

THEY SERVED IN SILENCE



The Story of a Cryptologic Hero CTT1(SW) Steven P. Daugherty, USN

As all these actions make clear, our war on terror will be much broader than the battlefields and beachheads of the past. This war will be fought wherever terrorists hide, or run, or plan. Some victories will be won outside of public view, in tragedies avoided and threats eliminated.

President George W. Bush

Since the beginnings of the Republic those who serve in America's armed forces have taken personal pride in being part of a specific branch of our nation's military. But above all, whether one serves as a Soldier, Sailor, Airmen or Marine, they are in the end, warriors who have pledged to lay down their lives protecting the United States. Steven Phillip Daugherty of the United States Navy was just such a man.

Throughout time the men and women of the sea service have manned the ships of the United States Navy with the aim of protecting freedom throughout the world. But there is also another Navy tradition, one that is characterized by versatility, ingenuity and resourcefulness. Namely, since 1776, at places such as Midway, Bladensburg, Wake Island, Bataan and the Mekong delta U.S. Sailors have fought not only on the sea but on land as well.

CTT1(SW) Steven Daugherty was a part of this storied tradition. During his time in the Navy he would, like so many of his fellow Sailors, distinguish himself at sea, but due largely to his unique talents, particularly cryptologic talents, during his naval career he would be called upon to support a wide range of missions and operations.

Raised in Barstow, California, Steve attended Barstow High. After receiving his Associates degree from the local community college he made the decision to join the U.S. Navy with the aim of raising additional funds for college, seeing the world and gaining some valuable life experience. In joining the service he would be following in the footsteps of his brothers and sister in serving his country as a member of the United States Military. After his initial training he served in a wide variety of operational and intelligence related duties both at sea and at shore installations culminating with his assignment in 2002 to Navy Information Operations Command Norfolk and who deployed to a U.S. Navy SEAL team operating in Iraq.

From the very first days of our nation's fight against terrorism the members of our nation's special forces have played a critical role. Due to their training and expertise, units such as the U.S. Navy SEALs are particularly adept at meeting the challenges posed by asymmetrical





warfare. One of the most important functions of any “special operations” team is to gather critical intelligence with the aim of discerning future enemy intentions. Daugherty’s role in this important process was to provide timely and effective cryptologic support to his team. By providing and protecting his unit’s most precious communications he not only contributed to coalition success on the battlefield but also saved countless lives.

Two Days after the 231st anniversary of the nation he had sworn to defend Petty Officer Daugherty was returning from a important mission with his team when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device killing him and two other members of his unit. Daugherty would leave behind a loving family and young son but his efforts would not be in vain. Later it was confirmed that the work he and his team performed earlier that day had played a decisive role in thwarting a dangerous group of insurgents in their efforts to kill coalition forces.

The famous philosopher Thomas Hobbes once noted “Hell is truth seen too late.” Throughout his time in the United States Navy both on the sea and on land Petty Officer Steven Phillip Daugherty devoted his life to determining truth with the aim of defeating the enemies of freedom throughout the world. His work and accomplishments as a Sailor, cryptologist, father and friend will forever stand as testament to his own personal character and his devotion to his country.



In May of 1914 President Woodrow Wilson spoke at the Brooklyn Navy Yard with expressed purpose of saluting those who had recently lost their lives while serving in the U.S. Navy. His words were meant for the people of that time but they are equally applicable to men like Petty Officer Daugherty whose service and sacrifice help to preserve freedom in this day and time.

Have you thought of it, men? Here is the roster of the Navy—the list of the men, officers and enlisted men and Marines—and suddenly there swim nineteen stars out of the list—men who have suddenly been lifted into a firmament of memory where we shall always see their names shine, not because they called upon us to admire them, but because they served us, without asking any questions and in the performance of a duty which is laid upon us as well as upon them.

CTT1(SW) Steven P. Daugherty

United States Navy

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Photos courtesy of the Daugherty family
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