THEY SERVED IN SILENCE

The Story of a Cryptologic Hero
Senior Airman Julian S. Scholten

Self-sacrifice is the real miracle out of which all the reported miracles grow.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Senior Airman Julian Scholten was born on October 17, 1985, into an Air Force family at Misawa Air Base, Japan, where he would spend much of his youth. However, in his short but meaningful life, he would also live in such diverse places as Germany, Colorado, and finally Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Julian's time at Upper Marlboro's Fredrick Douglass High was well spent. During high school, he played on the football team and managed to meet Diamond, the woman who would eventually become his wife.

In 1814, Upper Marlboro served for a time as the headquarters of British forces that would defeat the American Army at Bladensburg and then go on to capture and burn the new capital of the fledgling republic. Despite this setback, due to the efforts of the brave men who carried the fight to the enemy, the United States would eventually prevail in the conflict and preserve its independence. In 2007, Julian would decide to follow this tradition by answering the call to defend his nation during a difficult and demanding time.

After initial training, Julian would be assigned to a variety of installations and commands to include the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California; Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas; and, eventually, the 25th Intelligence Squadron (IS) at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The 25th IS traces its lineage to 1944 when it was created as a photographic technical unit whose purpose was to provide critical intelligence to U.S. combat operations in an effort to defeat the Axis. Decades later, the unit would provide critical support to *Operation Desert Storm*, and, after 9/11, it would assist in our nation's efforts to combat terrorism around the globe. In January 2012, Julian would deploy with the unit to Djbouti, Africa.

Senior Airman Scholten was not your average analyst. In fact, Julian was a very skilled tactical systems operator or TSO, and he was looked up to as a leader among his peers. He served as a key member of an airborne team of specialists whose purpose was providing critically needed intelligence for U.S. military operations.

Julian was one of the first-ever professional TSO's at the 25th IS. Due to his demonstrated professionalism and expertise, his commander hand-picked him to become the unit's first junior operator to enter flight

instructor training, a remarkable achievement for a senior airman. He consistently displayed maturity beyond his years and earned a reputation for being one of the most patient and insightful airman in the squadron.

In his five years in the Air Force, Scholten completed two tours of duty as a TSO in Iraq. He amassed more than 200 combat sorties and accrued over 900 combat aviation hours.

On February 18th, Julian was returning with his team from a reconnaissance mission in the U.S. Africa Command's area of operations. Six miles from their base, their single-engine U-28 turboprop crashed, killing the entire team.

At a remembrance observance held after the tragedy, Maj. Gen. Robert P. Otto, Commander of the Air Force ISR Agency, would note that "Julian was a tremendous Airman," but to his friends and family he was much more than a dedicated analyst. Julian loved movies, Asian cuisine, and the San Francisco 49ers. Most of all, he was devoted to those who loved him. His wife noted that he was the best husband, son, brother and friend that anyone could ever have, and that he will continue to live in the hearts of everyone who knew and worked with him.

Many believe that wars are won by great military leaders who set the example and show the way to victory. This is undoubtedly true. But it is also the case that nations prevail in time of war due, not only to those at the top, but also to the dedicated efforts of thousands of individuals like Senior Airman Scholten. In the end, it is their talents and abilities that allow those who stand in harm's way to achieve their objectives and survive the crucible of war.

Senior Airman Julian S. Scholten
17 Oct 1985 - 18 Feb 2012

Photographs courtesy of the Scholten family

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