

Dedication of West Hills Post Office in honor of  
Sgt. Evan Ashcraft  
May 22, 2005

I am honored to be with you today as we dedicate the West Hills Post Office in honor of Sgt. Evan Ashcraft, whose life was cut short while he was courageously defending our country. It is particularly fitting that we dedicate the post office today on Evan's birthday.

I want to acknowledge Evan's family who are here today: His wife, Ashley, his mother and stepfather, Jane and Jim Bright, his father and stepmother, Asa and Bev Ashcraft and his brother, Drew. I also want to express my appreciation to Stacia Crane of the Postal Service for her tireless work in planning this wonderful event.

Evan represented the very best of American values. From an early age, he excelled in school, first at Welby Way Gifted Magnet School in West Hills, then at Nobel Middle School Magnet in Northridge and El Camino Real High School in Woodland Hills. In fact, Evan used to ride his bike right past this post office when he was young.

Evan enlisted in the Army at the age of 20, and it did not take long for his superior officers to recognize that he was a gifted soldier. Midway through his basic training, Evan was made a team leader. Evan enjoyed his time with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne division. As was often the case in his life, he sought a greater challenge and volunteered for duty with the elite Army Rangers.

On March 1, 2003, Evan was deployed to Iraq. He saw action quickly, participating in the liberation of Baghdad International Airport and the mission that found two of Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Usay.

A month later, the Humvee Evan was riding hit a land mine and came under enemy fire. Both soldiers accompanying Evan were badly wounded and in desperate need of medical attention. Showing no regard for his own safety, Evan risked his life to pull the two men to safety. According to others on hand that day, were it not for Evan's quick and decisive action, both men would have died.

One of the men Evan saved that day, Sgt. Arcebuca said, "Evan was always there for his men. He was a natural born leader."

Like so many soldiers in Iraq, Evan had big dreams for his life after the war. He planned to move back to California with his wife, Ashley, start a family, and join the Los Angeles police force. His reason for doing so was simple according to Ashley: “He was a person who really wanted to help other people, to protect them.”

Evan was not able to realize his dreams. He was killed with two other soldiers on July 24, 2003, when his Humvee was attacked during a reconnaissance mission near Mosul.

To the people who knew him, Evan represented hope for America’s future. After he died, his mother wrote, “This loss is not just mine, it’s the world’s loss...Evan will always be with us in spirit. He still lives, and will continue to live, in all of us.” Evan was awarded the Bronze Star for bravery, and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

By dedicating a post office in Evan’s honor in his hometown of West Hills, his community and a grateful nation will always be reminded of the life, the contributions, and the ultimate sacrifice of this extraordinary young man.”