



RELEASED BY Col. Greg Hapgood
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RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

CAMP DODGE
JOHNSTON, IOWA
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7 P.M.

IOWA NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIER KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN

The Iowa National Guard regrets to announce the death of Spc. Donald L. Nichols, 21, of Shell Rock, Iowa. Nichols was killed during a mounted patrol, Wednesday, April 13, when the Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected, All-Terrain Vehicle (MATV) in which he was an occupant was struck by an Improvised Explosive Device in the Mehtar Lam District, Laghman Province, Afghanistan at approximately 11 a.m., local Afghanistan time. Wounded in the attack was Spc. Timothy R. Gourd, 24, of Prescott, Iowa. Both Soldiers were assigned to the Iowa Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, based at Waterloo, Iowa.

Nichols was born Sept. 3, 1989 in Waterloo, Iowa and graduated from Waverly (Iowa) High School in 2009. Prior to his mobilization, he worked at the Walmart in Waverly, Iowa.

Nichols enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard in March 2008. Following graduation from Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training, he was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry as an Infantryman.

Nichols was part of the approximately 2,800 members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division deployed to Afghanistan. These Iowa Soldiers reported to their mobilization station at Camp Shelby, Miss. in Aug. 2010 for additional training and preparation before departing for the Afghanistan theater of operations. The unit arrived in Afghanistan in November 2010, where the Soldiers provide full-spectrum operations in a combat theater, including lethal and non-lethal capabilities, support to Afghan National Army and Police units, and assistance to humanitarian relief initiatives.

Nichols is survived by his mother and step-father, Roger and Becky Pooch, of Waterloo; his father and mother, Jeff and Jeanie Nichols, of Shell Rock, Iowa; his fiancé, Chelsey Bliss, of Waverly, Iowa; brothers Joe Nichols, stationed in Afghanistan, and Nick Nichols, of Waterloo; grandmothers, Kay Secor and Carol Buchholz, and grandfather,

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Donald L. Nichols, all from Waterloo; his niece Alexis, of Waterloo; and several close cousins, aunts and uncles.

The family of Spc. Donald L. Nichols issued the following statement:

“It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of our beloved son, brother and friend during combat in Afghanistan. Don died doing what he loved, serving his country and protecting the freedom that we enjoy and providing the people of Afghanistan with the opportunity for freedom.

We are proud of Don’s accomplishments and those of his fellow Iowa National Guard Soldiers and all of the military serving our country. Don was making a difference in the lives of the Afghan people, and was proud of it. As shocked as we are by his death, we are deeply appreciative of the outpouring of support shown by his fellow Soldiers, his family, friends and the community during this difficult time.

We are sure that you can understand and will honor our request for family privacy at this time, as we are focused on working with military officials to return Don’s body home for military services and burial. We thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and kindness at this extremely difficult time. We are deeply saddened by our loss, but extremely proud of the honorable way he served America as a leader in the U.S. Army. We will remember him, his sense of humor, his “snarky” attitude, and his love for his family, friends and his country, with great pride.”

The Nichols family asks that their privacy be respected at this time. Media representatives may contact the Iowa National Guard Public Affairs Office for additional information.

For questions concerning this release as well as additional information about the operations, training, and activities of the Iowa Army and Air National Guard, please contact Col. Greg Hapgood, Iowa National Guard Public Affairs Officer by email at gregory.hapgood@us.army.mil or 515-252-4582 (office) or 515-971-6385 (cell), or Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden at duff.e.mcfadden@us.army.mil, or 515-252-4666 (office) or 515-480-7647 (cell).

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