

13Aug98 Sean J. McDermott



SRA Sean J. McDermott

Sra Sean J. McDermott died on 13 Aug 98 while acting as Team Leader on a HALO RAMZ (Rigging Alternate Method Zodiac) jump to save four (4) simulated survivors. Nine (9) personnel were on the first pass (Slick HALO) into the water to set up the patients and scenario...a second pass came over and dropped three jumpers and RAMZ package...

Sean was on the 3rd pass with two other jumpers and a RAMZ package. He cutaway his main canopy, and his reserve failed to open. 33rd RQS and 320th STS Pararescuemen treated him on scene and hoisted him out via Stokes litter...TSgt Jim Thede and SSgt Ron Thompson hoisted Sean out via forest penetrator and treated him on the way to the hospital.

Sean is survived by his wife Jacqueline, daughter Maeve, mother Ruth McDermott, sister Maureen, and his brothers Rick and Kevin.

**Senior Airman
Sean J. McDermott**

- Entered active duty on March 4th 1993
- Pararescue student assigned to the 58th Operational support Squadron at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico
- Selected for reassignment to the 320th Special Tactics Squadron on June 9th 1995; Reported 15 October 1995
- Assigned to Blue Team
- Promoted to Senior Airman on March 1st, 1996
- Selected Pararescueman of the Year for 1997 (Squadron)
- SRA McDermott is survived by his wife Jacqueline, daughter Maeve, mother Ruth, sister Maureen, and his brothers Rick and Kevin.

My Eulogy to Sean

This is quite frankly the hardest thing I have ever had to do in my military career. How does one say goodbye to someone that you will never have the chance to talk to again. How does one say goodbye to a friend who's friendship you will never experience again. As everyone knows, Sean was the epitome of a young Pararescueman. His words, no matter what you asked, were "What ever the team needs". That was Sean...always thinking of the team, of how he could help, no matter what the cost. When he first arrived at the squadron, I thought to myself "who is this goofy new PJ they sent me"? Boy, did he prove me wrong. As I got to know him, I saw the makings of an exceptional pararescueman both in his ability as an operator, and his attitude while operating. His ability spoke for itself. He was a quick learner, and soon developed into a teacher himself. His attitude was usually animated no matter what the situation, serious when required, and always upbeat... nothing could get him down. He loved all aspects of the job, the climbing, the diving, the field work, and yes...the jumping. On his last jump, he was the team leader on a HALO RAMZ deployment to save 4 simulated patients. But it didn't matter to Sean whether it was real or simulated...he treated it the same. That is what his life as a pararescueman was all about...saving lives. That is what he was trained to do, no matter what the situation. That is what he had done for real in the past. The world is a lesser place without him, and those people touched by him will never forget him. Those who didn't know him are

themselves diminished for they will never have the chance to know him. To his wife Jackie and daughter Maeve I offer my condolences and share in your sorrow. He was as much an inspiration to us, as he was to you. Never forget that the life he savored as a paramedic is and will forever be a part of yours. Your husband, our friend truly lived by his sworn motto "These things we do that others may live".

Steven B. Blankenship's Eulogy to Sean:

Sean McDermott Hello my name is Stephen Brock Blankenship. Today I stand before you to speak about my friend and brother. It is a great honor for me to stand here, as has been enjoying the life of this friend.

Leonardo de Vinci said it best when he said, "With what words do I describe the heart as to not fill volumes of books." With this in mind, I would like to describe the heart of a father, husband, son, brother, and friend, Sean McDermott. Understanding Sean's heart is understanding Sean. While he was a person of many words, these words were spoken from the heart. The smile that rarely left his face, was from his heart. This smile means happiness, and Sean will continue to smile because Sean is happy.

Never before or since have I met someone so full of life. It was almost as if Sean knew that there was such a short time to live. While coping with this tragedy I asked myself, "why Sean?" "Why not me?" I thought, if we could only change places. My reasoning was that Sean had so much to lose, a loving wife, a beautiful daughter, and heart-felt touches on everyone he met. Then suddenly I was hit by what Sean would say. He would not allow us to change places because he knew that he has experienced the joy of touching people, a beautiful baby, and a loving wife. That is sacrifice. That is love. That is Sean.

I remembered a time back at my parents house when I asked Sean if he wanted to go climb a particular mountain. His answer was clearly yes, as was his desire to enjoy another one of life's pleasures. It hurt me to think of situations such as these because I thought of how much Sean will miss from this world. Soon after I found peace in the fact that Sean is climbing mountains that our eyes cannot imagine; he is sailing waters that are more beautiful than we can dream. We should rejoice in the fact that Sean is in a better place. As it says in the Bible, "A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth" (Ecclesiastes 7:1).

Sean would say, "If I can save one life, I think my life would be worth it." By learning from Sean he will accomplish this goal by saving pieces of everyone's life he has touched. Sean will continue to save lives for a long time.

We love you Sean, Hoo-Yah.