

THEY SERVED IN SILENCE



The Story of a Cryptologic Hero SGT Trista Leah Moretti, USA

"The mission of the U.S. Intelligence rests on a pillar of pure optimism: that seemingly ordinary men and women can do truly extraordinary things."

DCI George Tenet

From the beginning of the Republic the foundation of the United States Army has rested on the courage and ability of dedicated warriors to carry the fight to America's enemies. But behind every warrior are other highly trained professionals whose skills are also critical to ensuring success. Among them are army cryptologists who use their talents and abilities to provide and protect critical information on the battlefield. In order to succeed in this field one must be innovative, intelligent, creative, and most importantly imbued with an indomitable team spirit. As a member of the United States Army, SGT Trista Leah Moretti was all of these things and more.

Trista was born appropriately on Flag Day, June 14, 1980, and raised in South Plainfield, New Jersey. During her youth she excelled both in the classroom and on the athletic field, earning nine varsity letters in field hockey and spring and winter track. In 1997 she and her teammates brought home the Middlesex County field hockey championship to South Plainfield High.

Trista loved children and seriously considered a career as a teacher. For a brief time she took courses in child development and worked at a local day care center, but like many bright young women of her time, Trista had a strong desire to have not only a successful life, but a meaningful one as well. She was determined to be a part of something bigger than herself. With this in mind she began to think about a career in the United States armed forces. In 2003, after talking the idea over with her father and a close friend, both of whom were familiar with military life, she made the decision to enlist in the United States Army. After basic training, AIT and airborne school, she was assigned to the Medina Regional Security Operations Center Command in Texas where she worked hard to hone her cryptologic skills.

All soldiers, no matter what their military specialty, are trained in infantry tactics. In her time in the service of her country Trista not only made good use of her soldier skills, but also became an accomplished cryptologist. In December 2005, she was assigned to the 425th Brigade Special Troop Battalion of the 25th Infantry where she became adept at gathering and protecting the critical information so vital to winning battles and saving lives.

The roots of the 25th Infantry can be traced to WWII in the Hawaiian Islands. The motto of this division is Tropic Lightning: Ready to Strike! Anywhere, Anytime. The unit was stationed at Schofield Barracks on Oahu on the morning of December 7th 1941 and was one of the very first units in the United States Army to carry the fight to Japan. Decades later, the attacks on our nation on September 11, 2001 led the unit to once again answer the call to the colors. In 2006, Trista would become a part of the 25th's efforts to protect America in this day and time when her unit was deployed to Forward Operating Base Kalso near the Sunni Triangle in Iraq.





Friends and family described Trista as “fearless, brave and resourceful.” During her time in Iraq she used all of these attributes to help the unit to succeed in its efforts to defeat the insurgency. One of the most critical tasks of the 425th was to search for and locate IEDs — roadside bombs. Trista’s work was critical to this effort. Her work and the work of the unit were not in vain; countless IEDs were discovered before detonation.

On June 25, 2007, after a hard night of work Trista returned to her quarters for some much needed rest. At midday the base came under an intensive mortar attack. A shell struck the area killing her and injuring dozens. For her service and sacrifice she was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Badge.



In her short but eventful life, Trista Leah Moretti was many things: a devoted daughter and sister, a true friend, a superb athlete, an airborne soldier and a patriot who dedicated her life to serving her country during a challenging and demanding time. Her sister described her as a person who lived her life with an unsurpassed “fire and tenacity.” Others who knew her often said that “she was bigger than life.” In the end she will be remembered not only for the lives she touched and the exemplary life she led, but also for the work she did to save the lives of others, both military and civilian.



Sergeant Trista Leah Moretti
United States Army
14 June 1980 - 25 June 2007



Photos courtesy of the Moretti family
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