

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Robert Allen Guy



Private First Class, United States Marine Corps

3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force

Entered the Service from Willards, Maryland

Robert “Bobby” Guy was born 29 December 1978. He died 21 April 2005, near Al Karmah, Iraq.

Bobby Guy was determined to join the Marines, and he worked a variety of jobs while earning a high school equivalency certificate so he could qualify. “I was so proud of him because he didn’t give up. He kept trying, and it took two years before he could enlist,” said his father, James. He was based at Camp Lejeune. Guy, known as Bobby, was known for his friendliness and sense of humor. He liked to shoot pool as a kid and play video games in a small arcade. He dropped out of high school but was determined to earn his GED so he could join the Marines. “He did make some wrong choices, and he did his best when he grew up a little bit,” said Cory Perdue, a high school friend. “Going into the Marine Corps was just the next step for him improving himself.” “I never saw him work at anything so hard his whole life,” said his mother, Ann. “He really wanted this.”

Michael Joseph McMullen



Staff Sergeant, United States Army
National Guard

243rd Engineer Company, Maryland National Guard

Michael Joseph McMullen, 25, of Salisbury left this world as a hero Tuesday, January 10, 2006. Staff Sergeant McMullen died as a result of injuries suffered on Christmas Eve while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom during a successful attempt to save the life of two of his fellow comrades involved in a roadside bombing near Ramadi, Iraq. McMullen died at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He was a career firefighter and paramedic, the only member of the Salisbury Fire Department on active duty. McMullen was in Iraq with Baltimore’s 243rd Engineer Company, Maryland National Guard, and his death represented the Guard’s first casualty resulting from hostile circumstances since World War II.

The 243rd was charged with providing security and transportation of supplies throughout Iraq. The day McMullen was fatally wounded, his vehicle was following a Humvee that was struck by an improvised explosive device. McMullen, before being injured himself, pulled the driver of that Humvee from his burning vehicle. McMullen was subsequently struck by shrapnel when another device detonated.

Staff Sergeant McMullen was born May 27, 1980, in Abington, Pennsylvania. Michael and his family moved to Princess Anne in January 1994. Michael attended and graduated from Washington High School in 1999. In 1998, he joined the Princess Anne Volunteer Fire Department, where he began his initial fire service career. The family then moved to Salisbury in 2001, and Michael joined the Salisbury Fire Department in December 2001 as a volunteer and tested for and achieved career status in December 2003. He attained his emergency medical technician, paramedic certificate in 2004, after successfully completing a two-year program at Wor-Wic Community College in Salisbury.

Michael's military career began when he joined the Army National Guard, 1229th transportation unit quartered in Salisbury in 2000. His unit was absorbed as part of the 243rd Engineer Company stationed in Baltimore, where Michael served as part of the 2nd Platoon. Michael was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 2004, and in September of this year had full intentions of re-enlisting with plans to further his military career as an officer and registered nurse.

Michael received numerous awards in his short careers with both the Guard and the Salisbury Fire Department: The Army Achievement Award (twice); Purple Heart, the Rifle Marksman and Grenade Expert Awards; the Maryland State Service Award (twice); and Maryland's highest honor, the Maryland Distinguished Service Cross, were all bestowed upon him for his military service.

From the fire service, Michael earned a Unit Citation and a Departmental Commendation for his involvement in two separate incidents and will receive the International Association of Fire Fighters' Medal of Honor (posthumously) for upholding the finest traditions of the fire service through his recent actions in Iraq. Michael was also an active member of the Salisbury Fire Department's Special Operations Team, where he held positions as a diver and hazardous materials technician.

Michael is survived by his parents, Robin and David, a former United States Marine Corps veteran; his sister, Jeanette; brother Brian; several aunts and uncles as well as an extended family of both military and fire service personnel. He also left behind a loving fiancée, Kim Mundorf, who never left Michael's side throughout his ordeal and whom he planned to marry upon his return from active duty.

Staff Sergeant Michael Joseph McMullen was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery with military honors.

Eric Thomas Caldwell

Corporal, United States Army



Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade,
1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas

Corporal Caldwell was just 22 years old when he was killed in combat on January 7, 2007, in Taji, Iraq. On January 11, 2007, the Washington Post ran a headline that stated: Salisbury Soldier, Who Found Direction in Army, Is Killed. The relatives of Eric Caldwell knew that he rode as a gunner on a Humvee, trying to clear roads southwest of Baghdad. Three days before he was killed, Eric called home to Salisbury, Maryland, to say he would be coming home soon for a weeks leave. The Maryland native died in Iraq after his Humvee unit was in a firefight with enemy forces.

He was the son of Vanessa Caldwell of Gloucester, Virginia, and Brian Caldwell of Exton, Pennsylvania; the brother of Andrea Caldwell and Katie Caldwell; the grandson of Earl Robins Sr. and the late Virginia Estelle Robins, of Gloucester, and Melvin and Naomi Caldwell of Ellicott City, Maryland. Eric was born in Maryland and lived there and Florida before moving to Gloucester in 1999, and attending Gloucester High School from 1999 – 2003. In 2003, Eric joined the Maryland National Guard and served with them until enlisting in the United States Army in 2005. Eric's hometown at the time of his enlistment was Salisbury, Maryland.

Eric was born a mere 14 minutes before his twin sister, Andrea. He apparently took that 14 minutes seriously and spent years trying to convince Andrea that he was her big brother. "He was a great kid. He was the most kindhearted," said his aunt, Caroline Cerniglia. "He was the most decent young man that anyone would be proud to have as a son." Eric's love for food was the basis of many family jokes. Some loved ones even marked their calendars after a rare meal where Caldwell would say he was full.

Corporal Eric Caldwell received the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star Medal: *For meritorious service from 1 November 2006 to 7 January 2007, while assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment during Iraqi Freedom. His commitment contributed to our Nation's continual war on terror and his actions represented his dedication to the security of the United States of America. His sincere desire to bring peace and stability to a foreign nation is an example of what all American Soldiers strive to achieve. No greater honor can be demonstrated by his ultimate sacrifice and he will be forever remembered for his actions. Corporal Caldwell's duty performance and selfless service are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Multi-National Corps-Iraq, and the United States Army.*

Thomas Lee Latham



Sergeant, United States Army

Company C, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York

Army Sergeant Thomas “Tommy Lee” Latham was killed on March 11, 2007, when a makeshift bomb detonated near his Humvee in Baghdad. Tommy Lee was 23 years old at the time of his death. He entered the service from Delmar, Maryland. Tommy Lee was a 2002 graduate of Wicomico High School.

Sergeant Latham left behind a 22 year old wife, Rachel Guy-Latham, and two children, Caleb, 5, and Ariel, 21 months. Rachel Guy-Latham said she met her husband in the seventh grade at Wicomico Middle School. They later began dating and married in April 2005, when Latham returned home from an earlier tour in Afghanistan.

At the time of his death, Tommy Lee’s parents, Barbara and Thomas, were living in Clyde, North Carolina.

Teachers and friends remembered “the kid who was always happy.” Carla Hicks, assistant principal at Delmar Elementary School, said he was a studious boy who enjoyed experiments. “He was a very likable student. He always had a nice smile when you saw him.” Bill Duck, a teacher who taught Latham 11th–grade U.S. History, described him as a “quintessential Eastern Shore kid who knew how to have fun but lived up to his responsibility.”

Sergeant Thomas “Tommy Lee” Latham is buried at the Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery near Hurlock, Maryland.

Sean Michael Mitchell



Corporal, United States Marine Corps

2nd Marine Division, 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion,
Alpha Company, 4th Platoon

Corporal Sean Michael Mitchell died on Tuesday, March 24, 2009, following a tragic accident on Route 13 near Westover, MD. Cpl Mitchell was returning to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, after a two week leave spent with his family. The young Marine was stationed at Camp Lejeune, having just returned from a tour of duty in Ramadi, Iraq, in February.

Sean was born February 12, 1988, in Salisbury. He lived on Pratt Road, enjoying almost any activity outdoors, such as fishing, hunting, surfing, crabbing, swimming, camping, and riding his 4 wheeler. He played baseball for Westside League on Pemberton Road, and one season of football at Bennett High School. Sean graduated at the top of his class from Free State Challenge Academy in Aberdeen, MD. After graduation, he attended Wor-Wic Community College. Sean Mitchell left for Parris Island, SC, on December 26, 2006.

Cpl Sean Mitchell's Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was 1833, Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) Crewman. As a member of Alpha Company, 4th Platoon, Sean's responsibilities included the operation, maintenance, and servicing of the following equipment: a 50 cal. M-2 Browning Machine Gun, a 40mm MK-19 Automatic Grenade Launcher, 4 SINGAR Radios, and a 903 cubic inch Cummings Turbo Diesel Engine. An AAV's mission was to SHOOT, MOVE, AND COMMUNICATE. He earned his license to be the driver of the AAV's and MRAP's during his training at Camp Pendleton in California. Cpl Mitchell's duties were to ensure his vehicle was always mission capable and on call when needed. Continuing the proud tradition of the Marine Corps, Sean qualified as an expert with the rifle. He also earned the National Defense, Iraq Campaign, and War on Terrorism Service Medals.

Cpl Mitchell's deployment to Ramadi, Iraq, took him far away from his regular duties as an AAV crewman. His Platoon Sergeant, Gunny Darrell A. Nash Jr., reported that "while deployed, we were attached to Regimental Combat Team (RCT)-8, 2nd Battalion/9th Marines. Cpl Mitchell and 4th Platoon's mission was to control two Entry Control Points (ECP) around the city of Ramadi, Iraq. Cpl Mitchell was assigned as a Mine Resistant Anti-Penetrating (MRAP) Vehicle driver, and also had duties pertaining to the security and operations of ECP-7 West. With over 7 thousand Iraqi civilians passing through the ECP each and every day, one can only imagine how tedious such a post and responsibilities can weigh on the shoulders of those on post during operating hours. Cpl Mitchell served most honorably and will be missed by many. Our fellow Marine is gone, but will never be forgotten."

Born in Salisbury, Sean was the son of Kathleen Dryden Mitchell and Robert Mitchell and his wife, Jeannie. Along with his parents, he is survived by a brother, Chris R. Mitchell; a sister, Sara W. Mitchell; paternal grandparents, Robert and Carolyn Mitchell; aunts and uncles, Earl and Diane Charnick, Danny and Patti Jackson and Steve Mitchell; and many cousins and friends. Sean was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Dorothy and Charlton Dryden.

His older brother Chris said that "Sean was a true friend to many. If there was the possibility of his getting into trouble but it would help somebody else he would do it for you. He would do it for you no questions asked. If he thought it would bring the better out in you in the long run, Sean would do it. He was the kind of person you couldn't help but love. He will never be forgotten. If you knew him there's no way you could forget him."

The following memories and reflections were shared by Sean's mother, Kathleen Dryden Mitchell. Sean had so many friends, both military and civilian. Sean had a vehicle at Camp Lejeune, and if anyone needed to go anywhere, he would take them. His Marine buddies said, "When you saw Sean, you would not see an empty seat beside him." One of Sean's friends quoted Sean saying, "It doesn't matter how long you live, but how you live." Sean loved to fish, hunt, and go surfing. He would go to Topsail Beach, NC, from Camp Lejeune and surf on his off time. He loved the water. He would go fishing and crabbing with his brother when he was home. Sean would hunt on his grandparent's farm in Newark, MD, for deer and turkey. He was planning on going turkey hunting when he returned to Camp Lejeune in March. When he was home, you could frequently find him on the beach at Assateague with a bonfire or at a friend's bonfire. On his last visit home, Sean saw many friends and spent most of the time at home with his family. Sean always had a smile on his face. He was a happy person and his goal was to make you laugh with him. He could always make us laugh. We miss that. He was very honored to fight and defend his country.

The Marines at Camp Lejeune held a memorial service for Cpl Mitchell in May and they said, "Sean established a reputation as an honest, kind, and dedicated Marine. He served his country honorably during his deployment to Ramadi, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During this time he was described by his peers as a constant source of encouragement, who greatly contributed to the morale of his platoon. As a man, a Marine, and a friend he was deeply admired and will be sorely missed. Sean's mother said that his Marine brothers told her that when they were on lunch break at Camp Lejeune, Sean would go into his barracks and pick up his guitar or didgeridoo and his bunkmate would go to the drums and they would have a mini concert where everyone would meet and sing or just jam.

Cpl Sean Mitchell received a full military burial in his dress-blues as a symbol of his love of being a Marine. According to Sara Mitchell, Sean's sister, "The Brotherhood he had with his platoon and serving his country were the most important things to him about being a Marine. He wouldn't have wanted it any other way."

Quoted from the *Card of Thanks from the Family*: "The outpouring of love, compassion, caring, support and giving received from our community and the United States Marine Corps can only be described as a true blessing. Your visits, cards, emails, phone calls, flowers, food and donations were cherished and will be forever appreciated. Sean was very proud of his community, very proud to be a Marine and very proud to serve his country. His love for his community and country touched everyone's heart as was demonstrated by the overwhelming magnitude of generosity and fellowship during this most difficult time. Sean was a true role model, a true hero and, most of all, a truly and deeply loved son, brother and grandson."

United States Marine Corps Cpl Sean Michael Mitchell was the 188th Wicomico County resident to be added to the Wicomico County War Memorial. Sean's final resting place is at Trinity Church in Newark, MD, buried near his grandparents. Semper Fi Marine.