

# THE BATTALION

Volume 110 • Issue 133 • 10 pages

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## Aggie Muster 2004

April 21, 2004

As a senior at Texas A&M, Lt. Doyle Hufstedler III never got much sleep. While some seniors used their upperclassman status to take it easy and “bag-in” weekday mornings, Hufstedler got up at 5:30 every morning to join the Company I-1 freshman and sophomore cadets in their daily drills. Hufstedler just considered it part of his duty to take care of his men.

As a U.S. Army officer in Iraq, Hufstedler's sense of duty stuck with him until the day he died. Hufstedler was the only officer in a vehicle full of Army privates when a bomb detonated under their M-113 in Malahama, Iraq, on March 21, 2004, killing him and four others.

“He was right there with the bottom of the totem pole, doing what he had to do, and that's not surprising,” said Michael Hernandez, a senior finance major, who was one of Hufstedler's “fish” in 2000. “That's just the kind of person that he was. He was very attached to his men and definitely took care of his people.”

Hufstedler, Class of 2001, along with two other Aggie soldiers, Capt. Ernesto Blanco-Caldas, Class of 1998, and 1st Lt. Jonathan Rozier, Class of 2001, were killed in action in

Iraq in the past year. All three soldiers' names will be called at the Muster roll call Wednesday at 7 p.m. in Reed Arena, and a family member or friend will answer “Here” to symbolize that their memory still lives on.

Keith Alaniz, a senior civil engineering major and I-1 commanding officer, said the entire I-1 outfit will say “Here” when Hufstedler's name is called.

“It will be an honor to stand up and say ‘here’ because I knew him and he was a really great guy who made a huge sacrifice for us,” Alaniz said.

Alaniz, who knew Hufstedler as his senior and the Ranger Challenge commander, said Hufstedler understood the sacrifices he would have to make as a soldier.

“I was in his room one time with him and my other friends, and we were watching CNN,” Alaniz said. “Some U.S. soldiers had been killed, and one of the guys said, ‘That's horrible.’ Doyle told him, ‘That's what happens, and that's what you have to do.’”

Hernandez said Hufstedler was a selfless leader who epitomized Army values and that he is proud to have known Hufstedler.

“His death helped several thousand people in Iraq who now have the opportunity for freedom,” Hernandez said. “We will never forget what he did for us.”

Hufstedler's wife, Leslie, who is eight-and-a-half months pregnant with their first child, Grace Ashley, will attend a Muster ceremony in Charlotte, N.C., if she is physically able to, while Hufstedler's parents and family friend, Bill Libby, Class of 1958, will honor Hufstedler at the Muster ceremony in his home town of Abilene, Texas.

Libby, who has known Hufstedler since he was in seventh grade, said the serious-minded, patriotic and religious soldier loved being an Aggie. Libby said Hufstedler was determined to graduate from A&M, despite a learning disability that forced him to work extra hard in his classes and an administrator who encouraged him to drop out and attend a junior college.

“It was his dream, his vision in high school, to go to A&M,” Libby said.

See Muster on page 8

STORY BY: Rhiannon Meyers; PHOTO BY: Randal Ford;  
PAGE DESIGN BY: Ruben DeLuna, Joshua Hobson, Lauren Rouse, Melissa Sullivan, Rachel Valencia & Elizabeth Webb

