

OVN Fallen Heroes Project

Remembering the service members who died in the service of their country.

U.S. Air Force Pararescueman Chief Master Sgt. Nicholas L. McCaskill

“The Code”

It is my duty as a Pararescueman / Combat Rescue Officer to save life and to aid the injured. I will be prepared at all times to perform my assigned duties quickly and efficiently, placing these duties before personal desires and comforts. These things I do, That Others May Live.



By Orange County Register - <https://www.ocregister.com/2013/04/17/airman-with-oc-ties-killed-in-afghanistan/> April 17, 2013

An Air Force Pararescueman who grew up in Capistrano Beach and graduated from San Clemente High School has been killed in Afghanistan.

“On April 6, 2013, a hero was taken,” Nick McCaskill’s sister, Erin McCaskill Newman, wrote in a note to friends. “My brother, Nicholas Leon McCaskill, was killed in combat overseas. He exhibited unparalleled bravery and valor during the battle and gave his life protecting the lives of his fellow soldiers that were ultimately able to return to safety. He was committed and passionate about his service and was a true embodiment of his PJ (pararescue jumper) motto, ‘That Others May Live.’ During his honorable career, he was awarded a Bronze Star for his bravery in combat and also achieved the highest ranking of an enlisted airman, chief master sergeant.”

McCaskill was a reservist with the 306th Rescue Squadron since July 2006, said Master Sgt. Luke Johnson at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz.

The squadron is part of the Air Force Reserve Command's 943rd Rescue Group.

McCaskill joined the Air Force in May 1992 as an airplane mechanic and transitioned to pararescue in October 1994. According to the Air Force, pararescuers are part of special-operations units tasked with recovery and emergency medical treatment of personnel in humanitarian and combat situations. They are attached to special-operations teams from all branches to conduct other operations as deemed appropriate. They are used to support NASA missions and have recovered astronauts after splashdowns.

McCaskill was not in a military status at the time of his death in Afghanistan, Johnson said. Johnson said he could not provide details of how McCaskill was killed or who he was working for.

Commenters on several blogs connected to Air Force special operations praised McCaskill. One blog said McCaskill was killed while providing security for a Department of Defense contract.

A post on Shadowspear.com stated: "Chief McCaskill was ... killed in Afghanistan ... during a suicide bombing that claimed the lives of several other Americans, performing personal security functions as part of a DoD civilian contract. ... Fair winds, Chief. You will be missed."

"It's a sad loss," said Lt. Col. John Keeler, who commands the 306th Rescue Squadron in Arizona. "We're trying to mourn over it and take care of his family. He was an outstanding airman and friend. It's a great loss for the air squad. He was investing in lifesaving activities for 16 years. He was a superior human being."

Newman said McCaskill loved surfing, riding motorcycles and playing golf. She said most of his time was spent with family and friends. She said he had "joyful nature and charisma." Newman wrote that her brother is survived by his wife, Nikki; daughters Kenna and Tyler; his mother, Lynne; his father, James; brother-in-law David and nieces Stella and Elaina.

Rescue wing pays tribute to fallen Pararescuemen

By Master Sgt. Luke Johnson, 943rd Rescue Group Public Affairs / Published April 29, 2013
<https://www.afrc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/156258/rescue-wing-pays-tribute-to-fallen-pararescueman/>

DAVIS MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. -- Over the weekend, the 943rd Rescue Group memorialized the life of a fallen Pararescueman who was killed in Afghanistan on April 6, 2013 while performing civilian duties as security contractor.

The memorial included family and friend of Chief Master Sgt. Nicholas L. McCaskill, 306th Rescue Squadron PJ. They recalled his life as a dedicated Pararesuceman, mentor to junior rescue Airmen and a devoted family man.

"This memorial speaks volumes for the leadership and impact that Chief Master Sgt. Nick McCaskill had on those who knew him," said Col. Harold Maxwell, 943rd RQG Commander. "Those who served with Nick loved him and respected him, and he was a role model to the

younger Airmen that wanted to be like him."

"He mentored them and inspired them; he was an outstanding example of what a senior non-commissioned officer should be," said Maxwell.

The memorial included his induction into the rank of chief master sergeant which was earned on February 1, 2013, and also the presentation of the meritorious service medal.

"Nick was a humble man," said Lt. Col. John Keeler, 306th RQS. "His actions and his life focused on saving lives and building his team, and not the decorations that he received."

Nicholas L. McCaskill was born in Pomona, Calif. on January 5, 1972. He spent most of his childhood in Long Beach, Calif. then moved to San Clemente, Calif. where he graduated high school.

In May of 1992, McCaskill entered the Air Force as a structural maintenance specialist. After completing technical school he was assigned to Nellis AFB, Nev., where he worked on jet aircraft and helicopters to include the F-4 Phantom, F-15 Eagle, F-16 Falcon, A-10 Warthog aircraft and HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters.

In October 1994, he entered the two-year pararescue indoctrination pipeline, and in November of 1996 McCaskill was assigned to the 66th Rescue Squadron at Nellis AFB to begin his career as a Pararescueman.

In 2001, Chief McCaskill's next assignment was the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Group, Kadena Air Base, Japan. While assigned as a special tactics Pararescuemen, he deployed to the Philippines where he augmented the 1st Special Forces Group Theater Quick Reaction Force. McCaskill provided vital combat-search-and-rescue expertise in direct support of a mission to rescue American hostages, for which he was awarded the Joint Service Achievement Medal from the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command.

In addition, he supported a maritime interdiction operation that led to the elimination of the region's number one most-wanted terrorist. In 2003, the 353rd Special Operations Group recognized McCaskill as PJ of the Year for "building the most capable team in the unit's history."

McCaskill joined the 48th Rescue Squadron in 2005. He deployed to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom where he led 13 combat missions.

On one mission, McCaskill led a four-man rescue team to recover six U.S. Army aircrew and four 10th Mountain Division soldiers killed in a CH-47 Chinook helicopter crash. This recovery required a three-hour overland movement through hostile and hazardous mountainous terrain. While exposed to extreme danger from hostile machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire, his team worked continuously for 24 hours taking sporadic enemy fire to ensure that all 10 killed in action and all sensitive items were recovered from the crash site.

"Nick skills leadership and persistence reduced a seven day recovery mission in to less than 48

hours, we all know how painful it would be to wait seven days to find out the status of a loved one," said Keeler.

For his efforts on this mission, McCaskill was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

Later that year, McCaskill led a 14-man team in support of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita relief. They were credited with 1200 saves.

In July of 2006, McCaskill became a reservist with the 306th RQS. McCaskill led numerous NASA missions at Kennedy Space Center and executed Guardian Angel exercises with ally countries in both Tajikistan and the Philippines.

McCaskill served more 20 years in the U.S. Air Force to include 16 years conducting rescue and special operations. He had 500 plus flight hours, 200 of which were during combat operations.

McCaskill leaves behind a wife and two daughters.