

SPC THEODORE MATTHEW GLENDE

13 January 1989 – 27 July 2012

"Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war!"

Specialist Theodore Matthew Glende paid the ultimate sacrifice for a grateful nation 27 July 2012. At just 23 years old, Theo died doing what he loved—serving his country and protecting the men beside him. His call to duty was unwavering and inspiring. While his life was far too short, it was one filled with purpose and with love for family, friends, and country that defined the man he became. He is deeply loved, missed, and cherished by all who knew him, especially his parents, brother, widow, and countless family members and friends.

But before he was an American hero, he was simply our little boy who went by his middle name, Matt.

Matt was quick-witted, intelligent, and caring, growing into a man who was fiercely protective of those he loved. Whether family or friend, Matt was always there. His oldest friend once said Matt was "the brother he chose."

Riding bikes through the neighborhood gave Matt and his friend their gateway to freedom as kids. As they grew older, school and military life introduced new friendships, but the bonds they formed early on never faded. Whether you were hanging out, playing video games, or spending time at the range, you knew you were with someone you could always depend on. Matt had a way of making everyone around him feel like family. His loyalty wasn't something he talked about—it was simply who he was.

Matt loved making people laugh. He was a comedian and a prankster, always finding ways to keep spirits high and minds entertained. Even now, friends still laugh about the times he would sneak off campus at McQuaid and somehow manage to get back into the building with nothing more than a wink, a smile, and no reprimand. His sense of humor was infectious, and even in difficult moments he could find a way to bring a smile to those around him.

Behind the jokes and easygoing personality was someone who loved to stay busy and challenge himself. Matt was a Boy Scout, a Naval Sea Cadet, served as Captain of the Point Pleasant Fire Explorers, and volunteered within the Rochester City School District. His competitive pursuits at McQuaid included Cross Country, Track and Field, and Speech and Debate. Matt was opinionated and had a fondness for playing devil's advocate, especially in Religion and Philosophy classes. He loved asking difficult questions and challenging ideas, earning the respect—and often the frustration—of his teachers at both McQuaid and eventually his professors at Niagara University.

Of all his interests, however, one stood above the rest, Matt was always interested in the military. He spent countless hours reading and researching it and from a young age it was clear that military service was his calling. What began as an interest grew into a passion that shaped his future. Upon graduating from McQuaid Jesuit High School, he attended Niagara University on an Army ROTC scholarship. It was during this time that he began going by "Theo."

In Theo's senior year at Niagara University, cadets were informed that many would become reservists due to the limited number of active-duty Second Lieutenant slots. Theo's desire to serve as an Infantryman outweighed any concern for rank. Without hesitation, he left Niagara University during his senior year, enlisted in the Army, and forfeited his commission.

Before beginning the next chapter of his military career, Theo returned to Rochester to await orders. During that time, he met Alexandra, who would eventually become his wife. A serious relationship had not been part of his

plans because of the uncertainty surrounding his military career. However, after meeting Alexandra, everything he thought he understood about his future changed.

Meanwhile, with three years of military training already completed, Theo was sent to Fort Benning to begin as a Private. Unbeknownst to the Army, what they believed was a punishment turned out to be exactly what Theo wanted. He completed his training as an Airborne Infantryman, and only a few months later was assigned to the 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade at Camp Ederle in Vicenza, Italy where he stayed true to his roots as a comedian and prankster.

Theo remained in Italy for one year, distinguishing himself as a tenacious and disciplined soldier with encyclopedic knowledge of his equipment. His physical fitness—thanks in part to years of McQuaid Cross Country—and remarkable endurance made him exceptionally capable in combat, leading to his assignment as a Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) gunner.

As rewarding as military life had become, Theo's greatest joy was still waiting for him back home. Theo and Alexandra were married during his pre-deployment leave in April 2012, carrying with them the hopes, dreams, and excitement of a beautiful future together.

In July 2012, Theo deployed to Combat Outpost (COP) Kherwar in Logar Province, Afghanistan. After only a few weeks in country, he and his squad mates headed out on 27 July 2012 to conduct practice fire and weapons checks. Shortly thereafter, the outpost came under direct enemy fire. After one soldier suffered a leg wound, Theo and two others followed the medic to give cover and aid, deciding to head to a shipping container for shelter. While tending to the wounded soldier, their position was struck by a large mortar round, killing Theo instantly. His protective stance and body position spared the lives of his fellow soldiers. Even in his final moments, Theo's instinct was the same as it had always been—to protect others before himself. It was the way he lived, and ultimately, the way he gave his life.

Theo received a posthumous promotion, as well as the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. The Main Post Office on Jefferson Road was named in his honor, and three memorial benches in Rochester have been dedicated to his memory.

While these honors recognize his extraordinary courage, those who loved Theo remember so much more. They remember the little boy called Matt, the loyal friend, the devoted husband, the loving son and brother, the relentless prankster, and the soldier whose greatest strength was the heart he carried into every part of his life. His legacy is measured not only by his sacrifice, but by the countless lives he touched, the laughter he shared, and the example he left behind.

Theo chose the following quote for his McQuaid senior page, one our family feels beautifully captures his essence:

"The question is not how far. The question is, do you possess the constitution, the depth of faith, to go as far as is needed?" — Il Duce, The Boondock Saints