

GI SPECIAL 713:



U.S. Army soldier wears a peace sign on his helmet as he patrols in Bejjia village in Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

NOTICE:

GI Special will suspend publication until 9.9.09 to provide time for meeting with activists organizing outreach to members of the armed forces.

It will not be possible to respond to mail, but thanks to everyone who sends in key information all year long. T

“At What Point Have We Run Out Of ‘Democratic’ Options, In Trying To Peacefully Force Our

Government Obey Our Constitution?”

“Will Politicians EVER Give Us
Back What They Have Taken, Or
Must We TAKE It Back?”

“So At What Point Does It Become
Necessary To Take Up Arms Against
Our Own Federal Government To
Defend Our Laws?”



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

August 17, 2008 By Ward Reilly, Veteran

In our nation, our common enemy is anyone that violates our Constitution.

Right?

So, at what point does it become necessary to take up arms against our own federal government to defend our laws?

At what point have we run out of “democratic” options, such as lobbying, voting, writing, and marching in the streets, in trying to peacefully force our government to obey our Constitution, and its Bill of Rights?

Politicians, security workers, and soldiers, take an oath to “defend the Constitution against ALL enemies, both foreign and domestic”...which establishes the moral and legal conflict for all citizens, both veterans and non veterans alike, that being; if the Commander in Chief, and/or Congress, is violating the laws of the Constitution, and we citizens swore to defend the Constitution, what do we do when we are confronted with the problem of how to defend the Constitution against those domestic enemies?

For citizens that are thinking people, what do they do if it is apparent that the Constitution is being overtly violated, and they took an oath to defend it?

It can't work both ways, which is where the dilemma begins; Are “mis-leading statements” lies? (Rumsfeld said: We know where the WMD's are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat”... Bush said “We don't torture”)

Is torture, torture?

Is allowing no legal representation for “detainees”, legal? My Bill of Rights says “NO PERSON shall be held unless indicted by an impartial jury”

Is kidnapping and renditioning to prisons, kidnapping and rendition?

The Bill of Rights says NO PERSON shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, WITHOUT DUE PROCESS”.

How many detainees have died in our custody since 9-11? How can ANY “legal official” say that these things are legal?

“Interpretation” of the law.

Isn't unauthorized spying against Americans illegal?

Bush, Cheney, and Pelosi authorized torture.

My copy of the “Bill of Rights” states that we are “secure against unreasonable searches”. Isn't kidnapping illegal?

How about renditioning and imprisoning secretly?

The Bill of Rights says “and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense”. Isn't harvesting emails and telephone calls spying? Isn't torture illegal? (Japanese soldiers were put to death for water-boarding, by our country after WWII)

As citizens, or as veterans, how long can we allow obvious interpretation of the laws of the Constitution to be violated, before we must FORCE real change?

If we don't defend the Constitution, then we must face the reality that we don't really believe in, or truly care to defend, that Constitution.

How long can we accept the fact that Constitutional laws are broken overtly, and then new laws are written and passed, to make the (already-committed) crimes to be "legal", before we are forced to confront our federal politicians with force?

At what point have we run out of "democratic" options to create enforcement of our Constitutional laws, before we give up trying?

After citizens have written, spoken, lobbied, marched in the streets, voted, and gained a majority in opinion, and still gotten nothing from federal politicians, what are the remaining options we have besides force, or the surrender of our beliefs?

At what point will the citizens of this country understand the implications, and the shared criminal guilt, of killing more than 1 million innocent people, because our federal government relies on "oops" for a policy to send us to a war in Iraq? ("Oops, we were wrong about WMD's"...Oops, we lied about Saddam's ties to Al Qaida)

Do we wrongly occupy Afghanistan and Iraq (oops) because our government says that "we are going to track down Osama bin Laden?". (Puhhhleeze).

We are bombing Pakistan, and are responsible for covert military actions against Iran, a nation that hasn't invaded another country for hundreds of years. Are any of these acts' Constitutionally legal?

The legal reality, in my eyes, is that we have kidnapped, imprisoned, tortured, invaded and killed MANY legally innocent people. The reality is that a million+ people are dead, and 5 million are destitute and homeless because of our criminal occupations. All that is legal?

ALL Constitutional crimes that are committed by soldiers and the CIC, are the crimes of every U.S. citizen, because we are ruled by "we the people". Dead is dead, kidnapped is kidnapped, and tortured is tortured...I, nor any other citizen, should EVER accept some appointed lawyer or judge's "legal opinion" that interprets torture as not being torture.

Dead is dead. Innocent is innocent.

One typical example of what we have done: Sami El Hajj, a journalist, was released last week, after being imprisoned and tortured for 6-1/2 years. He was never charged with any crime, and never allowed contact with any legal representation. How is that NOT a Constitutional crime, by ANY "legal" interpretation?

And that is one example of thousands, that we are collectively responsible for. Kidnapped and tortured by EVERY U.S. citizen, period.

Which brings us back to this:

As citizens, veterans or not, how long can we allow the obvious interpretation of the law to be violated, before we must FORCE real change, or face the reality that we don't really believe in our own Constitution?

How long can we accept the fact that Constitutional laws are broken overtly, and then new laws are written and passed, to make the (already-committed) crime(s), to be legal, and before we are forced to confront our federal politicians, with force?

Will "we the people" ever enforce the law, if our federal politicians and justices simply won't, in spite of the wishes of the majority?

Or will political correctness allow the abuse of our laws to continue, because we are afraid to truly effect change with force, if, and when, it becomes necessary?

In our nation, our common enemy is anyone that violates our Constitution, and it's our job to "protect and defend" the Constitution. That's what every soldier that ever died for our country, died for.

So at what point does it become necessary to take up arms against our own federal government to defend our laws?

At what point have we run out of "democratic" options, in trying to peacefully force our government obey our Constitution?

It's time we all face this very-real question.

Will politicians EVER give us back what they have taken, or must we TAKE it back?

MORE:

**“Shall We Acquire The Means
Of Effectual Resistance By
Lying Supinely On Our Backs
And Hugging The Delusive
Phantom Of Hope?”
“There Is No Retreat But In
Submission And Slavery!”**

“Should I Keep Back My Opinions At Such A Time, Through Fear Of Giving Offense, I Should Consider Myself As Guilty Of Treason Towards My Country”

“The Millions Of People, Armed In The Holy Cause Of Liberty, And In Such A Country As That Which We Possess, Are Invincible By Any Force Which Our Enemy Can Send Against Us”



Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne!

Mar. 23, 1775, By Patrick Henry, House of Burgesses, Williamsburg, Va.

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful

to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve.

This is no time for ceremony. The questing before the House is one of awful moment to this country.

For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate.

It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country.

Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope.

We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts.

Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and, having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation?

For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience.

I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past.

And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House.

Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet.

Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss.

Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love?

Let us not deceive ourselves, sir.

These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort.

I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies?

No, sir, she has none.

They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other.

They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging.

And what have we to oppose to them?

Shall we try argument?

Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing.

We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain.

Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted?

Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves.

Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on.

We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament.

Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne!

In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation.

There is no longer any room for hope.

If we wish to be free-- if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending--if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained--we must fight!

I repeat it, sir, we must fight!

An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary.

But when shall we be stronger?

Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house?

Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction?

Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?

Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power.

The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us.

Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.

The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election.

If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery!

Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston!

The war is inevitable--and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter.

Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace-- but there is no peace. The war is actually begun!

The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms!

Our brethren are already in the field!

Why stand we here idle?

What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have?

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?

Forbid it, Almighty God!

I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



Aug. 19, 2009: Soldiers of the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division based out of Fort Drum, N.Y., evacuate a wounded soldier after their armored vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in the Tangi Valley of Afghanistan's Wardak Province. (AP Photo/David Goldman)

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

**Family, Friends Mourn Soldier From
Somerville Killed In Afghanistan:**

“There Was So Much Brightness. I Hope People Remember That, And He Doesn’t Just Vanish Into The Numbers”



An elite U.S. Army “carry team” remove the remains of Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Lobosco of Somerville from an Air Force C-17 aircraft during a transfer ceremony at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. Andrew Mills/The Star-Ledger

August 24, 2009 by Amy Ellis Nutt, The Star-Ledger

He was the first person to come to your defense, and the last person to leave a job that was not yet finished, his friends said. That was why he joined the military.

Army Staff Sgt. Andrew T. Lobosco, 29, of Somerville, died Saturday in Yakhchal, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his unit.

He had been assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C., and was at least the 107th armed services member with ties to New Jersey to die in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“It’s mind-blowing that this could happen,” said Jeff Mosier, 29, a friend of Lobosco’s from Immaculata High School in Somerville. “He was a truly special, remarkable human being.”

Mosier, who lives in New York City and who said he last spoke with Lobosco several months ago, was frequently in touch with him online, through Facebook. He said Lobosco last updated his profile five days ago, with these words:

“What you are is what you have been, and what you will be is what you do now.”

Today, Lobosco's mother, Bonnie Jo, who lives in Pennsylvania, and his twin, Lisa, from Minnesota, were on their way to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware where the remains of their son and brother arrived aboard an Air Force C-17 military jet shortly after 6 p.m.

Lisa Lobosco received word of her brother's death about 6 p.m. Sunday, said her fiancée, Jason Safar. They were both on the front lawn when two men from the military approached them with the news.

"We knew right away," Safar said. "We were very proud of him. He was somebody everybody looked up to."

Safar and Lisa Lobosco were waiting to get married until her brother's return.

Lobosco had visited his sister last month, on July 4th, and the two went hiking in the mountains, Safar said. Six days later, he re-deployed to Afghanistan.

Safar said it was at least his second or third time overseas.

"He wanted to serve his country after 9/11," Safar said.

Mosier remembered his friend as someone who could be "light-hearted" and "knew how to have a good time" -- the two friends were both in bands in high school -- but Lobosco was also disciplined, and passionate about helping others.

"He was fearless," Mosier said. "He couldn't tell me a lot, but I knew he physically saved people's lives while he was there."

News of Lobosco's death also shook Bonnie Jo Lobosco's neighbors in Forks Township, Pa., just outside of Easton.

"A mother has to have this possibility in the back of her mind when her son goes to war, said Nancy Kopin, fighting back tears. "But you never think it's going to happen so close to home."

Kopin said her neighbor and friend often spoke of her son, describing him as "wonderful" and "happy-go-lucky."

"This just never should have happened," she said.

"He was a conscientious, but had a sense of humor," said Sister Karen, who taught Lobosco theology his freshman year at Immaculata. She remembered her former student, who graduated in 1998, as an expert in martial arts, and once performed in a school talent show, along with his sister who was a student at Bridgewater-Raritan High School.

"They were doing karate with fire," she said. "It was amazing."

Jan DeVito, a former art teacher at Immaculata, agreed.

"He was just a really nice kid," she said.

Lobosco was not currently in a relationship, according to Kopin, but had previously expressed a desire to get married and have children, because he was the last man in his family to carry on the Lobosco name.

“I really believe Andy was there to try and make things better,” Mosier said. “He was always the first person to come to your defense if you needed him. He was always in your corner. He was special. ...

“There was so much brightness. I hope people remember that, and he doesn’t just vanish into the numbers.”

Navajo Soldier Killed In Afghanistan



KOB.com

August 21 2009 By Sue Major Holmes, Associated Press Writer, AP

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - A 21-year-old Navajo soldier killed in Afghanistan was described by his mother as someone who made everyone smile and his father remembered him as an outgoing man with an interest in the outdoors and art.

Navajo Nation Council Delegate David Tom of Beclabito-Cudii and his wife, Carolyn Tom, flew to Dover Air Force Base, Del., for a brief ceremony Thursday night when the body of their son, Army Spec. Troy Orion Tom, was brought back to the United States.

“Right now he’s just our hero,” David Tom said Friday. “His family is all proud of him that he was out there, serving his country.”

His son was killed Monday in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan. David Tom said the family was told he stepped on a roadside bomb when his unit was setting up camp after a fight with Taliban insurgents.

Tom joined the Army in June 2006 after graduating from Aztec High School and was based in Fort Lewis, Wash. His father said he joined the military because he wanted to physically and mentally challenge himself.

“He was the nicest, the kindest, son. He made everybody smile. He always had a smile on his face - never, ever did he get mad. We’re going to miss him very much,” Carolyn Tom said before breaking down in tears.

David Tom said his son liked to hunt, fish and sketch, and enjoyed herding sheep when he was back on the reservation.

Services are set for 10 a.m. Wednesday at the Civic Center in Farmington.

George Hardeen, spokesman for Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr., said Tom is the ninth Navajo member of the military to die in either Afghanistan or Iraq since 2004.

Shirley will order flags lowered to half-staff before the funeral, Hardeen said.

Slain Miss. Soldier Known As Leader: “This Time He Didn’t Want To Go ‘Because Of His Little Baby,’ His Mother Said”



August 25, 2009 By Jerry Mitchell, Clarion Ledger

Army Sgt. Matthew Ingram, killed in an apparent ambush in Afghanistan, is being remembered as a leader who loved his country, a father who loved his family and a small-town Mississippian who wanted to see the world.

The 25-year-old Newton County native already had a Purple Heart for injuries he suffered in his second tour of duty in Iraq before being sent to Afghanistan in May.

His mother, Patricia, said Army officials called with the news of his death. “It’s the worst news that anybody had ever told me,” she said, “but this is what he wanted to do.”

No date has been set for funeral services in Newton County, where he grew up. He is survived by his wife, Holly, and their 10-month-old daughter, Chloe, who lived with him near Fort Carson, Colo, where he was stationed.

Ingram was killed Friday in Afghanistan, where fighting is so fierce that Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, described the situation as “serious and deteriorating.”

With 44 killed, July was the deadliest month for American forces in Afghanistan since the conflict began.

Ingram died from wounds he suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. According to the Department of Defense, his unit was under small arms fire from enemy forces when the blast occurred.

Ingram was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson.

His mother said the initial report military officials gave was enemy forces had ambushed her son and other soldiers who had been called out at 3 a.m.

“Matthew was the first one hit,” she said.

She said Army officials said they are going to continue to investigate what happened but that it wasn’t the first time soldiers had been ambushed there.

“They told me I should be very proud, that he went down as a hero,” she said.

Even as a child, Matthew was the one giving the orders, she said. “He’s always been a leader, not a follower.”

He would tell his brother, five years older, what to do, she said.

And he was bright. When he was in kindergarten, his classroom had a plastic replica of a human body. He was able to remove the organs and return them to the right locations, naming each one, she said. “The teacher told me Matthew might be a doctor one day.”

When he got older, he found he could miss a few days of school and still keep up, she said. “He was very smart.”

Eventually, those misses became more permanent, and he dropped out during his senior year at Newton County High School, where he was a member of the Future Farmers of America.

Principal Ken Stringer said Matthew was never loud or a troublemaker. “The ones who made the racket I knew,” he said.

Although he dropped out of school, Ingram was filled with ambitions and dreams beyond the discount store where he worked, his mother said. “He didn’t want to be mediocre.”

He saw the Army as a way to pay for his college, she said.

He saw other advantages to military service, too, she said. "He wanted to see the world. He said, 'When I get older, I want to go to a big town and live in a big town.'"

He may have been influenced, too, by his mother's fiance, Harry Hastings, who retired as a full colonel in the Army medical service corps.

"He talked about how happy he was when he joined," Hastings said.

Matthew joined the Army the summer of 2003 and did basic training at Fort Benning. His mother and Hastings visited him there on parents' day, and at Matthew's request, Hastings wore his uniform.

Ingram was reassigned to South Korea, where he spent 10 months before his entire brigade was deployed to Iraq, where he spent a year.

While visiting back home, Matthew enjoyed the hobbies of paintball and riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle, his mother said.

Stationed later in Colorado, he met his future wife, Holly, in Colorado Springs. They married in 2006.

He became a sergeant before returning for a second tour in Iraq. He didn't get back home until early 2007.

Hastings remembers he and Matthew's mother visiting the young couple after he returned, and Matthew pushing a medal out onto the table.

It was a Purple Heart, he said. "That was his most prized possession."

Matthew never discussed what happened beyond an explosion inside a Humvee that injured his foot and ankle, he said. "Most likely it was a roadside bomb or a grenade."

In May, Matthew had to leave for Afghanistan, and this time he didn't want to go "because of his little baby," his mother said.

"He said, 'You know, Mama, I might not come back this time.'"

He worried about not seeing his daughter again.

Though grieved by his death, his mother said she's comforted by a Native American saying that people "never die as long as you mention their name. Their spirit lives on forever."

Pfc. Morris Walker: "He Was Just A Joy"

25 AUG 2009 by Joe Schwartz, Independent Weekly

Morris Walker never wanted a desk job. The former University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill student enlisted in the military last year and served his country in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Pfc. Walker was killed Aug. 18 when an explosive device detonated near his vehicle. He was 23, and one of the 802 soldiers (PDF) who have been killed in Afghanistan since the war started in 2001.

Sam Rosenthal was one of his best friends, and he shared his memories with us:

"I met him at a party freshman year. He was a year older. I guess I was just talking to somebody that he knew and I guess we just hit it off right away. It was a girl I was talking to, and he had known her, and he was like, 'Who's this kid talking to my girl?' And I guess he thought I was funny, and so he kind of I guess decided to be like an older brother figure to me.

"He was one of the best friends I'll have, it's very rare that you get a friend who can know you for who you are and not judge you, and you know you can tell them anything.

"With school he could never concentrate on the schoolwork; mentally things would get in his way. He was always about physical stuff; when he was in school he was always working out and playing basketball.

"He wasn't scared of any physical challenge, and that was one of the reasons he thought he was suited for war, that he could be a warrior. He was physically and mentally tough. He eventually wanted to be Special Forces. He was ready to be in danger; he was ready to stare everything in the face."

I asked Rosenthal about the phone calls and e-mails he received from Walker at war:

"He would talk to me some, I'd ask him about what was going on over there. He tried not to make me worry. He didn't really convey a sense of what was going on. I'm sure he was in pain. I'm sure it was really tough on him, but he didn't let that show. It was just very interesting he just wanted to be in contact with everybody back home just to know that we were all still there and there was something waiting for him. He had a listserv, wanted to stay in touch with everybody and let them know he was all right."

Rosenthal often worried about his friend, but he felt fortunate that Walker went to Afghanistan instead of Iraq:

"I felt like we had some business in Afghanistan, and with Iraq it was more of a mess. As far as just reason for him to be there, I thought he was doing something worthwhile, but we knew from the start that it was supposed to be worse than Iraq, so I was always worried about him. The odds were really small that he would be one of the ones killed, that's one of the tough things about it.

"My dad was very angry when he first heard about Mo. He was around in the '60s for Kent State. We were driving back from Busch Gardens when we got the news. We were playing a lot of songs to help with it: 'Woodstock' by Joni Mitchell, 'Fortunate Son' by CCR, 'Ohio' by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.

“That kind of to put in light that he shouldn’t have been there whether he was ready for it or not. He was prepared to do what he had to do, but that’s not where he should have ended up.

“He passed away in the middle of war where the last world he knew was a horrible place where horrible things were going on away from his family and everyone that he loved. That’s no way to go.”

Rosenthal told me that Walker was always eager to volunteer for the most dangerous missions and that his supervisors already had identified him as a valuable leader.

“He’d already won a couple of awards, the Aircom with V-Device, an award to outstanding soldier in dangerous situation and the Combat Infantryman’s Badge.

“He’d been in charge of his platoon, giving him responsibility and he was excelling. For that, I’m incredibly proud of him. He was proud of himself.

“He went over there to succeed. He was ready to make a career out of the military and to really keep moving up the ranks. I have no doubt he was going to do so.

“What people should know about Mo is who he was as far as how he made other people feel when they were around him. He was just a joy. I think that he epitomized cool, but he was never too cool. It was just kind of him, and he wasn’t perfect. He had his insecurities and his flaws, and I think that’s what endeared him to people, was that he was so perfectly comfortable with who he was and who everybody else was.

“The last conversation I had with him, he was giving me girl advice thousands of miles away. He was still one of my best friends, and that never changed and it still won’t. ... It will in some regards, I can’t ask him stuff anymore.”

Walker’s funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday at Our Redeemer Church in Fayetteville. Arrangements are by Wiseman’s Mortuary.

Marine Killed In Afghanistan Bomb Blast ‘Was A Beautiful Kid’



Donald J. Hogan

August 27, 2009 BY VIK JOLLY, The Orange County Register

A Tesoro High School graduate who wanted to be a Marine like his grandfather was killed in a roadside bomb explosion Wednesday morning in southern Afghanistan.

Lance Cpl. Donald J. Hogan, 20, of San Clemente was on a foot patrol at the time of the blast, which also injured several other Marines, said a spokesman for the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton.

"He was a beautiful kid," Jim Hogan said on the phone today from Dover, Del., where he had gone to see the transfer of his son's body at Dover Air Force Base. "He ran cross country at Tesoro High School. He wasn't very good at it but he always showed up and competed."

Donald was assigned to 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton.

On Sunday, Donald called his mother for the first time since deploying to Afghanistan in June, and left her a message.

"He said that he was safe and that he was OK," Jim Hogan said. "And (that) he loved us and not to worry. He missed us."

Donald joined the Marines soon after graduating in 2007 "because he wanted to do something different in his life," Hogan said. "He was pretty happy go lucky and had a lot of friends. His whole dream was to one day join the Marine Corps."

A career Marine, Donald's grandfather James Hogan Sr. retired as a gunnery sergeant and was a veteran of three wars – World War II, Korean and Vietnam. "He wanted to follow in his footsteps," Jim Hogan said.

The father and son had talked about death. "He was aware of the dangers. (But) if he was worried about it, he didn't let me know about it," Jim Hogan said.

Stacy Ruffer, a teacher and head cross country and track coach at Tesoro, said Donald ran for him during his junior and senior years and always gave his best.

"He was a coach's dream," Ruffer said. "He tried to be a mentor to a lot of younger kids on the track."

Donald competed on the junior varsity team at the high school and told his coach that he planned to join the Marines.

"I thought it was a good fit for him," Ruffer said.

"He always had a very positive attitude. When we'd be out there in 90-degree weather and running six to 10 miles, we would come back and even after this exhausting workout, he'd have fun playing with the other kids."

Donald's body is expected to arrive at Dover Air Force Base today and the military will bring him home for services in San Clemente. This was his first tour of duty and he

deployed with his unit to Afghanistan in the past few months, said Cpl. Shawn Coolman, a 1st Marine Division spokesman.

Donald was on foot patrol in the Nawa District of Helmand province when an improvised explosive device blew up nearby, Coolman said. It was not immediately known if Donald died at the scene.

Donald joined the Marine Corps on Nov. 5, 2007. He had received the Combat Action Ribbon, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal, Coolman said.

Soldier With Minnesota Ties Killed In Afghanistan



Photo from myspace.com

8.26.09 KARE-11

Jonathan Yanney once described himself as a “pretty active” person, “so I don’t like just sitting around doing nothing.”

Not long after he graduated from high school, Yanney joined an Army Stryker brigade deployed to southern Afghanistan. The 20-year-old was reportedly on his way to help another unit under fire last week when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle. The explosion killed him and another soldier, Spc. Troy O. Tom, 21, of Shiprock, N.M.

“Extremely driven,” was how his former high school principal, Marcella Swatosh, described Yanney on Monday.

“We knew that he wanted to go into something where he could help people,” said Swatosh, the principal of Norwood High School in southern Missouri, which Yanney attended for three years. “He was always very focused on wanting to help people, and it sounds like that’s what he was doing.

Yanney, of Litchfield, Minn., enlisted in the Army in March 2008 and reported to Fort Lewis, Wash., six months later.

He was sent to Kandahar province, one of the most dangerous regions of Afghanistan. Insurgents regularly plant roadside bombs to attack Afghan and foreign troops there to combat both the Taliban and a thriving opium trade.

Yanney's self-description was on his MySpace page, where there was little else about him. Contact information for family members couldn't be found Monday.

A posting on Yanney's MySpace from someone who identified himself as his father said Yanney was "en route to assist another unit under fire." The man, Russ Yanney, did not respond to a message sent on MySpace.

Jonathan Yanney's decision to join the military was a surprise to some who knew him.

"I never pictured that," said Kevin Drake, his former baseball coach. "Very respectful, always, 'Yes sir, Mr. Drake.' ... As far as the being respectful part, you could see the military in him. But no, I wouldn't have thought he'd be in the armed forces."

Drake said he persuaded Yanney to join the team even though he hadn't played baseball before. In time, Yanney became a good hitter on the junior-varsity level and played in a handful of varsity games by his second year.

Both Drake and Swatosh, his high school principal, remembered his sense of humor. "It was very dry," Swatosh said.

Yanney later moved to Tennessee for a short time. Samantha Lynn Fedele worked with him at a Wendy's in Johnson City and stayed in touch after he moved to Minnesota and then deployed abroad.

She remembered him as outgoing and friendly.

"He just had this big, bright smile," she said. "His smile would be the very first thing you noticed."

Oak Park Resident Killed In Afghanistan

August 21, 2009 Ventura County Star [Excerpts]

An Oak Park soldier was killed in Afghanistan after insurgents attacked his military unit.

Brian M. Wolverton, 21, had been assigned to a light infantry division of the U.S. Army. He died Thursday in the Kunar province of wounds suffered during indirect fire.

Wolverton was a 2006 graduate of Oak Park High School and received an associate degree in 2008 from Moorpark College. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team. He was the son of Christopher and Miriam Wolverton of Oak Park.

Beside a smiley face posted in an Aug. 12 entry to his MySpace page, Wolverton stated that his mood was "accomplished."

“Finally in Afghanistan,” he wrote. “Time to earn my pay.”

His page indicates he last logged in on Wednesday, the day before his death.

Daniel Wells, another 2006 Oak Park High School graduate, was shocked to hear the sad news of his classmate’s death.

“What?” he exclaimed when told. “He was the kind of kid who’s a little bit quiet but once you talk to him was very funny and unique in his own way. He wasn’t like the kind to conform and do whatever he could to fit in. He was just himself. He had a unique sense of humor. He was a unique kid.”

Another classmate, Jenny Silver, was also taken aback by the news.

“I can’t believe it,” she said. “I’m in shock.”

Silver remembers Wolverton as a quiet, respectful and friendly person. “He was just very concerned about how everyone’s doing,” she said.

The Kunar province is a dangerous region of Afghanistan in the northeastern part of the country that borders a tribal area of Pakistan that is a known haven for Taliban militants.

Wolverton is the second county resident killed this year in Afghanistan.

Lt. j.g. Francis “Frankie” Lawrence Toner IV, 26, of Westlake Village was killed March 27 in Afghanistan after being shot by an insurgent dressed as a soldier.

Beneath Wolverton’s senior year photo in the high school yearbook a quote reads: “Courage is facing your fear, with no fear there is no courage.”

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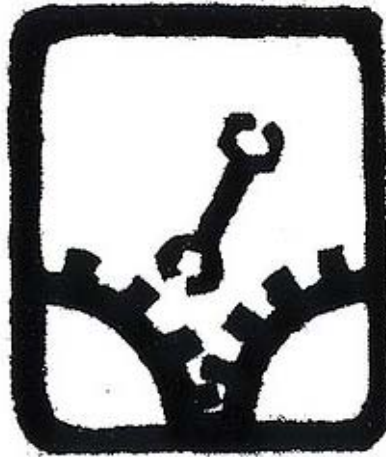
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