

Soldier killed in

U.S. paratrooper grew up in Dania and Hollywood

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Sgt. 1st Class Michael S. Curry spent 20 years in the Army. He leaves a wife and two sons.

An Army paratrooper who grew up in Hollywood and Dania Beach was one of four soldiers killed recently in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb exploded, the paratrooper's family said.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael S. Curry, 37, had spent the last 20 years of his life in the Army, and for most of that time he had been assigned to the 173rd

Airborne Brigade at Caserma Ederle, in Vicenza, Italy. It's also where he met his wife and had two sons, one of whom turned 12 today. The other is 9.

"He was a wonderful husband, father and son," said Curry's sister, Niki Martin, 35. "He was so wonderful, like something that is too good to be true."

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Afghanistan, family says

But it was true, relatives said Tuesday, as they mourned and discussed plans for a local memorial service. Curry will be buried in Italy next week, relatives said.

The U.S. Department of Defense would not confirm Tuesday that Curry was killed in the explosion, which happened Monday. A spokesman said it's the department's policy to wait 24 hours after a serviceman's relatives have been notified of the death before releasing his identity.

Curry's relatives in Dania Beach said they learned of the tragedy early Tuesday, in a transatlantic phone call from Curry's wife.

It was the second time Curry had been ordered to the Middle East re-

gion. He left for Afghanistan in March.

His loved ones were proud but they were also worried.

Relatives said Curry was one of about a thousand U.S. soldiers who parachuted into northern Iraq before dawn on March 27, 2003, the largest group of paratroopers to land in a combat zone since World War II. He was in Iraq for 14 months and returned uninjured, relatives said.

For Christmas 2004, Curry brought his wife and sons to Florida, to meet his relatives and take a large family trip to Daytona Beach.

It was the last time Curry's relatives in Florida saw him.

"I was so proud of him," said older

sister Keisha Robinson, 39, who recalled the last hug she shared with her brother. "If wrong was going left, he was always going right," she said.

Curry graduated in 1987 from Hollywood Hills High School and immediately enlisted, relatives said.

When he took a job at a Dania Beach Winn-Dixie and insisted on not only saving most of the money but separating a portion of it to give as allowance for his two sisters, his family said.

"He was my hero," said Robinson, who like other relatives and friends knew her brother as Lil' Mike.

"We're hurting now, but we're all so proud that he served his country well," said aunt Joyce Curry.