

# THEY SERVED IN SILENCE



## The Story of a Cryptologic Hero **Sgt Jacob McLean Durham**



Sergeant Jacob McLean Durham, United States Marine Corps, was born on April 8, 2002, and raised in the Belmont Shore/Naples area of Long Beach, California, a major US West Coast port and commercial center. Jacob attended Lowell Elementary School and Ernest McBride High School, both in the Long Beach area.

During his youth he developed an interest in swimming and kayaking. He graduated from high school with honors, and for a short time attended California State University at Long Beach before enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in 2021.

After US Marine Corps basic and combat training, he reported to Goodfellow Air Force Base to become a certified Electronic Intelligence/Electromagnetic Warfare Specialist. Once he had completed the course of instruction, he reported to Company B of the 1st Radio Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, California.

As an electronic warfare specialist, Jacob worked with a dedicated team to gather critical information to support United States–Philippine security-related operations. Jacob quickly developed into an experienced cryptologic professional and was selected for future deployment to the United States Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. In December of 2023 he underwent 10 months of additional training to prepare him to support Operation Pacific Eagle–Philippines.

September of 2024 found him hard at work carrying out airborne intelligence-gathering missions. By this time, Jacob had honed his craft and gained the respect and admiration of his peers. He was well-liked by his fellow service members, who enjoyed his sense of humor and what they termed his "California calm" during the operations.

On February 6, 2025, Jacob and three other crew members boarded a UC-12W Beechcraft King Air aircraft to conduct a routine aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission in support of partner forces in the Philippine province of Maguindanao Del Sur. During the mission, the plane developed severe engine trouble and went down, resulting in the deaths of the entire crew.

After the tragedy, Jacob's body was recovered and flown to Manila, Philippines, where he was received by the US Ambassador to the Philippines, Mary Kay L. Carlson. He was then flown to Yokota, Japan, and eventually back to San Diego, California, where he was received by his family and leaders from the 1st Radio Battalion.

In his short but meaningful life, Sergeant Jacob McLean Durham exhibited the highest traits and virtues of the United States Marine Corps and the nation he served. He left behind a loving family and countless fellow marines and service members who admired him for his courage, bravery, and devotion to duty. He is buried in Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego, California.

