





BRYAN TUTTEN

, - December 25, 2007

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FACTS

Death: December 25, 2007

Place of Death: Iraq

Occupation: Military

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BIOGRAPHY

A St. Augustine resident on his second tour of duty in Iraq with the U.S. Army lost his life on Christmas day in a roadside bombing. He is the first St. Johns County native to die in a war-related incident in Iraq.

Sgt. Bryan Joseph Tuten, 34, serving with the 82nd Airborne out of Fort Bragg, N.C., was due to come home in 45 days, according to his mother-in-law, Faye Peterson.

His wife, Constandina Peterson Tuten, and the couple's two children, Catherine, who turns 4 on New Year's Eve, and Gareth, born May 17 of this year, are here for the holidays with her parents, Faye and Gary Peterson.

Tuten was a rifleman and squad leader of an infantry company, said Gary Peterson, who retired as a lieutenant colonel after 33 years in the Army National Guard.

Peterson said the Army casualty assistance officers told them Tuten was killed Tuesday afternoon while on operations in Tikrit and implied it was due to an improvised explosive device.


"He went out to clear out the insurgents," said Peterson. "It was a very dangerous job, but he was very good at it."

Tuten is apparently the first county native to be killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, retired Sgt. Maj. Daniel Blackman, said Thursday.

Blackman is affiliated with the military honors office of the Florida National Guard here.

The sergeant's family was notified of his death early Wednesday.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army six years ago and deployed for his second tour of duty in Iraq in November 2006. In May, the Red Cross helped him return to Fort Bragg for a two-week emergency leave when his son was born.



He had missed the birth of his daughter.

Tutten was born in St. Augustine, attended St. Joseph Academy, graduated from St. Augustine High School and attended St. Johns River Community College. He was a member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of St. Augustine.

The sergeant was the son of the late St. Augustine guitarist and folk singer Tom Tutten. The elder Tutten was 50 years old when he died on April 8, 2001. He drowned while coming to the aid of children who had lost an inflatable raft on Vilano Beach. He reached the raft, according to reports at the time, but then slipped beneath the surface.

Tutten is also survived by his mother, Sylvia Stembridge Smallwood, and his stepmother, Linda Tutten, both of St. Augustine, and by members of the Peterson family: Stefan, Scott and David Peterson, Marisa Peterson Clark and her husband, Chris; stepsister Amy Caswell and her husband, Andy; and stepsisters Audrey and April Smallwood.

"We were just so close," Faye Peterson said.

Tutten was an avid sportsman who loved to fish and cook.

"He was a very good family man who would spend hours playing with his daughter," Gary Peterson said. "My wife, Faye, and I were so attached to Bryan that we thought of him as one of our sons, and we have three of our own."

Tutten last spoke with his family during a video conference call on Dec. 11.

"He was one of my heroes, and he sacrificed his life for our safety," said Gary Peterson.

FUNERAL SERVICES

Friday January 4, 2008, 1:00 PM at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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VISITATION

Thursday January 3, 2008, 5-7 PM at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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