

30Oct14 TSgt Sean Barton

320th STS Airman dies after training mishap

By , Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs / Published November 01, 2014

KADENA AIR BASE, Japan -- Tech. Sgt. Sean Barton, an Air Force Special Operations Command pararescueman assigned to the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, died Oct. 30 from injuries sustained after a rappelling training incident during a joint exercise training event near Kathmandu, Nepal. The cause of the incident is currently under investigation.

"Sean was a selfless leader on our team," said Capt. Michael Erickson, 320th STS combat rescue officer and Tech. Sgt. Barton's team leader. "He aggressively pursued excellence with a smile on his face and laughter never far behind. His love for his family, loyalty to his team and relentless determination serve as an example for us all."

Tech. Sgt. Barton joined the Air Force in 2003 and deployed multiple times to both Iraq and Afghanistan. He was a master parachutist, military freefall master parachutist, combat dive supervisor and recovery team leader.

His decorations include seven Air Medals, one Air Achievement Medal, two Air Force Commendation Medals, one Air Force Achievement Medal and one Army Achievement Medal.

The 320th STS is part of the 353rd Special Operations Group, the focal point for all AFSOC activities in the U.S. Pacific Command theater. The group is based out of Kadena Air Base, Japan, to provide air support of joint and allied special operations forces in the Pacific.



TSgt Sean Barton

320th STS PJ remembered at memorial service

KADENA Air Base, Japan -- From a small special operations community a large group of people gathered to honor one man's life.

A memorial service was held Nov. 25 at Kadena Air Base for Tech. Sgt. Sean Barton, a pararescueman assigned to the 320th Special Tactics Squadron who died Oct. 30 from injuries sustained after a rappelling incident during a joint exercise training event near Kathmandu, Nepal.

During the service, leadership, teammates and friends shared memories from their time spent with Barton. Smiles and tears were shared as they told stories of a man they nicknamed "Chief."

"Sean was the type of man who always wanted to make things better," said Staff Sgt. Eric Braddock, a 320th STS pararescueman who spoke of Barton's drive to implement change. "I can promise you one thing that's not going to change, and that is our team's respect for Sean as a leader, a teammate, a friend."

Each teammate highlighted Barton's personality and character. They remembered him not only as a PJ but also a brother, a son and a husband.

"He loved his mom, and he wasn't embarrassed to admit that he was a momma's boy," said Tech. Sgt. Mark Bunnell, a 320th STS pararescueman and Barton's flight chief. "He loved and supported his wife and lived his life with a passion."

After the presentation of Barton's meritorious service medal to his mother, Chief Master Sgt. Michael Stockdale, the 320th STS chief enlisted manager, conducted a roll call before the firing party conducted a three volley salute and a bugler played Taps.

While each member gave Barton one final salute, members from the special tactics and rescue community also removed their beret flash to pound into a plaque as a sign of respect for a man who they will not easily forget.

"When I think of Sean, I will remember him grinning, making a little trouble and living in 29 years what most men don't live in a lifetime," said Bunnell. "He will always be a PJ, my brother, and I will carry him with me for the rest of my life."

Barton served 11 years in the Air Force and deployed multiple times in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Unified Protector. In addition to these deployments, Barton completed assignments at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., Pope Air Force Base, N.C., Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., and Kadena Air Base, Japan. Barton earned one Meritorious Service Medal, seven Air Medals, one Air Achievement

Medal, two Air Force Commendation Medals, one Air Force Achievement Medal and one Army Achievement Medal.



The firing party stands and salutes after conducting a three volley salute while a bugler plays Taps during a memorial service held for Tech. Sgt. Sean Barton Nov. 25, 2014 at Kadena Air Base, Japan. Barton, a 320th Special Tactics Squadron pararescueman, died Oct. 30 from injuries sustained after a rappelling incident during a joint exercise training event near Kathmandu, Nepal. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Kristine Dreyer)



Members from Tech. Sgt. Sean Barton's team pay their respects at a memorial ceremony held Nov. 25, 2014 at Kadena Air Base, Japan. Barton, a 320th Special Tactics Squadron pararescueman, died Oct. 30 from injuries sustained after a rappelling incident during a joint exercise training event near Kathmandu, Nepal.

Tech. Sgt. Sean Barton, assigned to the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, died Oct. 30 from injuries sustained after a rappelling training incident during a joint exercise-training event near Kathmandu, Nepal. The accident took place on the 21st of Oct

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Here is a link to a memorial Facebook page set-up for friends to post pictures and tell stories.
<https://www.facebook.com/Seanbartonmemorialpage?fref=nf>

Yesterday evening TSgt Sean Barton, 320th STS Pararescueman, succumbed to his wounds initially received 21 OCT. He passed with his wife by his side. The 320th STS, with full support from the 353rd SOG, will be with him and his wife every step of the way as we return him to his final resting place.

I ask you keep in mind that even though his wife, mother, and father are all aware the remainder of his extended family must be allowed adequate time to receive the news from family and not others.

All indicators are showing a funeral service in Phoenix in the near future followed by a marker placement in Arlington at a later date.

I will continue to provide funeral and memorial service info as it flows in.

Please ensure any PJ/STS leaders I omitted are updated and please share with your Commander's and teams as appropriate.



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