassion and skilled medical care.” Her comrades held her in equally high esteem, with a fellow Soldier writing that “King was the one thing that kept me going through Basic Training and AIT. She was an amazing person. No matter what was going on, she could put a smile on your face. She was the greatest friend I could have asked for.” Heather Hughes, who also served with Janelle, said of her fallen

comrade, “Janelle was always one to make people smile, even after a bad day.”

After hearing of Private King’s death, Representative Dennis Cardoza of Merced, California, the town in which King lived before enlisting in the Army, said that it was “a shame that we’ve lost another of America’s finest. We need to honor those who have served.” Echoing his sentiments was Merced Mayor Ellie Wooten, who spoke of the bravery of American Soldiers: While “we worry about the little things...they’re putting their lives on the line.” The city of Merced flew flags at municipal buildings at half-staff in honor of the fallen hero. Flags at the state capitol were also flown at half-staff in her honor. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger spoke highly of the Private: “our nation has suffered a great loss with the death of Private Janelle King. She served bravely to protect the safety of her fellow citizens and Californians will never forget her sacrifice.”

Janelle’s father, Brian, said that Janelle’s death makes his own work in the Air Force harder at times, but he persists in her honor. He says that “on occasion...I see some of the young ladies in Army attire and it makes me think of my daughter. You gotta take that deep breath and keep walking.”

Private King is survived by her mother, Jamecia Jackson; her father, Brian King; her stepmother, Tamara King; her stepsister, Alexandra King; and her stepbrother, Brian King; along with many other dear friends and family members.



WILLIAM L. MCMILLAN III

Date of death: July 8, 2008

Rank: Specialist

Unit: 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2005-2008

Specialist William “Bill” McMillan was serving in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, when he gave his life for his country on July 8, 2008. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He died 12 hours after an improvised explosive device struck the vehicle in which he was riding. Funeral services were held for the 22-year-old Army medic at Southland Christian Church on July 19, 2008, with burial at the Camp Nelson National Cemetery in Nicholasville, Kentucky. A horse-drawn caisson carried the flag-draped casket, shadowed by a riderless horse, Bill’s family, and a bagpiper who rendered the hymn “Amazing Grace.” The 25th Infantry Honor Guard attended as well. Overhead, on that bright summer day, a constellation of Army Black Hawk helicopters performed a flyover.

McMillan’s family demonstrated a proud and enduring tradition of patriotic national service. His father, a West Point graduate, served in the Vietnam War. McMillan graduated from Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Virginia, and attended Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. After a year at the university, he chose to enlist in the Army. He served in Hawaii for a year before being assigned to Iraq. For rendering medical treatment of injured insurgents in Sadr City, a suburb district of Baghdad,



McMillan was awarded the Bronze Star. At that time, his mother prophetically cautioned him, "One Bronze Star is enough, start ducking." McMillan's death came when he was just seven months into his tour of duty.

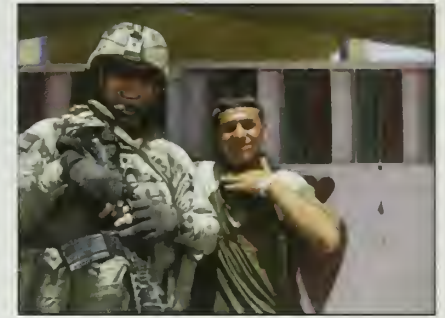
During his brief life, Bill was blessed with a close and loving family. Without fail, he phoned his parents and his wife from Iraq several times a week. Not infrequently, he had to walk two miles through the desert heat to find a telephone. His wife, Elizabeth, noted that in their last conversation Bill sounded happy and concluded by telling her that he loved her. She noted, "I'll always have that."

Bill was a native of Lexington, Kentucky. Those who eulogized him remembered him as a "loving husband, beloved son, steadfast brother, loyal friend, and brave Soldier." They described him as "fun-loving, a prankster who made friends easily." Others recalled his "easy smile and his large 'gorilla paw' hands." His mother revealed that Bill took great pleasure in wakeboarding and boating on nearby Lake Cumberland in Kentucky. He was the Athlete of the Year in high school, serving as the captain of the wrestling, lacrosse, and football

teams. A friend, Max Nelson, affirmed that "I know Bill's up in heaven right now, probably got some other angel in a headlock...and he's bragging about how his wings are bigger." His mother reminisced that Bill "brought laughter and light into any room he entered from the day he was born." In an abbreviated life of 22 years, his achievements and contributions equaled or even exceeded those of many people with a longer lifespan.

Transcending his death, Bill's animated, vital spirit will live on in perpetuity. It will be celebrated and survive forever in the Bill McMillan American Spirit Award Scholarship at the Hargrave Military Academy and in the fund set up in his honor for the Camp Nelson Honor Guard. It will also remain alive in the memories of all who knew and loved him. At Bill's funeral, Army Major General James Myles presented his grieving wife and parents with the medals he so courageously earned in Operation Iraqi Freedom—the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Bill is survived by his wife, Elizabeth McDonald-McMillan; his parents, General William Lloyd McMillan, Jr., and Marge McMillan; his brother, Bradley McMillan; his sister, Lauren Buchanan; and numerous other friends and family members.





JOHN P. PRYOR

Date of death: December 25, 2008

Rank: Major

Unit: 1st Medical Detachment, Forward Surgical Team

Branch: U.S. Army

United States Army Reserve Major and Medical Corps Officer Dr. John P. "JP" Pryor died on December 25, 2008, of wounds incurred when a single mortar round hit his quarters in Mosul, Iraq. He served as a physician in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Major Pryor at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter & Paul in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, followed by burial in Colestown Cemetery in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. The interment took place on January 5, 2009, with full military honors. Before his final deployment, Major Pryor organized his own funeral rites, chose music to be played at the service, selected a casket, and composed his obituary to mitigate his family's burden in the event of his death.

Several memorial ceremonies were conducted to honor and celebrate Major Pryor's life. One took place at the University of Pennsylvania and another in Clifton Park, New York, where attendees shared humorous anecdotes, personal experiences, and life lessons derived from their association with Major Pryor. On the day of this citizen Soldier's funeral, the governor of New York State ordered flags to fly at half-staff in a final tribute to Major Pryor's valor and sacrifice.

The events of 9/11 were a pivotal point in the life of Major Pryor, prompting him to join the Army Reserve. He deployed in 2006 with the 344th Combat Support Hospital to Abu



Ghraib, Iraq, where he served as a frontline trauma surgeon. Major Pryor departed for a second tour of duty in Iraq on December 6, 2008, with the 1st Medical Detachment, Forward Surgical Team, home-based at Fort Totten, New York. His death within weeks of his arrival in country signaled the

end of an extraordinary life of service dedicated to the welfare of his fellows.



JP Pryor grew up in the Albany, New York. At 15, he volunteered with the Saratoga County Emergency Services. At 18, he enthusiastically began an emergency medical technician course and, following successful completion of that program, served as an EMT. In 1984,

after graduating from Shenendehowa High School, he attended State University of New York (SUNY), Binghamton State University, and then matriculated at SUNY University at Buffalo, School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, graduating with a medical degree in 1994. He then served an internship and residency at the latter institution. In 1999, he began a fellowship in trauma and critical care surgery at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and later became an assistant professor of surgery and director of that system's Trauma Department. While on staff at the University of Pennsylvania, JP waged his own personal crusade against guns and violence on the crime-ridden streets of Philadelphia.

Major Pryor's military colleagues held him in the highest esteem. The chief nurse at Abu Ghraib noted that everyone "in our Unit thought about as highly of him as possible." Another associate recalled Major Pryor's "outstanding care and surgical expertise." This fellow Soldier remarked that, after his first tour of duty in Iraq, Major Pryor "sent a report, detailing where improvements in our system of care could be made," adding that "we were amazed at his insightful and thoughtful approach to very difficult problems." A number of Major Pryor's

recommendations focusing on the delivery of trauma/combat care ultimately were integrated into Army Medical Department doctrine.

Civilian comrades likewise greatly admired Dr. Pryor, calling him "a magical man, with boundless energy and goodness." They described JP as "a devoted son, husband, father, colleague, and friend." He also "was an outstanding physician, gifted surgeon, teacher and mentor." A fellow physician inscribed the following tribute to JP:

As a soldier, we respect and salute you.

As a teacher, we seek to emulate you.

As a visionary, we support you.

As a surgeon, we recognize your master skills.

As a human, we applaud and memorialize your unique and lasting contributions.

An academic mentor, Dr. Bill Schwab, wrote that JP's favorite quote was one articulated by Albert Schweitzer, a theologian, musician, missionary, philosopher, and physician from Alsace, France. These words of wisdom hung in a place of prominence on JP's office wall and precisely encapsulated his core values:

... Seek always to do some good, somewhere. Every man has to seek in his own way to realize his true worth. You must give some time to your fellow man. Even if it's a little thing, do something for those who need help, something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it. For remember, you don't lie in a world all your own. Your brothers are here, too.

Major Pryor embodied that model of altruism.

He fully actualized, and will be long remembered for, his self-appointed mission of dedicated service to wounded Soldiers on the field of combat, to injured Iraqis, to victims of crime and violence in Philadelphia, to his professional associates, and to his beloved family. JP is survived by his wife, Dr. Carmela V. Calvo; his three children, Danielle, Francis Xavier, and John Joseph; his parents, Christopher and Victoria Geraldine Pryor; and his brother, Dr. Joseph Pryor.



JEFFREY M. RADA MORALES

Died: June 29, 2008

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1995-2008

Sergeant First Class Jeffrey M. Rada Morales, a 32-year-old distinguished member of the elite Green Berets, died June 29, 2008, in Khosrow-E Sofla, Afghanistan. The brave medical sergeant was supporting his country in Operation Enduring Freedom when the vehicle he was riding in rolled into a canal and he and two of his comrades drowned. Sergeant First Class Rada Morales was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He had been in Afghanistan for less than two months at the time of his death. He is buried in the Puerto Rico National Cemetery, Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

Sergeant First Class Rada Morales joined the Army in April 1995 as an animal care specialist and served for 14 months at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida as a veterinary technician. In 1996, he was assigned to the 248th Medical Detachment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; from there, he was assigned in 1999 to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, where he served for three years.

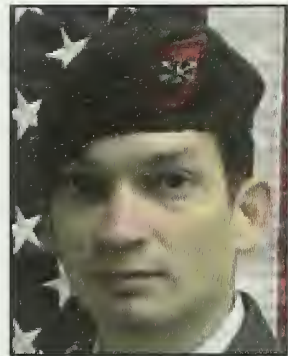
In 2002, Rada Morales served at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as an animal care instructor. His military career took a different tack when he became a student at the school and trained as a Spe-



cial Forces medical sergeant. He earned the Green Beret title in 2007, and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (A) at Fort Bragg as a Senior Medical Sergeant in Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha. Rada Morales deployed to Afghanistan for his second tour in May 2008 as

a member of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force—Afghanistan.

Rada Morales' military education includes the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course; Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Course; Airborne Course; Jumpmaster Course; Air Assault Course; Warrior Leaders Course; Basic Instructor Training Course; and Special Forces Qualification Course.



In an online tribute to his fallen teammate and friend, Captain Eddie A. Bonilla wrote, "I will always remember you. For the short time I met

you I found that great man in you. Always caring for others. I can call you FRIEND because that is what you really are. I will always pray for you and for your family. Your honor and selfless service will always be in our heart. Thanks for being that soldier we all need on our side. SALUTE!" Rada Morales left his handprint on this earth. He was a blessing to his mother; a gift to his wife; a hero to his children; and a defender of freedom to his country. Jeffrey may no longer walk this earth, but he is always in our thoughts and forever in our hearts.

Sergeant First Class Rada Morales' honorable service garnered him many awards and decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal; Joint Service Commendation Medal; three Army Commendation Medals; seven Army Achievement Medals; four Army Good Conduct Medals; the National Defense Service Medal; the Afghanistan Campaign Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal; Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon; Army Service Ribbon; NATO Medal; Senior Parachutist Badge; Air Assault Badge; and Special Forces Tab.

Jeffrey is survived by his wife, Amanda; his children, Jessica and Andrew; and his mother, Virginia.



GERARD M. REED

Died: June 11, 2008

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Unit: 86th Combat Support Hospital

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1985-2008

Sergeant First Class Gerard M. Reed died in Baghdad, Iraq, on June 11, 2008, while serving with the 86th Combat Support Hospital, a unit garrisoned at Fort Campbell, Kentucky while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 40-year-old Army medic died from injuries he sustained in a non-combat-related incident, having served nearly 22 years in the Army. Family and friends paid their final respects to their fallen hero at Greater Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksville, Tennessee, and he was buried in Kentucky Veterans Cemetery West in Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

Reed and his brother Cedric enlisted in the Army in November 1985, before he graduated from high school. Reed received his assignment to Fort Campbell in 2001, and was serving his third tour of duty in Iraq at the time of his death. After nearly 22 years of service, Reed was planning to retire from the Army to his family's home in Tennessee.

One of five children, Gerard was born in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, to Bobby Brown Ramsey and Clyde Reed on July 9, 1967. He graduated from Fletcher High School in Neptune Beach, Florida, where he enjoyed playing chess and was heavily involved in sports. He ran track and was an active member of the school's wrestling team. Later in his life, he completed his bachelor's degree in theology and used the knowledge



and skills he developed as an ordained minister in his calling at the House of Praise Church of God In Christ in Clarksville, Tennessee. There he served as an elder adjutant to the pastor, as youth minister, and with the church's sick committee and the ministerial staff.

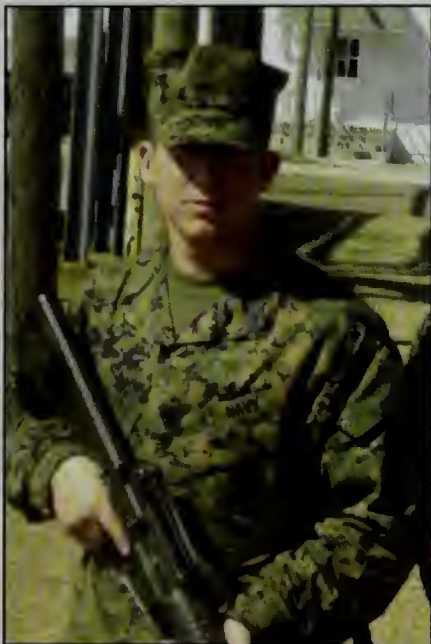
Family members described Gerard as a "happy-go-lucky person" who loved his wife

and son and "preaching the gospel." His brother Cedric affirmed that Gerard "loved serving his country and he loved people." Gerard's mother spoke about her son's wisdom, adding that he "taught her many lessons in life." She concluded that, in her mind, her son would continue to live on and she would forever have him close to her heart. Jimmy Ramsey, another brother, called Gerard "a God-

fearing man" and acknowledged that, though he was grief-stricken, he had reached a level of acceptance, knowing that Gerard "was in God's hands."

Reed's array of military awards and decorations, amassed over a long career, clearly demonstrate the scope of his patriotic contributions to service and country. He received the Army Commendation Medal seven times. He was awarded the Army Achievement Medal on nine occasions. He earned three Army Good Conduct Medals. Other visible symbols of his achievements were the two National Defense Service Medals, the Korean Defense Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Arrowhead, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, two Noncommissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbons, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Action Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

Gerard is survived by his wife, T'Wona; his son, Isaiah Jamar; his mother, Bobby Brown Ramsey; his father, Clyde Reed; and his brothers, Jimmy and Cedric.



MARC A. RETMIER

Died: June 18, 2008

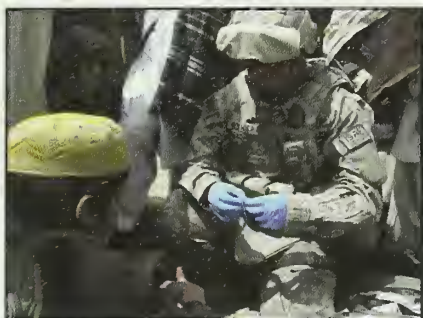
Rank: Hospital Corpsman

Unit: Provincial Reconstruction Team Sharana

Branch: U.S. Navy

Navy Hospital Corpsman Marc A. Retmier died on June 18, 2008, from wounds he suffered during an enemy rocket attack in northern Paktika Province, Afghanistan. Retmier was treating local civilians when the Taliban insurgent ambush occurred. A comrade also died in the attack and seven others were wounded. The 19-year-old Sailor was serving with the Provincial Reconstruction Team Sharana in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Marc, who loved the ocean, was laid to rest June 25, 2008, in a plot overlooking the sea in the Pacific View Cemetery in Corona del Mar, California. He was buried next to the uncle for whom he was named, also a 19-year-old member of the Navy, who died of natural causes while serving his country in 1975.

Retmier enlisted in the Navy following high school graduation. He trained at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, after which he received his orders to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. While there, he volunteered to deploy on a combat mission in Southwest Asia. Marc hoped to someday go to medical school and saw his experiences in the Navy as a fitting preparation for future career goals. In addition to his military duties, Marc was taking community college courses online as the first step to achieving his professional aspirations.



Marc was born September 28, 1988, in Orange County, California. He grew up in Hemet, California, where he spent many hours on his skateboard and indulged in high-flying motocross stunts in the hills of Beaumont and Lake Elsinore, California. He attended West Valley High School and Alessandro High School, both in Hemet, where he lettered in swimming and was a star safety on the high school football team.

Marc's grandfather, Dale Powers, whom Marc called "Papa," referred to Marc as his "retirement present" because, after

he retired, he babysat Marc. He noted that Marc "was one of the most popular kids in town," adding that his grandson would "be missed by a lot of people." Marc's mother realized the implications immediately when two men in white uniforms appeared at her door. She recalled cautioning Marc, "Please be careful." She implored him, "Don't offer to go on dangerous missions. I want you to come home safe. I want you to come home alive." Unfortunately, her worst fears were realized.

Retmier's death deeply affected many of his friends and fellow Sailors. Former coworker Hospital Corpsman Boykin wrote, "Marc's death is hitting everyone at Bethesda...hard. This shows just how many people's lives he's touched....His family...are paying the ultimate price for the freedoms we take for granted....the Navy lost one of its finest." Former classmate and friend Hospital Corpsman Third Class Tucker memorialized his comrade by saying, "Retmier was like my little brother through boot and at corps school. We were as close as blood relatives and I truly feel like I have lost my brother. I know Marc would love to know that he will live forever in ink somewhere on my body. I hope one day that I will know my own two sons to be as mature and courageous as I knew Marc Retmier to be at only 19. I will forever miss you bro." Another fellow Sailor, Hospital Corpsman Desirée Steinhilber, said, "The news of Hospitalman Marc Retmier is hitting Camp Lejeune pretty hard, to those of us who knew him. I had the pleasure of meeting Marc in Corps School, and we had been friends since....He was like my kid brother. He had his head on straight. He knew what he wanted to do in life. He was so full of life. He lived for adrenaline; he was very passionate about motocross and other extreme sports. He loved being a Corpsman. He had big dreams and I'm honored to have had the privilege to know him, and he is sadly missed...." The sentiments uttered by a close comrade, Hospital Corpsman Joseph Kidd, stand as a final tribute: Retmier "was a fine Sailor and a great friend."

Marc is survived by his parents, Steven and Joy Retmier; two younger brothers, Matthew and Mason; his grandparents; numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins; and a constellation of good friends.



ANDREW J. SHIELDS

Died: May 31, 2008

Rank: Private First Class

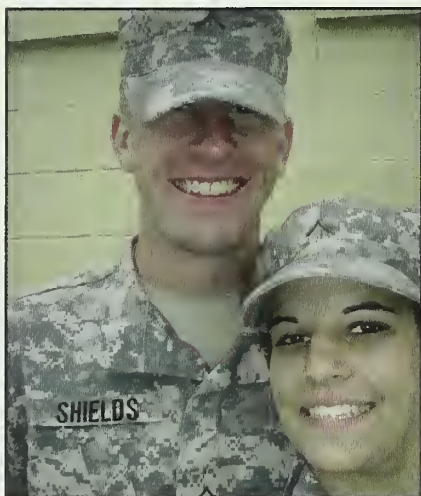
Unit: 173rd Special Troops Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 2007-2008

Private First Class Andrew Jon Shields died on May 31, 2008, on a hot, dusty road near Jalalabad City, Afghanistan. An improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near the 19-year-old's vehicle and he perished from wounds caused by the explosion. A second Soldier, Specialist Matthew Finley, lost his life in the same incident. Shields served with the 173rd Special Troops Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, garrisoned in Bamberg, Germany. He is buried in the Evergreen Memorial Gardens in Vancouver, Washington. Hundreds attended the solemn funeral at New Heights Church in Vancouver, while a multitude of others lined the streets in silent tribute as Andrew's procession made its way to his final resting place. Two fire trucks were present; they extended and crossed their ladders. From the scaffolding, the firefighters suspended a full size American flag that drifted in hushed, respectful witness to Andrew's passing. Brigadier General Mike Trombetta presented a eulogy at the funeral. Likewise, Mike Gregoire, the husband of Washington's governor, addressed the crowd of mourners.

Shields took the oath of enlistment on July 11, 2007, while still in high school. He graduated from basic combat training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and subsequently completed advanced individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Shields



then successfully completed airborne school at the Infantry Center and School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and became an airborne medic. On April 16, 2008, Shields reported to his first permanent assignment at Warner Barracks in Bamberg, Germany. From there, he deployed to Afghanistan on May 9, 2008, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. All the while, Shields carefully mapped out his future following his stint in the Army. He aimed to dedicate himself to a life of public service, as either “a cop, paramedic, or firefighter,” adding that when it came time for his Army service to end, he would go back home to the beautiful Northwest coast.

Andrew was born on September 8, 1988, in Bellevue,

Washington. Even as a youth, he sought to serve his community; he participated as a cadet in the Clark County Fire & Rescue program. Andrew’s life was brief, but he lived every day with gusto. His personal mantra proclaimed, “Stay focused, know what you want to do with your life, and make your dreams come true.”

Both of Andrew’s parents were Army veterans. His father, Jon Shields, had been an Army paratrooper and medic who became a

deputy sheriff and worked with a Special Weapons And Tactics team (SWAT) as a tactical medic. Andrew once said how cool it would be to have father and son medics on the team. Andrew counted his father among his greatest heroes, saying, “I hope to be half the man he is someday. He has made me who I am.” Jon responded with pride, “My son has become my hero and not a day goes by that I won’t think of him and honor his sacrifice.” Andrew’s mother, Wendy, recalled the affectionate, protective relationship her son shared with his sister Ryleigh, nine years his junior. He taught her to handle a firearm and was there when she caught her first fish. They were exceptionally close. Shortly before he deployed to Afghanistan, Andrew visited his alma mater, Battle Ground High School, Battle Ground, Washington, where he urged the student body to strive with all their might to reach their personal goals. His meeting with the students, faculty, and staff was marked with exceptional interest and enthusiasm.

Shields was a well-loved member of the “Ripcord” family and will be remembered as a fun-loving, courageous, confident trooper and an unselfish friend. Posthumously, the Army recognized this brave young medic’s service by promoting him to Private First Class and conferring the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Combat Medical Badge, and Army Good Conduct Medal in honor of his sacrifice. Previously, Shields received the National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, Expert Marksmanship Badge (Rifle), and Parachutist Badge.

Andrew is survived by his father, Jon Shields; his mother, Wendy Jo Campbell; his sister, Ryleigh; his fiancée, Loren Combs; and a number of other loving family and friends.



DAVID S. STELMAT, JR.

Died: March 22, 2008

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: 1132nd Military Police Company, 95th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1998-2008

Sergeant David S. "D.J." Stelmat, an Army medic and New Hampshire National Guard Soldier serving on active duty with the 1132nd Military Police Company, 95th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, died on March 22, 2008, in Baghdad, Iraq. His death resulted from wounds he sustained when the Humvee he was riding in was struck by an improvised explosive device as his unit traveled through the al-Zohour district of northern Baghdad supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The roadside bomb also killed two of his fellow Soldiers. A requiem Mass was celebrated for David on March 28, 2008, in his father's hometown of Centerville, Ohio, at the Church of the Incarnation. A second funeral service and his burial were held March 31, 2008, at the New Life Assembly of God Church on the border between Bethlehem and Littleton, New Hampshire, David's hometown and his mother's residence.

In 2003, Stelmat served with the active component as an infantryman, fighting in Afghanistan. During that tour of duty, just two months before he was due to redeploy home, Stelmat refused a superior's order to fire his weapon because he believed that discharging his weapon might harm or kill innocent civilians, and his conscience wouldn't allow him to do so. The Army gave him a general discharge for the defiant



act; however, two years after his discharge and after taking emergency medical technician classes, feelings of remorse motivated him to join the Army National Guard as a medic. Stelmat did not want to carry a weapon; he wanted to help people. His exemplary performance in Iraq greatly overshadowed his earlier struggles in Afghanistan.

David graduated from Profile High School in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, in 1998, and joined the Army after graduation, hoping to become an Army medic. Instead, he trained as a rifleman, serving in Afghanistan.

After returning to civilian life, David took emergency medical technician courses at New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord, New Hampshire. He worked with the ski patrol and lived the life of an outdoorsman, living in a small cabin with no electricity or running water in the isolated woods of Franconia, New Hampshire.

David was highly esteemed and greatly loved. Specialist Adam Rich, who served in Iraq with David, remarked that he was "good, funny, and charismatic." Another comrade, Specialist Rich Colcord, commented, "I wish there was something I could say to ease the pain of the family. They should be very proud of who he was and what he's done. He was the epitome of what a Soldier should be." Alan

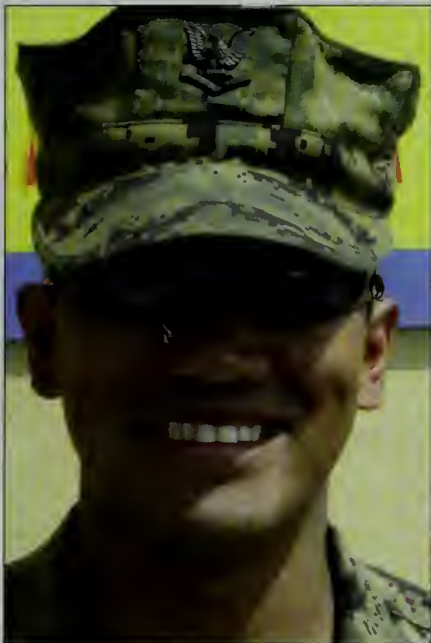
Campbell, David's high school guidance counselor, recalled that David was "a clown, but he found his focus helping others. He matured into the person he was meant to be." David's father confirmed that "All he wanted to do was help people....That was his whole purpose in life." David's girlfriend, Joanna, agreed that David found his work in Iraq extremely satisfying, adding that it "made him feel very needed."

Hundreds of mourners attended his funeral service in New Hampshire, including family, friends, and the state's governor, John Lynch. The number of attendees was so great that they could not all be accommodated inside the church. Those not in the congregation were able to join the service via live video in the church's basement as well as in a tent that was erected on the church grounds. Flags across the state flew at half-staff in David's honor that day.

As David's funeral cortège passed down the interstate through the beautiful White Mountains of New Hampshire, three members of a ski patrol kept watch on an overpass. We "have to say goodbye," said Gareth Slattery, who had hired David to work on the mountain eight years previously. Another old friend, Bill Mead, raised his hand in salute and remarked, "God must have needed a good medic." Amy Cyrs "bowed her head for a long moment." Silently, the trio paid a final tribute.

One week following his death, David was posthumously promoted to sergeant.

David is survived by his mother and stepfather, Maryanne and Jeff Rennell; his father and stepmother, David and Teresa Stelmat; three sisters; a brother; and his girlfriend, Joanna Fekay.



EICHMANN A. STRICKLAND

Date of death: September 9, 2008

Rank: Petty Officer Third Class

Unit: U.S. Marine Corps Embedded Training Team, Afghanistan Regional Security Integration Command–Central

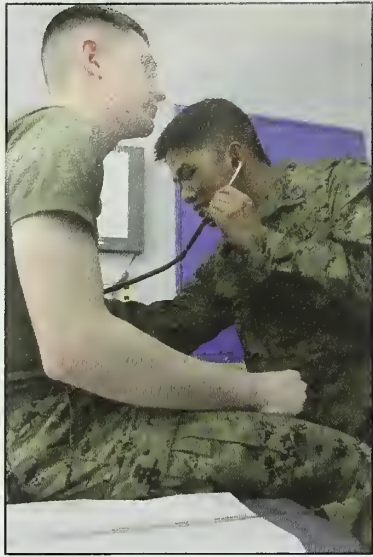
Branch: U.S. Navy

Years in Service: 2003-2008

Petty Officer Third Class Eichmann A. Strickland died on September 9, 2008, while serving in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. Strickland was killed when the vehicle he was driving encountered a makeshift bomb in Afghanya Valley, northwest of Kabul. He was 23 years old at the time of his death. His funeral took place at Northshore Christian Church in Everett, Washington, and he was buried at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park, also in Everett.

Strickland joined the Navy in 2003, shortly after graduating from high school. After receiving excellent marks on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude test, he discovered the position of corpsman, which he considered to be his true calling. He was assigned to Combat Logistics Company 36 at Marine Corps Air Station in Iwakuni, Japan. He was also a member of the U.S. Marine Embedded Training Team, which deployed to Afghanistan Regional Security Integration Command Central. In Afghanistan, he treated the medical needs of both U.S. Marines and Afghans and was instrumental in training Afghans to treat their own wounded. Strickland had been serving in Afghanistan for nine months at the time of his death.

Eicky, as he was affectionately known by his family and friends, was born in the Philippines on June 20, 1985. At the age of nine, he moved to the United States, where he



enjoyed his childhood as a quiet, happy, smiley youth. His mother, Yolanda, describes him as “a very quiet boy” who was “never in trouble. He gave his all. He always smiled. He was that kind of person.” Eicky graduated from Lakewood High School in Lakewood, Washington, in 2003, and joined the Navy soon thereafter. He had always hoped for a career in the medical field, perhaps as a physician’s assistant, and he aspired to use his medical training one day to participate in a medical mission in Africa.

“Doc” Strickland’s sensitive and compassionate nature made him well-respected and well-liked by his peers, subordinates, and superiors throughout his military career. Eichmann’s commanding officer wrote of his service in Afghanistan, “Eichmann performed exceptionally well in this difficult and challenging assignment. He repeatedly treated combat wounds, under fire, taking care of not only Marines and Afghan soldiers, but also Army personnel as well. His Marine Corps (buddies) called him ‘Doc’ Strickland. He was respected and well-liked.... He never complained and always maintained a positive attitude no matter the challenges he faced.” “Doc” Strickland was a Sailor who always put his comrades first and who understood the importance of his position. When interviewed during his training to become a medic, Eichmann explained that “the Marines depend on corpsmen to take care of their medical needs. I’ve been approached

with medical problems...I just have to think back to my training because the Marines trust you to take care of them.”

Eichmann Strickland took his mission very seriously, which was a trait recognized by his peers, but he also recognized the importance of enjoying life and of being a good friend. A corpsman with whom Strickland trained wrote, “I first met Eichmann when we began training for the mission in Afghanistan. We became close friends and teammates throughout the rigorous training. Strickland would always be there to cheer me up or help me out. I saw him grow tenfold while we went through training...he was the greatest person I believe I’ve ever met.” Another corpsman remembered Eichmann as “very compassionate, loving, and the sweetest person you will ever come across. He was just one of those people who could light up a room with just one smile.”

Strickland’s commitment to excellence was great, as evidenced by the accolades he received. In his military career, Petty Officer Third Class Strickland received the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, and the Navy and Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal.

Strickland is survived by his parents, Ken and Yolanda Strickland; his brother, Nick Strickland; several aunts, uncles, and cousins in the United States, Canada, and the Philippines, as well as many friends. One of those friends expressed in a farewell tribute to the fallen hero: “He served his country with the ultimate sacrifice. The best in Eicky was yet to come and Heaven will now benefit from his arrival.”





TIMOTHY H. WALKER

Date of death: November 8, 2008

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1990-2008

Staff Sergeant Timothy H. Walker fell victim to a makeshift bomb that detonated near his vehicle on November 8, 2008. He was serving in Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and was within one month of completing his second tour in Iraq. At the time of his death, he was assigned to Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and was garrisoned at Fort Carson, Colorado. The unit's mission in Iraq was to secure Sadr City in Baghdad's northeast sector. A memorial service was held in Sergeant Walker's honor at the Soldier's Memorial Chapel on Fort Carson on November 16, 2008.

Staff Sergeant Walker enlisted in the Army in July 1990. He completed assignments at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and Fort Knox, Kentucky. His Army career also included a tour of duty in Korea and deployments to Bosnia and Kuwait. In Iraq, Sergeant Walker trained the Iraqi Army and local police officers on medical supply procedures. He also coached Iraqi medics on strategies for functioning in mass casualty situations and provided instruction in combat lifesaver courses.

Although he claimed the Colorado Springs, Colorado, area as his home for the 10-year period prior to his death, Timothy was a native of Primm Springs, Tennessee. He was born on June 13, 1970, to Barbara and Wayne Walker, and graduated from Fairview



High School, Fairview, Tennessee, in 1988. Several years later, while stationed at Fort Knox, he met and married his wife, Dawn. Timothy doted on their two children.

Staff Sergeant Walker was a devoted family man, a benevolent human being, and a fine Soldier. His character was de-

scribed as “loving, caring, and dedicated to his family and friends.” Moreover, he “cared for his troops as he cared for his family—ever present and supportive. He was there when needed.” Staff Sergeant Walker’s obituary in the Colorado Springs *Gazette* memorialized a rock-solid individual, “someone you could lean on to get through any situation,” adding that he was also humble, “knowing where he came from and knowing what he wanted.” The newspaper tribute concluded that Sergeant Walker “touched many lives and will be sorely missed by all.”

Gordon Beck was Sergeant Walker’s First Sergeant in the year 2000 at the 4th Engineer Battalion (CBT). He wrote that Sergeant Walker “took over a troubled Aid Station and quickly brought it up to snuff. He was a great medic and a fine NCO.” Another former fellow Soldier,

Sergeant First Class Jeffrey Krenzer, remembered Sergeant Walker “as a dedicated leader with a great sense of humor.” Ricky Jones, a school administrator who knew Timothy as a youth, affirmed that he “always had a smile on his face. He was one of those guys that would do anything for you.

He just had a great disposition, always smiled whenever you talked to him.” Jones affirmed, “I really appreciate what he’s done for the country.”



The awards and decorations proudly pinned on Sergeant Walker’s uniform provide eloquent testimony to his distinguished career. They include two Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with five oak leaf clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with five oak leaf clusters, and numerous campaign ribbons and citations.

Timothy is survived by his wife, Dawn, and his children, Gregory and Madison; his father, Wayne Walker; his mother, Barbara Shearer; and numerous other cherished family members, fellow Soldiers, and friends.



CHRISTOPHER J. WEST

Died: February 4, 2008

Rank: Corporal

Unit: 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

Branch: U.S. Army

Corporal Christopher J. "CJ" West, a 26-year-old paratrooper and combat medic, died on February 4, 2008, at the 332nd Air Force Theater hospital in Balad, Iraq, of wounds sustained a day earlier in Muqdadiah, Iraq, while on foot patrol. West was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division and was home-based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Arlington, Texas, native's injuries were caused by an improvised explosive device and occurred during his last mission before he was to return home for rest and relaxation leave with his family. Looking forward to West's 12-day visit, his family had left their trimmed Christmas tree standing so that all the relatives could enjoy a much-anticipated but belated holiday celebration. Instead, the family gathered to bury West on February 20, 2008, with full military honors, at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia. The mourners carried long-stemmed yellow roses of Texas and placed their tributes on top of his coffin.

West's family has traditionally supported military service; his father, John West, served in Vietnam as an Army Ranger and Green Beret. Thus, it is not surprising that, as a four-year-old, West resolved to become his family's fourth generation serving in the Army. After graduating with honors from Texas A&M University, College



Station, Texas, with a bachelor's degree in marketing, he enlisted in the Army. West graduated from basic training and later airborne school at Fort Benning, Georgia, and from the Healthcare Specialist Advanced Individual Training course. He arrived in Iraq on October 5, 2007, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Born in Dallas, Texas, on January 8, 1982, CJ grew up as a gifted student, avid history buff, talented athlete who played soccer and football, and devoted family member. CJ attended Sam Hous-

ton High School but graduated magna cum laude from Bowie High School in Arlington, Texas.

Family and friends described CJ as an intense, dedicated, and highly motivated patriot. His sister, Lauren, said that CJ "was smart and funny." In fact, he was "the life of the party." She shared that CJ "loved hard, he played hard, he fought hard." Additionally, "he loved his country [and] he was so proud to be an American." Lauren believed that CJ "died doing what he loved. It was the only thing in his life that he felt was challenging him, and he loved it. He felt like he had found his calling."

West's platoon leader, First Lieutenant Rich Demarais, stated that West "brought an upbeat attitude to the platoon that spread to ev-

eryone he met," adding that "he loved being a combat medic and a paratrooper, he was loved by his brothers in the platoon." West had a few favorite adages that summed up his upbeat approach to life, such as, "Keep living the dream," and "No worries," and "Minor details." He found unique relevance in General George Patton's observation, "Give me an Army of West Point graduates and I'll win a battle. . . Give me a handful of Texas Aggies and I'll win the war." In keeping with his sense of proud patriotism, before he was deployed, West made his mother "promise to handle the call of his death with dignity and honor" as he didn't want her to "disgrace him or his decision to serve his country." His mother fulfilled that last pledge, affirming that it was "a very difficult promise," but she did not let him down.

West's lengthy list of awards and ribbons include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Combat Medical Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. The West family planned to set up a memorial fund to supplement and assist the Wounded Warriors Committee for the 82nd Airborne and to establish a memorial scholarship at Sam Houston and Bowie High Schools. CJ was promoted to the rank of Corporal posthumously.

CJ is survived by his parents, John and Hattie West; his older sister, Lauren Olivia West; and his younger sister, Cameron Marie West Wade.



JUSTIN R. WHITING

Died: January 19, 2008

Rank: Staff Sergeant

Unit: 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Branch: U.S. Army

Years in Service: 1999-2008

Staff Sergeant Justin R. Whiting gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country on January 19, 2008, while he was on patrol near Mosul, Iraq, when the vehicle he was riding in was struck by an improvised explosive device. Staff Sergeant Whiting was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The Green Beret was serving his third tour in Iraq. Funeral services were held January 27, 2008, at the Hancock Central School auditorium, after which he was laid to rest with full military honors in French Woods Cemetery in French Woods, New York.

Whiting joined the military in 1999, shortly after graduating from high school, and served initially as a track mechanic. After completing basic training and advanced individual training, Whiting was assigned to D Company, 4th Forward Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. He completed the Special Forces Assessment and Selection course in 2004, and was assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Whiting served his country in 2004 and 2005 during two previous tours of duty to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and received an honorable discharge when he decided to leave the military. Several months after his discharge, Whiting reenlisted and received his assignment with 5th Special



Forces Group (Airborne). Due to the exhaustive efforts of his teammates, he was reassigned to Operational Detachment A-5322; a rare occurrence in the Special Forces community. He was responsible for conducting foreign-internal defense operations, which included training local police and military.



Justin was born into a military family in Texas on September 24, 1980. The family moved to Hancock, New York, in 1983, and Justin spent his childhood there, graduating from Hancock Central High School in 1999. His family remembers that Justin was a great storyteller, had a wonderful sense of humor, and enjoyed hunting and country music. His favorite

singer was George Strait. Justin loved to play the guitar. His father remembers, "[Justin] was well-liked wherever he went. He could be quite the center of attention when telling the story of one of his exploits. Everything he did, he did with gusto."

His younger brother, Nathan, who was also stationed in Mosul, Iraq, and who ate breakfast with Justin just hours before his death, remembers, "I got to see him that morning only by chance. We ate breakfast and then gave each other a hearty handshake and said goodbye, although we didn't know it was goodbye. He looked me in the eye and said, 'I'll see ya.' That's all, just 'I'll see ya.' Justin was a very simple man. He didn't put up with much, and you always knew how he felt. I never met anyone who was so determined." Justin's fa-

ther Randy said the streets of Hancock were lined with people when the military procession escorting Justin's body came through the village. "Our pride is deeper than our grief at this point," he remarked, "I admired who [Justin] was and how good he was at being a medic and a Soldier. The outpouring from the community has been just overwhelming." Special Forces Medical Sergeant's Course leader, First Sergeant Robert Torka, wrote of his former student, "on Monday 05 May 2008 he will be forever remembered by a memorial plaque with his picture and biography on it. Justin will be inducted into our Hall of Heroes (the main hallway in our school, which teaches Special Operations Medics from all the services), so all the future Special Operations Medics will learn about the man who gave all for his country. RIP, Doc. Thank you for being a great student of mine, easy to teach and a pleasure to be around. Thanks for your service. You will not be forgotten."

Staff Sergeant Justin Whiting's exemplary career garnered him numerous awards and honors, including the Bronze Star Medal, two Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, two Army Good Conduct Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, two Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbons, Army Service Ribbon, Combat Medical Badge, Parachutist Badge and Special Forces Tab.

Justin leaves behind his father and stepmother, Randall and Cindy Whiting; his mother, Estelline Miller; his sister and brother-in-law, Amanda and John Stambach; his brother Nathan Whiting; two stepbrothers, Phil and Greg Martin; grandparents Ralph and June Whiting; several aunts, uncles, and cousins; many close friends; and his best friend, Paul Somers.

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GLOSSARY

ACR	Armored Cavalry Regiment	GPS	Global Positioning System	OR	Operating Room
ATLS	Advanced Trauma Life Support	HM	Hospital Corpsman (USN Rating)	PO	Petty Officer
CAPT	Captain (USN)	HN	Hospitalman (USN Rating)	PT	Physical Training
CDR	Commander	ID	Infantry Division	RPG	Rocket-Propelled Grenade
CP	Command Post	IED	Improvised Explosive Device	RN	Registered Nurse
CPL	Corporal	LCDR	Lieutenant Commander	SEAL	Sea, Air, Land (US Navy military Special Forces team member)
CPO	Chief Petty Officer	LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse	SFC	Sergeant First Class
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	LSA	Logistics Support Area	SGT	Sergeant
CPT	Captain (USA)	LT	Lieutenant	SSG	Staff Sergeant
CNA	Certified Nursing Assistant	LTC	Lieutenant Colonel	USA	US Army
COL	Colonel	MASH	Mobile Army Surgical Hospital	USN	US Navy
CSH	Combat Support Hospital	MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuation	USO	United Service Organizations
CWO	Chief Warrant Officer	MRE	Meal Ready to Eat	TOC	Tactical Operations Center
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician	MSG	Master Sergeant	VMI	Virginia Military Institute
EVAC	Evacuation	NBC	Nuclear Biological Chemical	WWI	World War One
FMF	Fleet Marine Force	NCO	Noncommissioned Officer	WWII	World War Two
FST	Forward Surgical Team	OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom	91W	Healthcare Specialist (US Army military occupational specialty, later changed to 68W)
FT	Fort	OIC	Officer in Charge		
GEN	General	OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom		

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Dr. S. Ward Casscells was sworn in on April 16, 2007, as United States Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), serving as the Secretary's principal advisor on all matters relating to military health. As the Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Casscells oversees an annual budget of over \$42B and over 140,000 military and civilian doctors, researchers, and support staff. Dr. Casscells is a graduate of Yale (B.S.) and Harvard Medical School (M.D.). Dr. Casscells has served as Director of Clinical Research at the Texas Heart Institute and the John Edward Tyson Distinguished Professor of Medicine (Cardiology) and Public Health at the University of Texas Health Science Center. Dr. Casscells holds dozens of medical patents, has been published over 125 times, and is credited with the discovery of a link between influenza and heart attacks. At 52, Dr. Casscells joined the US Army Reserves and served in humanitarian missions in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In 2005 he was deployed to Iraq as the liaison from Multinational Force-Iraq to Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad. Dr. Casscells is married with three young children.



Dr. Mary T. Sarnecky served for 23 years as an Army Nurse Corps officer, retiring as a colonel. She has lectured around the globe on military health care topics and is published extensively in a wide array of print media. She is the author of two award-winning volumes focusing on the history of the Army Nurse Corps. Dr. Sarnecky and her husband, George J. Sarnecky, PhD, are the parents of three grown sons. They now continue to travel the world and occasionally can be found at home in San Diego, CA. She is the author of the Introduction and editor of numerous profiles in *When It Mattered Most*.

Dr. John T. Greenwood holds a PhD from Kansas State University. He has been a military historian with the U.S. Army and Air Force since 1970 and is widely published. Most recently, Dr. Greenwood served as Chief Historian for the Army's Office of the Surgeon General. He is the author of the historical background chapter in *When It Mattered Most*.

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