



Lawrence George "JR" Sprader, Jr.

Lawrence George “JR” Sprader, Jr.

Born July 2, 1982

Died June 12, 2007

“JR” as he was affectionately known by his family and friends was born July 2, 1982, at DeWitt Army Hospital, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He is the son of SFC (Retried) Lawrence G. Sprader and Pok Sun Sprader. He had an older brother Christopher, born April 1, 1980, a sister-in-law, Jennifer and one nephew, Julian, at the time he passed away. A second nephew, Kyo, was born August 27, 2010.

JR lived with his family in Stafford, Virginia from 1982 to 1985, after which time his father was reassigned to the Republic of Korea and the family accompanied him there. He attended Seoul Elementary School from Kindergarten through the 2d grade and then the family was reassigned to Fort Lee, Virginia in July 1990. He attended South Elementary School, L.L. Beazley, N.B. Clements, and Prince George High School graduating in June 2000. JR joined the Army in July 2000.



JR with his parents and older brother.

Growing up he was never mischievous, he was very quiet and shy. He had no interest playing any type of sports, but he loved playing video games either by himself or with his brother, Chris. He was very close with his mother, and as he matured he protected her. He always remembered her on special occasions, and regardless of where he was stationed he always made sure that she received a card or a special gift from him. My most precious memory is when he was stationed in Germany and he came home for Christmas Leave in 2003. His mother had no idea that he would be home because JR and I planned it for about a month. To see them hug each other brought tears to my eyes and to this day I believe it was the most precious Christmas gift she could have received. (See picture included in this Memorial Biography)

JR's Army service took him to Fort Jackson, SC for Basic Training and then to Fort Lee, VA for Advanced Individual Training (AIT) as a 92Y, Supply Specialist. Upon completion of AIT he was assigned to Fort Leonardwood, MO with the 84th Chemical Battalion from 2001-2002. He was then reassigned to HHC, 1/26th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, GE and deployed with them on Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF II) from 2002-2005. Completing his tour in Germany he was reassigned to Fort Lee, VA with the 506th Quartermaster Company and assigned as the Unit Supply Sergeant and deployed with them to Iraq in 2005 and returning in October 2006.

In April 2007, he was reassigned to HHD, 11th Military Police (CID) Battalion, Fort Hood, TX. JR was attending the Warrior Leadership Course at Fort Hood, TX when he lost his life. On June 8, 2007, he was performing Land Navigation when he became dehydrated and disoriented and he succumbed to the heat. He was found on June 12, 2007, under very thick underbrush. The Army Investigation determined that the leadership at the academy was at fault for his death. JR would have deployed on his third tour in Iraq upon completing this course.

His awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, two Army Good Conduct Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, and both the Global War on Terrorism Service and Expeditionary Medals. He was posthumously awarded the Army Commendation Medal. In addition, he was also a Combat Life Saver and had twice been awarded the Driver's Badge for his expertise in operating a wide range of Army transportation vehicles.

He is interred at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia, Virginia. There is a permanent memorial at the location where he died at Fort Hood, Texas and his picture hangs on the Wall of Honor at the Survivor Outreach Services Office, Fort Hood, Texas. In 2008, he was honored by the Military Police Regimental Association with a memorial paver at the Military Police Memorial Grove, Fort Leonardwood, Missouri. It is located in Section: H/ Column: A/ Row: 92. There is also a memorial paver at the Quartermaster Museum, Fort Lee, Virginia.

Written by Lawrence G. Sprader, Sr.

Note: On the following pages is a letter that JR wrote to his father expressing his emotions several months after he joined the Army.

Dear Dad,

14 NOV 00

I'm addressing this letter only to you because I know I can trust you to keep this a secret also because you know what I am going through, but not really how I feel. I don't get much time to talk to you as much in AIT so I'm going to put it in words.

You already know how much I hate it here. Not only because of what we have to do, but also because I'm alone. I wish I had family here going through this with me. Honestly, if Chris was here too, I would feel a little easier. He's lucky, he had so many medical injuries that I don't think they'd allow him in. I wish I had some medical disability to have kept me from coming in. Hopefully, I'll get one.

I know you guys are proud of how far I got through this. I don't know myself how I got this far. But this is as far as I want to go. It's not that I want to be a quitter, it's just that I miss home. I actually more miss spending time with the family than anything. I still don't know why I couldn't see how good I had it. It's like, when I signed up, I received more attention. Mom didn't really say I was spoiled, or a brat, or lazy as before. She seemed to respect me more. Chris seemed to spend more time with me.

(2)

We actually played Nintendo together. We got along better than before. You pretty much worried and asked if I wanted to go through with this. I should have said no. I did not think I would miss home so much. I thought I could be independent, but I can't. I didn't even sign my contract right. I should have went reserve. I was just trying to follow in your footsteps. I wanted to be as strong as you, but you being rebellious younger, you were less worried and more tough. Plus, you had to be growing up alone with no parents.

I don't think you may know how I feel right now here. You come into the army with nowhere else to go and no family. I come in because I regret what I had done to you guys. I spent so much money from you guys. I made you all miserable last year. I made Chris overdose. I believe if I never knew or liked Kasey, I would not be where I am today. I just really miss spending time like we used to. Traveling, playing, talking. I remember almost six years ago we went to Wisconsin. I enjoyed traveling with you. I did not stay home with Chris because I felt bad if you went alone. I remember about five years ago, when the three of us, you, Chris and I went to Kansas. That was a fun trip. Then Mark stayed over and we played War and drank beer. I'm sorry for not like Mark being there. I would take it back if I could. I remember Mom leaving for Karen and I felt sad, but

(3)

you still kept us entertained with the baseball game and stuff. I felt glad to see her come back. Well, there's a lot of good memories I have. I know it sounds cruel, but sometimes I wish I could erase them. It's too depressing to think about. I get sad because when I'm sick, I can't lay in bed anymore and have someone take care of me to get better. I can't have a bro here to answer me some of life's questions. I can't have someone hug me or ask me how school or work was. I miss my home life. I hate it here. Sometimes, I wish I was as rebellious as you were. I was, but not anymore. I don't really know anymore.

I really want to come back home because I miss the life I had for 18 years, but I know you guys need your life sometime and I need to learn to live on my own. I don't know why I wanted to leave home for so long, but now that I'm gone, I want to come back. I wish I waited a little longer to join, probably until Chris moved out too. I guess I depended on you all so much, I adapted to it that I can't do things on my own w/o help. Hell, I signed a contract not knowing where I'm going and joined the RA when all I needed was college money. I'm sorry I didn't pay much attention to you guys till now. If I felt this way being gone from you guys for 15 weeks almost, what will I feel like when you guys pass on? I won't even think about it.

(4)

I feel like I have some mental disability or illness wanting to come home so bad. Most people my age don't think about going home as much as I do. Well, Quinn wants to, but she wants to see the ~~perman~~ unit first. This place has had a major change on me. Not only ~~by~~ mentally, but physically. My upper body strength has increased as much as my lower, but I've been getting more ill and my legs are hurting more. I never had to take so much medication in my life. I hope taking all these pills won't hurt me. It has made me extremely druggie though.

All of this feels like some bad dream. Like it's not even real. I never pictured myself in the Army. I still don't see me in the military, but I'm here. I want to wake up from this nightmare. I never had much worries about getting in trouble than here. All these counseling statements, Article 15's, etc... I hate it. I hate it here. I don't know what to do. If I get chaptered out, I'll feel bad because I disappointed you all. Getting this far only to come back. I won't have enough for college. I may not be able to afford my own place. I would be embarrassed to step out of the house. If I do graduate, I'll have to leave behind everything and everyone I love. It would just feel weird. It's hard to explain. Sometimes, I wish I could stop or turn back time.

(5)

One of my friends say I joined for a stupid reason, and I agree. All because of my greed. All that money got to me. It is a big sin that leads to demise. Why did I have to let greed overpower me? Is this punishment or fate? Is it the end or the beginning? I don't know and never will. All I know is that my soul was taken away when I signed that contract.

I swear that if I ever get my life back, I would change. I would be nicer, praise God more, work twice as hard, study more, and do better for myself. I am not learning much here, only that family is the best treasure you could ever have. I was too late to understand that and traded you guys for Uncle Sam. I'm so sorry. Please forgive me.

Well, I pretty much spoke my mind. I don't know how I got through basic, but not able for this. I'll never be strong. I'm scared right now. Lost and confused. Maybe I'm here for the best, or maybe the worst. Whatever it is, I'm sorry I didn't listen to you guys and got stuck here. I honestly wish Mom never encouraged me to go in, but I hope she's happy. My agony has made some happiness. I know you hate hearing me talk like this and are upset and mad so no more. Maybe I will get a medical and get a benefit while getting out, but if not, then I guess sooner or later I'll learn to "suck it up and drive on." Anyway, thanks for always being there for us. I'm sorry

(6)

I never treated you with the respect I should have or anybody else. It's tough being older and wiser because some things you just don't want to know. Thanks for listening. Knows that I love and care for all you guys and am proud to show it. If God gave me the choice to come back as anything, I would hope I could relive my life all over again with a few changes, a new and better me. Love you always, Dad.

Love,
Your youngest son,
JR



JR at the Aviation Museum in Washington, DC while on leave in 2001.



JR with his mother at a surprise homecoming from Germany in December, 2003.



JR with his 6 month old nephew, Julian



Army friend, SGT Ligia "Sophie" Arbaiza, giving JR a manicure while in Iraq.



JR, lower right, with Battle Buddies at Camp Speicher near Tikrit, Iraq in 2005.



Moment of reflection as SGT Frantz pins on his rank of SGT



Last picture taken of JR and his brother together.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS AWARDED

THE ARMY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Private First Class Lawrence G. Sprader
HHC, 84TH Chemical Battalion

TO

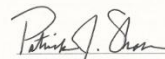
FOR Meritorious service while serving as the Alpha Company, 84th Chemical Battalion Unit Supply Specialist from 1 March 2001 to 20 July 2002. His efforts and mission accomplishment reflect distinct credit upon him, the 84th Chemical Battalion, Fort Leonard Wood, and the United States Army.

From: 1 March 2001 to 20 July 2002

This 28th Day of May 2002

PO 148-1, 28 May 2002
HQ, 84th Chemical Battalion
Ft. Leonard Wood, MO 65473




PATRICK J. SHARON
LTC, CM
Commanding

DA FORM 4980-18, NOV 97



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS AWARDED

THE ARMY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

TO **SERGEANT LAWRENCE G. SPRADER**
506TH QUARTERMASTER COMPANY, 530TH COMBAT SUSTAINMENT SUPPORT BATTALION

FOR


MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT WHILE SERVING AS A UNIT SUPPLY SPECIALIST. HIS PROFESSIONALISM, DEDICATION TO DUTY AND INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE WERE VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE UNIT'S WARTIME AND PEACETIME MISSION DURING HIS ASSIGNMENT WITH THE 506TH QUARTERMASTER COMPANY. HIS ACHIEVEMENTS ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, THE 530TH COMBAT SUSTAINMENT SUPPORT BATTALION AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

FROM: 12 JULY 2005 TO 10 APRIL 2007

GIVEN THIS 15TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2007

Permanent Orders# 074-001
15 MARCH 2007
530TH CSSB




ROBERT C. HORNECK
LTC, OD
Commander

DA FORM 4980-18, NOV 97



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS AWARDED

THE ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

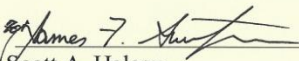
TO **SERGEANT LAWRENCE G. SPRADER, JR**
11th MILITARY POLICE BATTALION (CID)

FOR exceptionally meritorious service while assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment as the unit Supply Sergeant. Sergeant Sprader's professionalism, dedication to duty, and commitment to excellence will have a lasting impact upon all he followed, those he led, and his significant contributions to the "Peacemakers" Battalion. His efforts to live the military values, traditions, and honors will always reflect great credit upon himself, the 11th MP BN (CID), the 6th MP GP (CID), and the United States Army.

FROM: 28 July 2000 to 12 June 2007

PO# 165-01, 14 June 2007
HQ, 6th MP Group (CID)
Fort Lewis, WA 98433




Scott A. Halasz
Colonel, Military Police
Commanding

*The Army Commendation Medal awarded posthumously to JR
for sustained acts of heroism and meritorious service.*



Honor Guard at JR's funeral at J.T. Morriss Funeral Home.



Arrival at Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia, VA for Memorial Service



Folding of the flag at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery Memorial



Presentation of the American Flag to JR's mother at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery Memorial, with his father, Lawrence Sprader, Sr. beside her and JR's cousin Freddie. Other friends, the Honor Guard and the Pall Bearers are in the far section.



Memorial Flag used at JR's Funeral



*A Permanent Memorial as been established at the location where
JR passed away at Ft. Hood, Texas.*



*Memorial Paver at the Military Police Memorial Grove,
Fort Leonardwood, Missouri.*



The Sprader Family personal memorial for JR at their home in Prince George, Virginia



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 19, 2007

Sergeant First Class and Mrs. Lawrence G. Sprader, Sr.
6803 Birchett Drive
Prince George, Virginia 23875

Dear Sergeant and Mrs. Sprader:

I am saddened by the loss of your son. The loyal members of our Armed Forces exemplify the decency and unselfish courage that make our country strong. All are American heroes who stepped forward when our Nation needed them most. We will always remember J.R.'s service and sacrifice, and he will forever have the respect and admiration of a grateful Nation.

Laura and I offer our deepest sympathy. You are in our thoughts and prayers. May the encouragement and support of your loved ones be a source of strength during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GWB", written in a cursive style.

George W. Bush

Letter of Condolence from President George W. Bush soon after JR passed away.

한국계 로렌스 스프레더 병장 훈련중 사고사



한국인 어머니를 둔 한국계 로렌스 스프레더(Sgt. Lawrence G. Sprader, Jr) 미육군 병장이 장교과정을 위한 필수 훈련과정인 생존훈련차 텍사스 지역에서 훈련도중 숨졌다.

로렌스 스프레더 병장의 장례식은 6월 18일 J.T. Morriss & Son 장례식장에서 가족과 친지 그리고 군 관계자들이 모인 가운데

거행되었다. 이날 장례식에는 100여 명이 참석했으며 25세의 젊은 나이로 운명을 달리하게 된 로렌스 스프레더 병장은 아버지 Mr. Lawrence G. Sprader, Sr 와 한국인 어머니 복선 Sprader 의 차남이다.

위로 형 크리스토퍼가 있다.

아직 로렌스 스프레더 병장의 정확한 사인은 밝혀지지 않았으며 훈련 중 탈진이 주요 사망원인이라고만 군 관계자가 밝히고 수일 내 정확한 사인은 가족들에게 군 당국이 직접 전하게 될 것이라고 밝혔다.

갑작스런 사고로 치뤄진 장례식에 모인 친구들은 아직도 스프레더 병장의 죽음이 믿어지지 않는다고 하며 평소에 조용하지만 농담도 잘하고 착실한 친구였다면서 많이 그리워하게 될 것이라고 애도의 뜻을 표했다.

장례식에서는 어머니가 몸담고 있는 호프웰순복음교회의 성도들과 이요한 목사의 축원기도를 가졌고 이어서 부대에서 나온 군목의 기도로 식을 마치고 잠시 가족들을 위로하며 고인을 기리는 시간을 가졌다. 로렌스 스프레더 병장은 버지니아 소재 아멜리아(Amelia)국립묘지에 안장되었다. (리치몬드 지국)

Editorial

Sgt. Lawrence Sprader Jr. should be remembered as an American hero

During a time when soldiers are going Absent Without Leave declaring their disdain for the war, we can take pride in a local American hero.

Sgt. Lawrence Sprader Jr. deserves our thanks for his commitment to duty, his proud service and respect for this nation. He was a true patriot.

Unfortunately due to others' apparent misconduct, Sgt. Lawrence Sprader Jr. died in a training accident at Fort Hood, Texas, after he went missing on a land navigation course June 12. His body was found four days later, and an investigation into the matter continues.

Though, Sgt. Sprader was taken at the young age of 24, he had touched the lives of many. Not only through his personal kindness and ability to put others before himself but through his selfless service to our county.

The Prince George man served in Iraq proudly – not once, but two tours. And he was preparing for his third.

Sgt. Sprader was a supply sergeant who was sought after. He served in a variety of units from infantry divisions to Military Police brigades.

Every where and in each unit, he made an impression, and it was always positive.

In his seven years of service, Sgt. Sprader earned numerous awards and commendations.

His bedroom walls are adorned with sergeants major and commander coins. A tradition of honor in the military.

As many military leaders will confess, those coins are coveted and only given when truly deserved.

JR, as he was called by his friends and family in Prince George, believed in service to his country. He enlisted leaving for training just days after graduating high school.

He left PGHS with is diploma, numerous awards in business classes and a clear vision of where he was headed.

He took the path less traveled by many teenagers.

He chose family tradition of serving and also stayed clear of negative influences including drugs and alcohol,

His death is a great tragedy, an American tragedy.

But JR did not die without first impacting the world.

He brought comfort to his fellow soldiers in the time of war. And he generated smiles from children who lived in the midst of the conflict.

Sgt. Sprader was a true American hero.

We are indeed sorry we lost him, but are blessed for his presence even for his short time on earth.

Thanks JR. We are forever indebted to your selfless service.

Personal Tributes

My fondest memory of JR is whenever he played video games. He loved them and I'd always watch him play. He was good, very good. Even when he returned from Iraq and was home, all he wanted to do was play video games. So we'd just sit in my room and just chill, playing games. That was always fun. – *Christopher Sprader (JR's brother)*



JR enjoying his favorite pastime playing video games

My deepest condolences to the Sprader's Family for the lost of Lawrence Sprader. He was a good friend and great person to be around. He was always happy and making people feel the same way. I will always remember him as a good, caring person. Always with a smile on his face. Sorry I couldn't make it to the services, but my prayers are with you and your family. - *Pedro Rivera-Birriel (Pedro Rivera-Birriel was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas with JR and they served in Iraq together)*

We are so saddened to hear of Lawrence's death at such a young age. His determination to enter the United States Army right after high school and his pride in serving his country shone through in what I have read and heard. Our sympathies go out to the entire Sprader family. We can only offer our sympathies and cannot imagine your feelings of loss. However, I hope we are allowed to share in your feelings of pride for your beloved hero son. He lost his life while doing his duty and serving the country and that is an example for the rest of us. He was shining role model for any person. - *Kuykendall Family, Prince George, VA*

Logistics is a complex job and to be able to provide everyone with needed supplies requires to be meticulous and JR was just that; very meticulous and dedicated to the team. I was not much involved with him, but when I went by his section he was always working on something. He was dedicated to his job and his supply section, and therefore the mission was easier. He was involved with everything related to the unit. - *Victor Cabrera*

JR was 8 years old when he became the best friend of our son, Philip. He was a part of our life from 1991 until his untimely death at age 25 in a poorly run training exercise at Ft Hood. He was a well mannered, hard working and a good student in high school. These early traits were to foretell why he was an outstanding soldier and a non-commissioned officer who eagerly sought more responsibility as he led men in Combat in Iraq. His career looked bright as he gained more experience and he eagerly looked forward to his upcoming training at Ft Hood. Unfortunately it was this same "can do", must complete attitude and drive to complete the mission. That contributed to his heartbreaking death in a training exercise in the desert in 2007.

As a career military officer of over thirty years and two combat tours in Vietnam, I can say without hesitation that Sgt. Sprader was a great soldier, son, patriot and a very special human being that if alive today would be a senior leader no matter what career he choose to peruse and he deserves every honor that can be bestowed upon his memory for he was very special and our world is less complete without him. - *Respectfully, Clinton A Hodder*

My memory is something I'm working on with my therapist and we were speaking about JR. I keep thinking about our last convoy. He visited me in the motor pool to say goodbye to me and McCrae. He was excited to go to Texas, but was sad to leave friends and the comfort of home. We joked about new responsibilities since he wouldn't be living with his parents and he laughed his funny "yea" response between the chuckles. His expression and seeing him standing at the doorway is like a painted portrait in my brain. - *Swileen Tavarez-Almendarez*

I will forever remember JR's evolution. He was so quiet and shy when he came to the 506th from German. He never said very much at first and was very reserved, but as we all spent more time together and prepared to deploy he started to open up. He had the kindest and most genuine soul. He loved his family, he loved his friends and he was proud to follow in your footsteps. He had a great sense of humor and we would laugh all the time. His laughter was contagious! I was so proud to see him progress in his career, to promote him and to induct him into the NCO Corps. I received a shy kid unsure of himself and watched him grow into a confident young man ready to conquer the world. - *Heather White*

What comes to mind when I think of SGT Sprader is a loyal team player with a good sense of humor. SGT Sprader served as the unit armorer for the 506th QM Company during a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, but the scope of his impact spread much wider. The hard work from SGT Sprader started prior to ever stepping foot in Iraq. He spent numerous hours requesting and receiving supplies for shipment into Iraq, and the unit enjoyed the fruits of his labor with refrigerators, televisions, microwaves, etc. that he helped to acquire. He was a true morale booster in every sense. He kept us laughing, and the supply section excelled thanks to his competence, devotion, and positive attitude. He made the long, heavy days lighter for all. I am proud to have served with SGT Sprader. - *LTC Michael Lindley*

Wings in the Sky

On July 2, 2007, which would have been JR's 25th birthday and just three weeks after he passed away, his family was visiting his grave at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia, Virginia. The sky was completely clear, however they looked up at one point and saw the beautiful cloud and rainbow pictured below. They were awestruck. Then JR's mother said "That's my son telling me that he's okay."



Final resting place
Virginia Veterans Cemetery
Amelia, Virginia



This memorial tribute made possible by support of

The Bank of Southside Virginia

October 2015

Prepared by

The Prince George Regional Heritage Center

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