



In Memory of



1st Lt. Travis L. Manion
Died: April 29, 2007

26, of Doylestown, Pa.; assigned to 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.; died April 29 while conducting combat operations in Anbar province, Iraq.

Doylestown Marine killed in combat in Iraq
The Associated Press

DOYLESTOWN, Pa. - A Marine officer from Doylestown who was killed in combat in Iraq was a dedicated supporter of the troops' mission, his family said April 30.

First Lt. Travis L. Manion, 26, died April 29 in combat in Anbar province. He was serving his second tour in Iraq, embedded with an Iraqi army unit that he was leading and training.

"He was so sure what he was doing over there was right," said his mother, Jannette Manion. "He called the night Bush made his speech about the troop surge and told us, 'That's exactly what we need.' His biggest concern was that the politicians over here were giving life to the insurgents by putting the military and president down."

His father, Tom Manion, said he was proud of how his son would "give his all" in life and in the military.

"He was a kid with a big heart, never had a bad word for anyone. He was all heart; that is who he was," Tom Manion said. "We've had calls from all over the country, from people who said they loved him like a brother; he really touched people like that."

<http://www.travismanion.com/>

Travis Joseph Lemma Manion was born November 19th, 1980 in Camp Lejeune, NC. Being the son of a Marine father, Travis and his family moved often during his first 10 years until settling in 1990 in Doylestown, PA. where he attended Linden elementary school, Holicong middle school, and then La Salle College high school in Wyndmore, PA.

In 1999, Travis graduated from La Salle College High School where he lettered in wrestling, football and lacrosse and was a member of five Catholic League Championship Teams, was named to all league teams in all three sports while receiving 1st Team All-Catholic honors six times for both Wrestling and Lacrosse. He also earned All-American honors in wrestling. Travis was the recipient of the Hal Selvey, Jr. Memorial Award for Unselfish Dedication and Leadership presented by the Philadelphia Wrestling Association in 1999. He excelled both on the athletic fields and in the classroom at LaSalle where he maintained a 3.7 GPA

Over the years, Travis was exposed often to the United States Naval Academy, either through visits to the Academy grounds or in meeting former graduates that were family friends. So, when it came time to choose a college, it was no surprise to anyone who knew him that he chose to attend the Naval Academy. He graduated in 2004 where he was a 2004 preseason national top 20 wrestler. He won the 2002 - 2003 Weems Award for Leadership and Dedication presented by the Naval



At the end of his college career Travis chose to become a Marine Corps officer. His basic officer training was in Quantico, VA where he finished in the top of his class and as a result, he was awarded a regular commission in the United States Marine Corps. After completing his military occupational school Travis was assigned to the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force Camp Pendleton, CA. Shortly after arriving to his first duty station, Travis was sent with his unit to Iraq for his first tour. During his time in the country, he was part of many critical events including support of the 2005 election, uncovering weapons caches throughout the region and numerous other Iraqi transition missions.

Returning from a successful tour in March of 2006, Travis set out to prepare his unit for a return deployment scheduled for March of 2007. Looking for experienced Iraq veterans, Travis was selected to be part of a Military Transition team and in September of 2006 he was pulled from 1st Recon to train with 10 other Marines that would be attached to an Iraqi Army Battalion in Fallujah.

Travis deployed back to Iraq on December 26th 2006 for his second tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He and his fellow Marines worked diligently to change the outcome in Fallujah, building a brotherhood with the Iraqi Army units and setting the example with strong leadership and a passion for their mission. Aggressively taking the fight to the enemy on multiple missions, Travis and his Marines fought bravely to change the tide in this critical battle ground. As a result of their incredible efforts, Al Anbar Province is now recognized as one of the more significant successes of the surge in Iraq. During his final patrol mission on Sunday, April 29, 2007, Travis was killed by enemy sniper fire in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq while fighting courageously to defend against an enemy ambush. While Travis is there only in spirit now, his legacy of strong character and leadership continues as his fellow service members work diligently to establish a foundation for freedom in Iraq. In honor of Travis and as a true testament to how much he is admired, the Iraqi's have named their new headquarters in honor of him, Combat Outpost (COP) Manion. Travis' family, friends and fellow patriots will never forget his passion for life and his incredible sacrifices. Travis will always be remembered for his Spartan spirit and as a "Leader of Marines". Rest in Peace our brave, noble, warrior; you are a true American Hero! We will never forget!

"Live Travis in our hearts forever"

"[W]e shall fight on, insh'allah, as Mulazam Manion would want, and would do."
Rest in Peace, 1LT Travis Manion

On a Sunday afternoon in late April, 1st Lt. Travis Manion spoke to his father via satellite phone from a dusty Iraqi Army barracks in downtown Fallujah. Manion and his fellow Marines with Military Transition Team (MITT) 30 - advisors to the 3-2-1 Iraqi Army - had recently watched a DVD of the movie "300," and it made an impression. He told his dad that for the Spartans, there was "no greater honor" than to die fighting for one's country and its freedoms. He expressed frustration that many Americans didn't understand that's what he and his Marines were doing in Iraq. The satellite phone kept cutting out and, unusually, Travis kept calling his father back. He lingered on the phone. He spoke of the importance of honor, strength and courage. He expressed kinship with the Spartans.



A week later, Travis Manion died a Spartan's death.

In the days and weeks that followed, mourning friends, strangers and brothers-in-arms paid their respects with stories of how Manion lived up to the ideals he admired.

A childhood friend named Steve Brown said, "Travis was the first person to ever really stick up for me," after they had just met in the 5th grade. Manion had lectured a racist store clerk who ignored Brown because he was black, insisting that his new friend was served first. Another spoke of an incident a few years later, when Manion shot across a lacrosse field to tackle a temperamental high school teammate who was poised to blind-side a referee after an unfavorable call. This act probably saved a man from hospitalization and an angry kid from jail.

Such early glimmers of moral and physical character presaged enrollment in the United States Naval Academy, a career as a nationally ranked Division I-A wrestler, a decision to follow in his father's Marine Corps. footsteps, openness with Iraqi Army combatants, and a legacy of leadership. www.PDF.com 12/6/2010 7:17:58 AM
Article and photos courtesy of www.marines.com - Travis L. Manion

bravery in the restive city of Fallujah.

There was the time that Manion and his team were struck by an improvised explosive device (IED) while conducting a mounted patrol. After absorbing the blast and verifying that no one was seriously injured, he saw the glint of a "command wire" that sometimes leads to a bomb's owner. Jumping from the safety of the armored vehicle, Manion spotted and charged after the triggerman fleeing the scene. Though wearing 80+ pounds of "battle rattle" - armor, equipment and ammunition - Manion won the footrace against the small, wiry man, cornering and capturing his terrified prey in a building. As fellow MiTT Marine Maj Joel Poudrier put it, "He just stormed in and knocked a bunch of boxes the guy was hiding behind out of the way, flexi-cuffed him and dragged him out. That kid was a stud."

On March 28, his unit was hit with two suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIEDs): dump trucks loaded with explosives and chlorine gas. Just before dawn, heavy incoming mortars followed by small-arms fire woke the Marines and Iraqi soldiers (IAs) sleeping in their barracks in the Fallujah Government Center. One truck charged the front gate but was fired upon and detonated before it could penetrate the compound. As the Marines put on their gear and began to assemble, another exploded in an alley adjacent to the barracks, ripping open the entire western side of the building and blanketing the Marines and IAs in a chalky plume of poison gas. Manion ran up an exposed staircase through gas and the rattle of small-arms fire to recon and defend from the roof, maneuvering sandbags to create firing positions until a quick reaction force and medevac could arrive to remove the wounded.

On April 29, 2007, Travis and fellow advisors were conducting a combined Iraqi and Marine patrol in one of the most difficult sections of Fallujah. 3-2-1 MiTT Commander Maj. Adam Kubicki described that day in a letter to the Manion family:

"We departed our Combat Outpost in vehicles, but the actual conduct of the patrol was on foot, with vehicles in support. Travis was in the vehicle with me, and when on foot we moved together. We moved through the market section of the city with the Iraqi Army in the lead and we Marines providing guidance and direction."

"We had conducted the majority of our patrol uneventfully and were approaching the vehicles again when we were attacked ... our corpsman was struck by a sniper, critically injuring him. Travis and I pulled the corpsman to a covered position and attempted to locate the position of the sniper. Two more Marines rushed from our other vehicle to assist ... [and] a second Marine was struck by the sniper, critically injuring him as well. Travis and I again pulled the injured man to cover and realized that we must immediately establish security of our area."

"Travis selflessly moved from behind the covered position and began to engage the source of enemy fire. At that time, additional enemy forces appeared and began to engage us with a large amount of rifle and machine-gun fire. Travis, the Marine from the other vehicle and I took up firing positions to engage the enemy. I very clearly recall Travis firing his grenade launcher, keeping the insurgents from moving any closer, and his rifle."

"Our Iraqi counterparts were a short distance away at their vehicles. Travis's fire allowed them to remount and attempt to maneuver around to the flank. Our Marine vehicles provided cover and suppressive fire for us. Travis's only concern was the safety of our wounded and his fellow Marines and Iraqi soldiers. He continued to fire his weapon and maintain his position, even when additional insurgents appeared on the rooftops to our sides, firing down into us. [He] maintained his fire into the group of insurgents with the sniper."

"Our Iraqi counterparts maneuvering two blocks to the side encountered an IED and were stopped. I believe Travis was reloading his grenade launcher when the sniper next fired. [He] was struck directly in the side, just above the armor plate. The bullet severed the main vein from his heart and exited the other side. The other Marine and I, the only uninjured personnel on the ground, moved to Travis and pulled him back to a covered position. We alternated, one of us attempting to provide first aid ... while the other continued to engage the enemy. We continued to fight and provide first aid for several minutes. Travis died at 1525 Iraqi time (0725 east coast) on 29 April 2007."

"The fight continued for several more minutes, until a Marine quick reaction force arrived."

In addition to his fellow Marines, many Iraqis who served with the young lieutenant were distraught at Manion's passing.

"The American people must know we too lost a close friend and brother this day," said Iraqi Army Col. Ali Jafar, Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Iraqi Brigade, who previously spoke at Manion's memorial service. "May his family know we too lost family, and we share their loss, our loss."

Iraqi soldiers have since named a combat outpost after Manion.

"The advisors on a MiTT team are very different from the other American forces in Iraq. They are choosing to live with us, in our ways, share the same hardships and dangers, and choose to fight alongside of us. Many days. Every day," said Jafar. "Their blood is spilled alongside of ours on the battlefield. It mixes with ours. This is why Mulazam (lieutenant) Manion was, and will always be, our brother."

"I was impressed with the leadership in such a young guy," added Eric Greitens, a Navy SEAL who served with Manion. "[In combat] Travis maintained a very calm, mission-oriented presence that the Iraqis responded to."

I met Travis Manion prior to a night mission on January 15th, mere days after his team had deployed to the Iraqi Army barracks in the Fallujah Government Center. I struck up a conversation with him about wrestling when I noticed his cauliflower ears, and soon learned of his attendance at the Naval Academy. We spoke about college, his love for the Marines and his mission. Travis was reticent at first, wisely treating a prying reporter with polite circumspection, but he soon warmed up and always made it a point to speak to me or say hello in the weeks that followed.

One thing I noticed about Travis and his teammates: they had an edge. It wasn't simple fear exactly, but the men on that team - stationed as they were in an extremely exposed location, in an extremely violent city - felt that they were in for a rough deployment. They were right.

"When we first arrived in Iraq, one of the other Military Transition Teams in the city had a member killed. Our team was obviously affected, and we conducted a team meeting after his memorial service," wrote Kubicki. "Travis spoke at length, easing the minds of many team members. He was very proud of being a warrior, and the warrior spirit. I remember him saying that it would dishonor a man as a warrior if you did not continue the fight, despite the pain and loss. We have turned back to his words to help us through this time."

Despite the dangerous, difficult work, Manion later made plans to join his old Recon unit and continue working in Fallujah past his MiTT rotation. He believed in his Marines and mission. I wish he could have lived to see Fallujah now - a newly hopeful city, comparatively pacified to no small extent by the efforts of the Iraqi Army and their American advisors.

We had a brief acquaintance, but I was specifically inspired by Travis Manion when we met that chilly evening in January. Here was a young man - ridiculously athletic, smart and good-looking - who could have enjoyed a life of ease with the world at his feet, yet instead chose one of the most difficult paths imaginable. His subsequent actions and ultimate passing have inspired me even more, and continue to inspire others.

"Let all know too, we shall fight on, insh'allah (as God wills), as Mulazam Manion would want, and would do," said Col. Garza.

