

Written Testimony: Andy Andrews

Thank you Mr. Chairman, ranking members and members of the sub committees.

I am Andy Andrews, Father of 2LT Darryn Deen Andrews who was killed in Afghanistan while in the process of searching for Bowe Bergdahl.

Darryn's first tour in Afghanistan was in 2004 as an enlisted soldier. He developed a medical condition that required surgery so he was sent to Germany and then back to the states. He applied to the Green to Gold program and was accepted into it. He enrolled in 2006 at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas to complete his Master's degree while enrolled in ROTC. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He was stationed at Ft. Benning, GA then briefly at Ft. Richardson, AK before being sent to Afghanistan in April of 2009. We were able to talk to Darryn by telephone whenever he got a chance to call. We conversed with him around July 1 or 2. His birthday is on the third. He told us they had been out looking for the last 24 hours for this soldier who had walked away. I asked if the soldier had been captured while on guard duty. Darryn said he didn't think so because all his gear was found neatly stacked so he thought the soldier had just left. The soldier's name was not mentioned so all we knew was that a soldier had left. Darryn could not tell us where he was or what they were doing. When we would talk to him the next few months we would occasionally ask if they had found their soldier and he would say they had not and were still looking. No name or specifics were ever mentioned.

Darryn was killed on September 4, 2009 which coincidentally was our 41st wedding anniversary. 2LT Darryn Deen Andrews distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in combat as the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, Blackfoot Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry (Airborne) in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.

Darryn's wife and son, his twin brother, Jarrett, and his family were in Cameron, Texas to celebrate Daylan's (Darryn's son) second birthday on the September 7th. My wife and I had been on the coast to celebrate our anniversary. We had just pulled into our driveway and started to unload the truck. Jarrett came over and told us that Darryn's wife's neighbor had called to tell her that the army was looking for her. This was approximately 1530 hours. He told them that he would call her and tell her to be back at the house at 1830 hours. I unhooked the boat and we all went to New Braunfels. The Army notification team arrived at approximately 1900 hours. The sergeant told us that Darryn had been killed on Sept 4th and he would probably still be alive if he had remained in the truck like most officers

would have instead of getting out of the truck to help get it out of the hole the IED had made. We were told he had saved soldiers' lives when he spotted an enemy combatant fire a RPG, shoved others out of the way and alerted other soldiers. Darryn took a direct hit from the RPG.

We attended a memorial service for Darryn and the soldiers of the 501st killed on this deployment on or about September 13. During the days in Anchorage Darryn's commanding officer Lt. Colonel Baker's wife hosted a luncheon for us. At the luncheon Darryn's captain, Capt. Silvino Sandoval told us exactly how Darryn was killed. He stated that they were on a mission to locate a high interest Taliban and were passing through a village. The road had walls on each side and room to maneuver was limited. The lead vehicle hit an IED and was disabled. Because of the walls on each side of the road going around the vehicle was not possible. Soldiers got out to assess damage and get the vehicle out of the hole. Darryn had SSG Zavodny and PFC Martinec with him. Darryn saw the enemy combatant step from behind a wall and fire a RPG. Darryn yelled "RPG!!!" and pushed Zavodny and Martinec to the ground. Darryn took a direct hit from the RPG. SSG Zavodny received some damage to his ears. PFC Martinec survived to be airlifted to Germany but died a few days later. Lt. Andrews' warning gave his men time to seek cover preventing more severe injuries and loss of life. At no time was it mentioned they were engaged is searching for private Bergdahl during this mission or any other mission.

On February 12, 2010 2LT Darryn Deen Andrews was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for his heroic actions. During this ceremony the Cameron Independent School District renamed the Cameron Elementary/Junior High library the "2LT Darryn Deen Andrews Memorial Library". The narrative of the Silver Star documentation states that Lt Darryn Andrews was killed as Captain Silvino described. At no point in the document is the search for Pvt. Bergdahl mentioned.

When Bergdahl was portrayed on television as having served with honor and distinction as stated by Susan Rice the soldiers who were there contacted my wife to make sure she knew they understood what a hero was and what was not and Bergdahl's walking away was a contributing factor in Darryn's death. Darryn and Bowe Bergdahl were not in the same platoon. Bergdahl was in the second platoon and Darryn was the leader of the third platoon. The soldiers told us that everybody was searching for Bergdahl. Six soldiers who were serving with Darryn at the time of his death have confirmed with my wife and me that when Darryn was killed while on a mission to find Bergdahl. A member of Army intelligence who was there at the same time Darryn was came to our house last week and told us everyone based in the vicinity was instructed to search for Bergdahl every time they went

out. He related to us that he was supposed to go to another post to question locals but could not get transportation because all available helicopters were tied up searching for Bergdahl. He stated that Bergdahl's desertion disrupted the mission of the entire unit. Lt. Colonel Baker, Darryn's commander, called last week. He reiterated that the only mission Darryn was on was to search for the high ranking Taliban and the soldiers with Darryn probably did not have the security clearance to know what the mission was.

I do know that the men who were there believe he was a factor. They also believe he is a deserter. The enemy knew we were looking for him and they knew how to most effectively attack us. Did Bergdahl desert? I think so from what our son and soldiers who were there told my wife and me. There most definitely needs to be a through, non-political investigation in his leaving and the five years he was missing. I heard a Lt. Colonel on TV state that if one wants to know what is going on in the military do not ask the colonels or generals. Ask the lower ranks. They can tell you what really happened. My information was obtained from the enlisted soldiers who were there with my son and I believe it to be credible information.

Since Bergdahl was released we have been interviewed by many news media in the United States and Britain. We participate in these interviews because we want our son remembered for his heroic actions so someday his children can read about him with pride. His son turned two three days after he was killed and his daughter was born about three and one-half months after he was killed. The only thing they will know about him is his story.

R.G. 'Andy' Andrews

Father of 2LT Darryn Deen Andrews

