

Utah National Guard Killed in Afghanistan

DRAPER, Utah – Sgt. Leslie Hampton, 116th Engineer Company, Utah National Guard, died Oct. 11 in Helmand Province, Afghanistan due to an explosion of an IED that her Humvee hit when it ran over a pothole.

A resident of Salt Lake City, Hampton deployed with 120 other soldiers of the 116th in June 2015. She joined the Utah National Guard back in 2009. The unit's mission is to provide combat-engineer support to include building construction and repair in support of Coalition forces in Afghanistan. Another soldier, Sgt. James Workman of the 116th, was also hurt in the explosion. He suffered a broken arm.

“We are really saddened by the situation that has happened,” said Maj, Gen. Jeff Burton, adjusted general of the Utah National Guard. “I remember working with Sgt. Hampton closely while she was here being prepped for the deployment. She was a great woman and a hard worker. We always expected big things from her upon her promotion to sargent, and we thought she would go further in rank due to her hard work and diligence. We will sorely miss her. We shed great tears and give our deepest condolences to her husband and two children she leaves behind.”

Utah Governor Gary Herbert also gave his condolences after hearing the news. “This is a sad time for the Utah National Guard,” he said. “We never like coming across this kind of news. Especially when you know those men and women are working so hard to make a difference from the heartache of the wars that have been happening in Afghanistan since 9/11. All news of a soldier dying trying to help is sad to hear, but to hear it is one of our own from Utah is even worse, along with the news of Sgt. Workman's severe injury from the same explosion. We wish both families well, and we hope all will come support the Hampton family during this trying time.”

The Utah National Guard currently has 350 soldiers deployed overseas: 120 in Afghanistan, 80 in Kosovo, and 150 in the Horn of Africa (Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti). The Utah Guard has 7,000 members total (5,500 in the Army National Guard and 1,500 in the Air National Guard.

Hampton's remains will arrive back in Utah on Oct. 2015, and her funeral will be held at the Calvary Baptist Church on Saturday Oct. 2015. Pastor France Davis will be at the head of the funeral services, as Pastor Davis was the congregational pastor for the church services that Hampton attended. We ask that you please be respectful of Sgt. Hampton's husband Dover and her two children during the services and ceremony.

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Media Notes: The Utah National Guard will make public comment on the death of Sgt. Hampton at a news conference at 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16, at its Draper headquarters, 12953 S. Minuteman Drive in Draper, Utah. Please contact Lt. Col. Steve Fairbourn at (801) 432-4407 or at steven.a.fairbourn.mil@mail.mil for more information.

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