

Green Beret Killed By IED in Afghanistan

By Lisa Ferdinando - Department Of Defense News

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Staff Sgt. Matthew V. Thompson, 28, of Irvine, California, died Aug. 23, of wounds received from an improvised explosive device while on patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Thompson was assigned to A Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. Thompson was on his first deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. He had previously deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

"He was an exceptional Green Beret, a cherished teammate, and devoted husband. His service in Afghanistan and Iraq speak to his level of dedication, courage, and commitment to something greater than himself," said Lt. Col. Kevin M. Trujillo, commander of Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan.

"The Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan will honor his memory and sacrifice and his passing is a tremendous loss to all who were blessed to know him," Trujillo added.

Thompson enlisted in the U.S. Army in March 2011 as a Special Forces candidate. Upon completion of Army Basic Combat and Advanced Individual Training, Basic Airborne Course,

Special Forces Assessment and Selection and the Special Forces Qualification Course, he reported to 1st Special Forces Group as a Special Forces medical sergeant in August 2014.

Thompson's military education includes Basic Combat Training, the Basic Airborne Course, the Advanced Leader Course, the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Course, the Special Forces Qualification Course and the Special Operations Combat Medic Course.

His wife of five years, Rachel Thompson, spoke to Milwaukee's WTMJ-TV after his death, and said Thompson was with a joint U.S.-Afghan foot patrol clearing IEDs when he died.

Rachel Thompson said her husband lost his life doing what he loved.

"He had the time of his life," she told WTMJ, calling her husband "fearless."

Another U.S. Soldier was injured in the attack, as were six Afghan troops, according to the Army Times.

Thompson is the second U.S. combat death in Afghanistan this year. Sgt. 1st Class Matthew McClintock died in Helmand earlier this year.

About 700 U.S. troops are deployed in Helmand, and about 10,000 deployed to Afghanistan. Just before Thompson's death, the Defense Department announced another 100 Soldiers would be sent to that country.

Thompson's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (numeral 2), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Basic Parachutist Badge and Special Forces Tab.

Thompson was posthumously awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star Medal with V device, and Purple Heart Medal.

— *Lisa Ferdinando of Department of Defense News contributed to this report.*