

Staff Sgt. MICHAEL H. SIMPSON Military Profile



Staff Sgt. Michael H. Simpson, son of Mike and Barbara Simpson, was 30 years old when he died on May 2, 2013 from injuries sustained from an improvised explosive device. He was a resident of Shavano Park from 1995 until 2003 when he joined the Army. He graduated from Clark High School in 2000. He was assigned to Company C, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) as a weapons sergeant and was deployed to Afghanistan to support Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan. He served in the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and he was in his third deployment when he died.

Staff Sgt. Michael H. Simpson received multiple awards and decorations including, the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Good Conduct Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terror Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon with numeral "2" device, Army Service Ribbon, Special Forces Tab, Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. For his service and sacrifice, he was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart. Michael was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery on May 30, 2013.

Michael is survived by his wife, two sons and his parents. His father, Mike Simpson has served as an Alderman for the Shavano Park City Council since 2016.

Courtesy of The Green Beret Foundation

"Life of the Team"

Staff Sgt. Michael Simpson's teammates always called him the unquiet professional. That's because, contrary to the unassuming disposition of most Special Forces Soldiers, his association with the Army's elite Green Berets was often the first thing Simpson wanted people to know about him.

He was proud of his organization and the distinction that came with it, his peers and leaders wrote in letters from Afghanistan read during a memorial ceremony June 5 for the 1st Special Forces Group staff sergeant. The Soldier died May 1 at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany after encountering an improvised explosive device April 27 while scouting routes to ensure his team returned safely to their base from operations. The 30 year old was on his third deployment.

Simpson served with the unit's 4th Battalion, which he joined in December 2012 after eight years as an infantryman. He is the second Soldier with the battalion killed in action this year.

A teammate of Simpson, and one of his closest friends, remembered that the staff sergeant possessed an uncanny ability to let an entire room full of people know he was a member of Special Forces.

"The first time Mike introduced himself to me, he said, 'I'm Staff Sgt. Simpson, Green Beret,'" Staff Sgt. Carl Alvarez recalled. "Mike lived those words every day."

In a letter written by Sgt. 1st Class Gus Anderson, he described the moment that stood out most to him as a reflection of the dedication and drive naturally inherent in Simpson. Their section had worked into the evening loading up weapons in preparation for their Afghanistan deployment. Simpson insisted he would take a short break, treat his wife, Krista, to dinner, and then finish the work himself.

"It could have easily waited until the next day, but his unending dedication to finishing the task at hand was what made him who he was," Anderson said. "He was the hardest working guy on the team, hands down, and we all knew it."

Col. Robert McDowell, commander of 1st SFG, said Simpson, who died doing what he loved, epitomized the essence of a Green Beret.

"There's so many things about Mike that were the image of what we all came in here to do," he said, adding that Simpson saved his brothers the day he was injured. "He is what all of us try to be."

He was a true professional, his peers all resounded, but he liked to make people laugh, too. Once, the staff sergeant walked into a room singing a song from "Doc McStuffins," a Disney TV show he watched with his two sons. Anderson, who was familiar with the cartoon, couldn't help but join in.

"No one else in the team room had any idea what was going on," Anderson's letter read. "He was the life of the team, and his personality was one of his greatest traits. He never failed to put a smile on other peoples' faces."

In a slideshow that played as Soldiers finished filing into the Lewis North Chapel, photos showed Simpson flexing during a soccer game with his comrades, rolling on his back in the grass, lying affectionately with a zoo tiger, and firing a machine gun mounted to an all-terrain vehicle — the kind Simpson's unit used in training and downrange that he couldn't resist taking for joyrides whenever possible.

"How he loved to ride those ATVs," Anderson wrote. "He was always itching to hop on the quad or on the side-by-side."

But above all, the Soldiers remembered, Simpson remained a family man, often saying he was amazed by his wife's ability to simultaneously manage his demanding career and their two sons, whom he enjoyed getting into mischief with when she was away.

"His family was the foundation he built his Special Forces career on," Alvarez wrote. "His wife, Krista, was Mike's source of strength and balance. Without her, he would say, his potential as a Green Beret was limited."

Courtesy of Christopher Gaylord with Northwest Guardian, "Teammate was 'life of the team,' Soldiers say: Green Beret died May 1 during third deployment", Published June 13, 2013