

THEY SERVED IN SILENCE



The Story of a Cryptologic Hero CTR1 Michael J. Strange

“Let every man or woman here, if you never hear me again, remember this, that if you wish to be great at all, you must begin where you are and with what you are. He who would be great anywhere must first be great in his own Philadelphia.”

*Russell H. Conwell,
Founder of Temple University*

Cryptologic Technician (Collection) 1st Class (EXW) Michael J. Strange hailed from the historic city of Philadelphia. Many rightfully consider the city of Boston as the “cradle of liberty”, but it is also true that the city on the banks of the Schuylkill River played a critical role in securing the nation’s freedom. Today, the city of Philadelphia looks very different from the time when men like Franklin and Lafayette walked its streets, but despite the centuries that have passed, the city continues to produce patriots who are willing to defend the nation in times of peril.

As a young man, Michael attended the local parochial school and played football and baseball for the local youth organizations. Summers were spent crabbing and fishing with his family on Delaware’s eastern shore. By his senior year at North Catholic High, he had made the decision to join the service and two months after graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

After basic training Michael was sent to the Center for Information Dominance in Pensacola, Florida, and in April 2005, he reported to the Navy Information Operations Command in Kunia, Hawaii. In May of 2009 he joined an East Coast-based SEAL team in a support role. Navy Seal teams are known for achieving the impossible by using a unique combination of courage, competency and physical stamina to accomplish their missions. However, in addition to being competent in the combat skills needed to survive on the battlefield, these intrepid warriors also require timely critical information in order to achieve success. It was in this area that Petty Officer Strange’s skills and talents were applied. As a cryptologic technician, it was his job to provide and protect indispensable intelligence, intelligence that had the capacity to not only allow his team to achieve its mission, but to also save lives.

In August 2011, he would find himself supporting his comrades-in-arms in Afghanistan. During this time, Michael’s fellow service members would note that he was a hard worker, physically fit, and a real credit to the United States Navy. On August 6th, Petty Officer

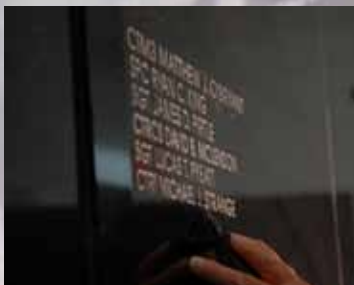




Strange's team was called upon to participate in a mission aimed at interdicting an insurgent attack on U.S. forces. As the team's helicopter neared the designated landing zone, it took a direct hit from an insurgent fired rocket propelled grenade. Michael, along with 29 members of his team and 8 Afghans, was killed making it the deadliest single loss for U.S. forces in the decade-long war in Afghanistan.

Michael would leave behind a loving family and fiancée, and a host of wonderful memories of better and simpler times at places like the rugby field at North Catholic High and Chink's Steaks, a local Philly cheesesteak emporium. Like so many inspiring service members, his service and sacrifice not only defined his life but even more so defined the legacy and tradition of those who consistently answer the call to defend our nation in dangerous and unpredictable times.

Michael Strange was a true native of Philadelphia, an accomplished athlete and a consummate cryptologic professional. Most of all his life was a testament to those indelible principles and attributes that ensure that our nation will continue to be a beacon of freedom and liberty for generations to come.



CTR1 Michael J. Strange
U.S. Navy
June 6, 1986 – August 6, 2011



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Narrative - Patrick Weadon, Curator, National Cryptologic Museum
Graphics/Layout - NSA Creative Imaging

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MEMORIAL 2011