

THEY SERVED IN SILENCE



The Story of a Cryptologic Hero SGT Andrew J. Creighton, USA

*"Someone's got to do the things that no one else wants to do."
Johnny "Mike" Spann, first U.S. combat death in the War on Terrorism*



Andrew James Creighton, or A.J., as his friends and family called him, was a native son of the Lone Star State. Born in Galveston, Texas, A.J. would spend much of his youth in the small Texas town of Cuero. Because of its vast number of turkey farms, Cuero is known as "The Turkey Capital of the World." In high school, A.J. was proud to play football for the Cuero High team, appropriately known as the Gobblers. After his freshman year, A.J. would move to Sussex County, Delaware. At Sussex Tech he would depart the gridiron for the band room where he became proficient on the baritone, trumpet, and tuba. Additionally, he would continue to pursue and achieve excellence in the fields of science, math, and technology. Even more impressive than his intelligence, perhaps, was his ability to connect with people, a talent that would remain with him throughout his life.

After high school, A.J. considered several possible career paths, including applying to West Point, but after much thought, he decided to enlist in the United State Army. After basic training, he would receive additional cryptologic and language training and would eventually be assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group (SFG) out of Ft. Lewis, Washington. The 1st SFG is a proud and accomplished unit whose lineage dates back to 1957. Since that time, the unit has participated in the Vietnam War and countless other conflicts in the defense of freedom

After joining the 1st SFG, A.J. would volunteer for duty in Afghanistan and would develop into a brave, determined warrior. His father would note that he was a man who never missed an opportunity and took life head on. A detachment sergeant would note that, "A.J. was always on the front lines no matter how difficult or dangerous the mission." Over time, his versatile and creative approach to problems, technical and otherwise, earned him the reputation as a jack-of-all-trades and an innovative problem solver. Due to these unique qualities, he played a vital role in helping his commanders to acquire and protect the kind of critical information that can often make the difference between victory and defeat on the battlefield.



Throughout history, those who fight our Nation's wars have always faced grave peril due to the nature of combat. However, it is also true that military life in general is often fraught with danger and frequently the terrain a unit faces can often present as much of a challenge as enemy fire. It was just such a challenge that would result in SGT Creighton losing his life.

On July 1, 2010, SGT Creighton was on the move with his unit, returning from an important mission in Afghanistan. While on a high-priority mission, SGT Creighton's unit's location was compromised by insurgents. During an exfiltration maneuver, the unit attempted to cross a river, and A.J. and another Soldier were swept off their feet by the current. Both men struggled against raging waters, but only one made it to the river bank. A.J. would be found days later on the 4th of July.

SGT Andrew Creighton's short but accomplished life had come to an end, but his legacy and accomplishments would never be forgotten by the host of friends and family members who understandably admired and looked up to him as the embodiment of a true American hero. For his service in combat he would posthumously receive the Bronze Star and the Meritorious Service Medals. President John F. Kennedy, a man who had seen combat personally, once noted that, "A Nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers." With this in mind, it is fitting and proper to honor and remember the service and sacrifice of SGT Andrew J. Creighton, Soldier, son, friend, and patriot.



SGT Andrew "A.J." J. Creighton
United States Army
July 24, 1986 - July 1, 2010



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