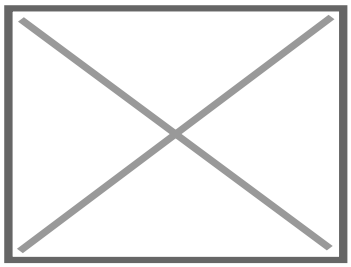
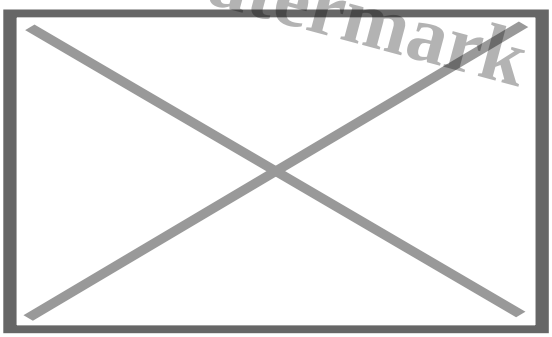
RIP: CPL Jonathon Proto, USMC

Description

Monday a local hero returned home from Afghanistan, not with his unit, to happy families, but to be placed at final rest.



Cpl Jonathon Porto, USMC



Cpl Porto Arrives 3/22/2010. Photo credit: 10 Connects

Today was perfect weather for such a fitting ceremony â€“ high 60s and mostly clear, bright skies.

At the Bay Pines National Cemetery, St Petersburg, FL, his family, friends, the Patriot Guard, othrs who came a show of community support, an Air Force Chaplain, and a reasonable number of Marines in Full Dress Blues, CPL Portoâ€™s life was eulogized.

The Patriot Guard surrounded the area with flags.Ã, The St Petersburg Police guided traffic.Ã, Marines from LCol to PFC were there, some to the side, 8 in a rifle squad, 6 as pall bearers and two of them the CACOs (Casualty Assistance Call Officer) to the Porto Family since the death on 3/14/2010.

The hearse arrived in the motorcade, with large Marine Corps emblems on itâ€™s side.Ã, After the family had gathered near the rear of the hearse, the 6 Marines carried their fallen brother to the center of a small gazebo in the portion of the grave site for the ceremony.Ã, It was the same place my friend, Jim Sr, had his final good byes from those of us who knew him.

The Chaplain delivered a strong message about a man, who, like Christ, had lived and died and had risen, a man who served his fellow mankind.

The eulogies began with one of Jonathonâ€™s older sisters.Ã‚Â She told of a man in diapers, who was one to stand up to the system, to be himself, in a humorous way.Ã‚Â She described a man who grew and was loved, and loved and had a love of cars, rock music and girls.Ã‚Â One who, when he met his wife, told his sister that she was â€œthe one.â€•

The family and friends came forward to speak.Ã‚Â The Best Man at Jonathon and Rachelâ€™s Wedding talked of a great friend, an inseparable buddy, who loved his blue Porsche.Ã‚Â Younger and older sisters spoke of a â€œprotector,â€• long before he was a Marine.Ã‚Â One sister read a poem she had written about her brother and his service and his death.Ã‚Â His mother said she always said â€œI love youâ€• at the end of each phone call, but lamented she had not talked to him more.Ã‚Â Brothers spoke of a brother who had found his passion in the Marine Corps, and how they admired how he had served a greater purpose than himself.

Jonathonâ€™s wife, came to speak.Ã‚Â She allowed us to know of a short romance before the wedding, but a wonderful relationship, and how proud she was of her husband.Ã‚Â Standing strong in the circumstances, she ended saying she would not say â€œGoodbyeâ€• as that was forever, but she would one day, be with him again.

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Jonathonâ€™s father spoke.Ã‚Â He marveled at how his son grew into a man, and into a Marine.Ã‚Â How proud he was of someone, and he being admittedly biased, that he thought of as the best man he had ever met.Ã‚Â A man who loved and sacrificed for the justice of others.Ã‚Â In addition to speaking of his fine son, he also talked of an in credible outpouring of support and love from an entire community, and how he vowed to do something with that show of support, settling, as prompted by one of his sons to turn it into service.Ã‚Â He invited us all, even those who he had no clue who we were, just that we were there, to come to a reception after the funeral.

The wife of a Marine Sargent, who knew CPL Porto, talked of how Marines are all brothers, and how Jonathonâ€™s wife is now and will be part of the â€œfamily.â€•Ã‚Â The Marine Sargent is stationed in Okinawa, and his wife said for the next 30 days, morning formation in Jonathonâ€™s honor would be held.

The rifle squad was commanded to attention by the Staff Sargent and 21 volleys filled the air, and â€œTapsâ€• played as the last 7 rounds echoed in our ears.Ã‚Â The flag from Jonathonâ€™s coffin was folded with dignity and honor, and three flags were presented to the family by kneeling Marines.

We were excused.Ã‚Â I asked the LCOL to point out the two CACOs, which had been mentioned by several of the speakers as preforming their duties in a superior manner, and I went and thanked them.Ã‚Â I received the training many years ago, but never was called upon for that difficult and extremely important duty.Ã‚Â Off to the car and the rest of my day, considering my privledge to have heard of a fine man, who served the country well.

One very sad note:Ã‚Â Jonathon, who was not only a friend, son, brother, and husband before departing life, was also a father, yet he had never held his daughter, since she was born after he deployed.Ã‚Â A trust fund has been set up in her name and the details are listed at the end of the post here.

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