

**Arlington National Cemetery Website**

**Jason L. Norton**  
Sergeant, United States Air Force



U.S. Department of Defense  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)  
News Release  
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January 24, 2006

**DoD Identifies Air Force Casualties**

The Department of Defense announced today the death of two airmen who were supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The airmen were killed January 22, 2006, when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device while conducting convoy escort duties in the vicinity of Taji, Iraq.

**Killed were:**

Technical Sergeant Jason L. Norton, 32, of Miami, Oklahoma  
Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy, 28, of San Antonio, Texas

Both airmen were assigned to the 3rd Security Forces Squadron, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

For further information related to this release, contact the Elmendorf Air Force Base Public Affairs Office at (907) 552-5756.

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Jason Norton was 4,000 miles away in Alaska when longtime buddy Scott Miller, who was living in Oklahoma, lost his wife to cancer in March. "He made it a point to come down from Alaska and be with me and my family," Miller said. "He's a very outstanding guy in my book."

Norton, 32, of Miami, Oklahoma, was killed January 22, 2006, by a roadside bomb near Taji. He was a patrol and dog-unit officer assigned to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

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Two airmen, one from Oklahoma and the other from Texas, were killed in Iraq when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device while they were escorting a convoy near Taji, the Department of Defense said Tuesday.

Technical Sergeant Jason L. Norton, 31, of Miami, Oklahoma, and Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy, 28, of San Antonio, Texas, died on Sunday.



Both men were assigned to the 3rd Security Forces Squadron at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

Norton's wife, Cristina Norton, said he was devoted to their two children, a son, 7, and a daughter, 8.

"He was the best father in the world, and I said that before anything happened," she said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "Family was his everything."

McElroy also was married with children, and officials said his wife is with her family in Colorado. Officials declined to release her name or location.

"For all of us, this has hit home. These two were family to us," Chief Master Sgt. William Watson, manager of the on-base security forces unit, said at a news conference. "It was a very hard blow for us when news of their passing came to us."

Cristina Norton wanted her out-of-state family here with her, so Elmendorf personnel took it upon themselves to take up a collection for plane tickets, according to Watson.

"People emptied their pocketbooks," he said.

Norton grew up in Miami and attended high school there and the military regards that as his hometown of record, but he has had several different postings.

He joined the Air Force in March 1992. He was stationed at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas, F. E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming, Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma and Anderson Air Force Base in Guam before landing at Elmendorf in 2002. The couple met when he was stationed

at Tinker and she was a college student.

Christina Norton said they both enjoyed Alaska, where she works as a school teacher.

"We were hoping to finish out his career here," she said.

Eve Knoll, Norton's sister-in-law, said Norton was an outdoorsman.

"He was a big hunter," she said. "He got a bear last season. He loved to fish and hunt elk and deer."

He was also fond of his military specialty.

"He was a canine trainer for the Air Force and he loved working with the dogs," Knoll said. "He loved it."

Norton was part of the 586th Expeditionary Mission Support Group, which has duties that include transportation and security, said Capt. Kelley Jeter, chief of external communications for the 3rd Wing. Norton, part of the security forces component of that unit, had been in Iraq since November 11, 2005.

Norton received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart posthumously on Monday. He also had at least six other medals, including four Air Force achievement medals.

Norton and McElroy were the second and third airmen from Elmendorf to die in recent combat. Airman Carl Anderson was killed in 2004.

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#### January 31, 2006:

More than 500 Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and multinational partners attended a memorial service Jan. 27 to pay their final respects to two Airmen who were killed in Iraq by an improvised explosive device January 22, 2006.

Technical Sergeant Jason Norton, 32, and Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy, 28, were assigned to the 70th Medium Truck Detachment, 586th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron. Both men were deployed from the 3rd Security Forces Squadron at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. The Airmen both left behind wives and children.

The memorial was held at the camp chapel at a forward deployed location. The chapel held a final memorial tribute with photos of the two Airmen. The ceremony included a firing party, a roll call acknowledging their absence and emotional words from friends and colleagues.

The memorial began with "Amazing Grace" being played on the bagpipes to the standing-room-only crowd.

The first speaker was Captain Kimani Alston, the detachment commander.

"Sergeant Norton was my 'go to guy'. His last mission was the first for our detachment to that new location. He was one of our best and was excited to go on the dangerous mission," Captain Alston said. "Sergeant McElroy was chosen to be the driver and a driver must be strong and capable. The fact that he was chosen to drive should speak for itself."

Colonel Mike Trapp, 586th commander, asked everyone to remember why they were there.

"We're here to remember two Airmen who gave the ultimate sacrifice. They put the welfare of others above their own. Jason and Brian were called upon to join a new group of warriors and be transporters. People were worried the Air Force wouldn't be up to it, but they were wrong, and the Airmen have made the Air Force and Army proud. They leave behind a legacy of leadership and service that will follow me the rest of my life," Colonel Trapp said.

Close friends of the two Airmen then stood before the crowd and told personal stories about the friends they will never forget.

"Jason loved NASCAR, hunting and fishing and always had plenty of amusing stories to share," said Master Sgt. Timothy John. "He loved the squad he commanded and his troops would follow him anywhere. He also loved his family and had very strong family values and we will all miss him."

Paying tribute to Sergeant McElroy, Staff Sergeant Richard Cleary said, "Brian always made us laugh and he always knew when to jump into a conversation to make us laugh even more. He was a family man and really enjoyed talking to his wife and kids. His mother gave him a gold cross that he always wore around his neck to remind him to never lose his faith. If you look back, remember the good times and remember him as a good friend."

Near the end of the ceremony Army Chaplain (1st Lt.) Dan Urquhart gave a memorial message and the final roll call was performed.

The synchronized crack of the firing party's rifles echoed into the open chapel doors. With tear-filled eyes, the official party began to render honors to the fallen heroes. After the ceremony ended, dozens of people waited in line to render honors to their lost comrades in arms.

Later that afternoon, more than 600 Airmen with the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing held a memorial retreat in Sergeants Norton and McElroy's honor. The retreat included a missing man guard mount roll call and a 21 gun salute.

**During the memorial retreat, Col. Tim Hale, 386th AEW commander said, "They have left us a bright torch to carry, men and women, fellow warriors, let's keep the torch moving forward. We owe it to these heroes. Drive on."**

**Two Airmen Killed in Action Share a Headstone at Arlington  
By Arianne Aryanpur  
Courtesy of the Washington Post  
Tuesday, June 6, 2006**

**Technical Sergeant Jason L. Norton and Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy found joy in their families.  
As airmen stationed in Alaska, both enjoyed the great outdoors.**

**And earlier this year, the two men died together.**



**The remains of Technical Sergeant Jason L. Norton and Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy were placed in the same coffin and buried at Arlington National Cemetery yesterday. The two were killed by an explosion January 22, 2006, near Taji, Iraq.**

Norton, 32, and McElroy, 28, were killed January 22, 2006, when their Humvee struck an explosive device during convoy escort duties in Taji, Iraq.

Yesterday, dozens of mourners gathered for a joint memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery. A long line of cars followed the hearse to the grave site. A firing party fired a three-volley salute, and a bugler played taps over the sound of roaring planes.

Norton and McElroy shared the same coffin and headstone because their remains were unidentifiable, according to an Arlington Cemetery spokeswoman. They were the 240th and 241st people killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom to be buried at Arlington.

The airmen were assigned to the 3rd Security Forces Squadron, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. Soldiers in their tightly knit squadron said they became close during training before deploying to Iraq last year.

"The squadron was so torn up when they died," said Captain Kelley Jeter, a base spokeswoman. At a joint service for the airmen January 27, 2006, in Elmendorf, mourners filled a chapel and adjoining annex to capacity. The ceremony was broadcast on a live video feed. "They were very popular guys," Jeter said.

Norton grew up in Miami, Oklahoma, and joined the Air Force in 1992. At Elmendorf, he was a dog handler and trained a pack of 10 military dogs for attack work and bomb sniffing.

Superiors and subordinates called Norton a dedicated professional; he was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart posthumously. "I've heard several leaders say that whenever they needed something done, he was their go-to man," said Technical Sergeant Joel Ewing, who was in Norton's unit.

Norton spent his weekends watching NASCAR races, camping, hunting and fishing with buddies in the Alaskan outback. Friends called him a consummate outdoorsman. But "first, more than anything, he was a father," Ewing said. "His family was everything."

Norton had two children, Rebecca 8, and Dalton, 7. McElroy, of San Antonio, had a 4-year-old daughter, Kaley.

Norton's wife, Cristina, was given an American flag at the service, as was McElroy's widow, Aymber. McElroy also received a Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

McElroy joined the Air Force in 1998 and recently became a noncommissioned officer in charge of information security for classified systems at Elmendorf, according to news reports.

"There's these few individuals that come along where you give them a job, a detail or a duty, and they reach around and totally grasp it and take it to levels you never expected them to," Chief Master Sergeant William Watson told the San Antonio Express-News. "He's that type of guy."

Sergeant Francisco Alcocer described McElroy as personable and outgoing. From the moment they met in 2004, the two became fast friends, he said.

"I was always over at his place," barbecuing, fishing or playing cards," Alcocer said. McElroy's penchant for jokes made him a favorite partner on Spades night. He frequently teased the other players, making them misplay their cards.

After McElroy was killed, Alcocer flew to Philadelphia to pick up his remains. "He was truly a family man and a best friend," he said. "He's missed greatly."



A U.S. Air Force honor guard carries the casket with the remains of Technical Sergeant Jason Norton of Miami, Oklahoma and Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy of San Antonio, Monday, June 5, 2006, at Arlington National Cemetery



U.S. Air Force chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Bob Lynch, left, speaks during a graveside service for Technical Sergeant Jason Norton of Miami, Oklahoma and Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy of San Antonio, Monday, June 5, 2006, at Arlington National Cemetery.



Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England, kneeling, speaks with the families of Technical Sergeant Jason Norton of Miami, Oklahoma and Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy on June 5, 2006 at Arlington National Cemetery



[Photo Courtesy of Roxsanne Wells-Layton, 11 June 2006](#)

Posted: 3 June 2006 Updated: 5 June 2006 Updated: 6 June 2006 Updated: 11 June 2006 Updated: 10 December 2006







UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

BRIAN SCOTT MCELROY  
SSGT

JASON LYNN NORTON  
TSGT

KILLED IN ACTION - IRAQ  
JANUARY 22 2006

DENNIS  
PATRICK  
HAY  
CMT  
US ARMY  
NOV 9 1951  
AUG 29 2000  
BRONZE STAR  
PURPLE HEART  
OPERATION  
IRACI FREEDOM

TROY  
SHANE  
EZERNAC  
SSG USA  
DEC 30 1965  
OCT 9 2005  
BRONZE STAR  
PURPLE HEART  
OPERATION  
ENDURING  
FREEDOM

[Photos Courtesy of Holly, December 2006](#)

