

THEY SERVED IN SILENCE

The Story of a Cryptologic Hero SPC Ryan C. King, USA

Ryan Charles King was born on Veteran's Day, 1986 in Marietta Georgia and raised in Paulding County not far from the southern metropolis of Atlanta. Paulding County takes its name from John Paulding, a Revolutionary War patriot best known for playing a critical role in the capture of Major John Andre, a British spy who had been plotting with Benedict Arnold to betray West Point. Two centuries later, like Paulding, Ryan would also serve his country by working to provide and protect critical intelligence in the defense of freedom.

As a young man Ryan had many interests. He attended East Paulding High School and developed a reputation as an excellent center fielder on the local baseball diamonds. From an early age, he exhibited a passionate desire to pursue a military career. After graduation in 2005, he sought to fulfill this life long dream by enlisting in the United States Army.

Ryan began his military career at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, and took his advanced instruction at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. After training, he spent a tour of duty in South Korea. During his time "In the Land of the Morning Calm," he not only worked to hone his soldier and intelligence related skills, but also was lucky enough to meet Sergeant Rachel Nicole Smith, the woman who would eventually become his wife. Smith noted that King loved his life in the service so much that he "could never imagine himself doing anything else."



In time, he would become a valued member of the Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry out of Ft. Hood, Texas. The year 2008 would find him in Afghanistan on a year long deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During his time on the battlefield, SPC King dedicated himself to his duties gathering critical information to ensure future American victories and helping to save countless lives.

King's unit, the "Fighting First," had a storied reputation. In April of 1918, the 1st Infantry had played a critical role in saving Paris by holding off a German offensive near the French village of Cantigny. Twenty-six years later on the sixth of June 1944, the men of the Big Red One would find themselves wading into withering fire on Omaha Beach. In 2009, SPC Ryan King and his fellow soldiers were once again at the point of the spear for the 1st Infantry.



The British historian David Dilks once noted that, *It is precisely when resources are stretched and the tasks many, when the forces are evenly matched and the issue trembles in the balance, that good intelligence and sensitive interpretation matter most.* In this regard, Ryan and his fellow cryptologists were extremely effective in collecting the kind of information that would help coalition forces to even the odds on the battlefield and increase the chances that more of their comrades in arms would survive the battle's fray.

In May 2009, SPC King's outfit was operating in Afghanistan when his unit came under fire. Ryan along with several other Soldiers would perish in the attack. On the day SPC King made the ultimate sacrifice for his nation, he was in the prime of his life and loved and admired by countless friends and family members.

During his short but meaningful time in the armed forces of the United States, SPC Ryan King achieved many things. He was a success not only as a Soldier but as a person as well. His wife noted that Ryan was caring and loving with a strong sense of humor and an even stronger devotion to his family. In the end, due to the immense service he provided to his Nation during a critical time, it can be said unequivocally that he lived up to the motto of his unit, "No Mission Too Difficult, No Sacrifice Too Great." Those inspiring words not only describe the sense of duty Ryan displayed in his work, but characterizes his life apart from the battlefield.

It is in this spirit that we honor and remember SPC Ryan Charles King, a Soldier, cryptologist, devoted husband and son, but most of all, a true American hero.



SPC Ryan C. King
11 November 1986 - 01 May 2009



Photos courtesy of the King family
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