

AFGHANISTAN CASUALTY

GI's family in mourning: He 'was our hero'

■ Broward family members of a U.S. Army paratrooper are struggling with the loss of their brother to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

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A U.S. Army paratrooper who grew up in Dania Beach died in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb exploded, the Department of Defense said Wednesday.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Curry, 37, had served in the Persian Gulf War and in the Iraq War. A 20-year veteran, Curry was among the select group of paratroopers to land in Iraq in March 2003, when the controversial U.S.-led invasion started.

"Our brother was our hero," said Keisha Robinson, the oldest of Curry's three sisters. "He paid the ultimate sacrifice with his life. He will be truly missed."



CURRY

Curry was part of the 173rd Airborne Brigade out of Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy, stateside family members said. Curry lived in Italy with his wife Lucia and their two sons, Kevin, 9, and Taylor, who turned 12 Wednesday.

The U.S. Department of

•TURN TO PARATROOPER, 2B

AFGHANISTAN CASUALTY

Paratrooper put life on line in three wars

•PARATROOPER, FROM 1B

Defense website confirmed that Curry was killed in the Sarobi District of Afghanistan Monday with three other soldiers. An improvised explosive device detonated near their vehicle.

Curry is the fourth military person with Broward ties to die in Afghanistan since Operation Enduring Freedom began in 2001. No Miami-Dade County military personnel have died in Afghanistan.

In addition to his military service, relatives remembered Curry as a private, yet selfless man — the kind of guy who did his own thing but kept others in mind.

Just before he graduated from Hollywood Hills High in 1987, Curry caught his family by surprise. The honor student who was good with numbers and favored button-down shirts told them he wasn't going to college; he was enlisting in the U.S. Army.

"He wanted bigger and better things in life, and I guess he saw the military as a way to do that," said sister Lavette Curry, 34, who lives in Riverdale, Ga., near Atlanta.

That longing to leave Dania Beach eventually took Curry to Italy. That's where he found his wife, Lucia, and they started their family.

Curry made periodic visits home. At Christmas in 2004, he and his family traveled to Atlanta to see his sisters and other relatives. He made another stop at an aunt's house in Daytona Beach, where there were two Christmas trees and at least five families.

Curry teased his eldest sister Robinson about how he was still the big brother — even though they always called him "Lil' Michael."

That was the last time Curry's sisters saw him.

"The hugs he gave were so tight," said Robinson, 39, of Coconut Creek.

Curry returned from a 14-month mission in Iraq uninjured, but he didn't want to head to Afghanistan after he received instructions to report late last year, relatives said.

Robinson said her brother broke down in tears with his wife before his March deployment.

"He was scared," Robinson recalled. "He wasn't sure if he was going to come back this time."

A memorial service is scheduled for Friday in Italy, where he wanted to be buried. A service also will be held at the Greater Mount Zion AME Church in Dania Beach on Aug. 4.

Miami Herald staff writer Phil Long contributed to this report.