

In Memoriam

1st Lt. Matthew Ryan Vandegrift '03

U.S. Marine Corps 1st Lt. Matthew R. Vandegrift, 28, of Littleton, Colo., died April 21 from wounds he suffered while conducting combat operations in Basrah, Iraq. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Vandegrift graduated from Leander High School in 1999 and earned a bachelor's degree in management from Texas A&M University in December 2003, graduating with honors. While at Texas A&M, he was a member of Company H-1 in the Corps of Cadets.

Vandegrift's father, John Vandegrift, also served in the Marine Corps and said his son was drawn to Texas A&M by the Corps of Cadets and the desire to serve his country.

"He loved the atmosphere at A&M," John Vandegrift said, "The values and patriotism, all of it."

Mary Jane Vandegrift described her son as a charismatic child who grew into a caring man, someone who was determined to better the lives of those around him.

"He was the perfect kid," she said. "One in a million."

After completing extensive rehabilitation for a knee injury, Vandegrift joined the Marine Corps March 23, 2005, and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment on Sept. 14, 2006. He deployed to Iraq on Aug. 21, 2007. His decorations include the Iraqi Campaign



Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

Vandegrift is survived by his parents, John and Mary Jane Vandegrift of Littleton, Colo., and his brother, Barrett Vandegrift, a USAF pilot stationed in Wyoming.

1st Lt. Vandegrift was remembered during funeral services April 27 in Lakewood, Colo., and was laid to rest April 28 with full military honors at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver.

His family requests that memorial contributions be made to programs that benefit military families who have lost a family member in service to the country.

1st Lt. Timothy W. Cunningham '04

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Timothy W. Cunningham died April 23 in Golden Hills, Iraq, of injuries suffered in a vehicle incident. He was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky.

Cunningham graduated from Alvin High School and attended Texas A&M in 2000-01, prior to accepting an appointment to the United States Military Academy. He graduated from West Point in 2006 and entered the Army that same year.

While at Texas A&M, Cunningham was a member of Company C-2 in the Corps of Cadets, where he served as an outfit chaplain his sophomore year.

Cunningham's C-2 fish buddies



remember him as a kind, outgoing and honorable young man.

"He had a strong desire to reach out to anyone in need, whether just to give them a hug or share a scripture with them,"

said his former roommate Kyle Webb '04. "Tim was a true selfless and gracious servant." Family friends described Cunningham as a leader who loved his family, his country, his soldiers and his God, and as someone who left a lasting impression on all he met.

"He was the young man that every dad wishes his daughter would marry," said the Rev. Alfred Perry of First Baptist Church Rosharon, where Cunningham's father is the music minister.

Cunningham's awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service

Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Combat Infantry Badge, Parachutist Badge and Ranger Tab.

He is survived by his wife, Samantha, and daughter, Abigail, of Fort Campbell, Ky.; his parents, Jim and Cindy Cunningham of Alvin; his brother and sister-in-law, John David and Jamie Cunningham of Fort Campbell, Ky.; his sisters, Christy Dawn Cunningham of Austin, Sara Beth Cunningham of McAllen and Kelsy Lynn Cunningham of Alvin. He is also survived by his grandparents, Wayne and Marian Cunningham of Spring and Edgar and Jean Jones of Panorama Village, Texas; and his niece and nephew, Emily and T.J. Bolton of Austin.

1st Lt. Cunningham's life was celebrated in services May 1 at South Park Funeral Home in Pearland. He was laid to rest May 2 at Houston National Cemetery.