

BROTHERS IN ARMS MARCH FOR CAUSE by Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes, 1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

October 19, 2009 - HURLBURT FIELD, FL (AFNS) -- Five states, 12 men, 13 batons, 24 boots, 600 pounds carried more than 800 miles all traveled for one cause: honoring special tactics Airmen who sacrificed their lives in combat.

Twelve special tactics Airmen conclude an 824-mile memorial rucksack march Oct. 16, 2009, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The men marched from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field to honor Staff Sgt. Timothy Davis, a combat controller assigned to the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron when Field when he was killed in action Feb. 20, 2009, and 12 other fallen special operations forces members. (U.S. Air Force photo/Drew Buchanan)

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Special tactics Airmen from here and across the special operations forces community embarked on a 10-day memorial rucksack march from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field.

The journey was especially poignant for these Airmen who marched in the memory of Staff Sgt. Timothy Davis who was killed in Afghanistan in February while serving as a member of the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron here.

Hundreds of members from Hurlburt Field lined the streets leading up to the Special Tactics Training Complex to honor Sergeant Davis and support the marchers as they entered the home stretch of the trek.

"It's amazing that these guys could march that far with 50 pound rucksacks," said Senior Airman Jasmine Davis, assigned to the 1st Special Operations Support Squadron. "It made me really proud to see them marching through the gate."

Twelve special tactics Airmen display batons presented to the Special Tactics Training Squadron commander during a ceremony Oct. 16, 2009, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The batons were carried by 12 Airmen who marched from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field during a memorial rucksack march honoring fallen special operations forces members. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes)

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"We didn't expect it to be this formal," said Staff Sgt. Ryan Carter, a 23rd STS combat controller and best friend to Sergeant Davis. "It was nice to see all the support."

The two 12-man teams also marched to raise awareness and support for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, which provides college educations to the surviving children of all branches of special operations personnel killed in combat or training. Additionally, the Warrior Foundation provides immediate financial assistance to special operations personnel severely wounded in overseas contingency operations.

NOTE: This online-only information was added to the CCT history after publication of *The Eye of the Storm – A history of Combat Control Teams*.

"When we lose somebody, it's like losing a brother," said Wayne Norrad, a retired combat controller and board member of the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. "Most of our guys have families ... and we want to let our fallen brothers' family members know we will always take care of his children, and that (the fallen man's family) are always part of the brotherhood."

"Tim Davis' child will have an opportunity to go to college," Mr. Norrad said.

According to www.specialops.org, 336 Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine special operations forces members have been killed in action, leaving behind 384 children.

Loved ones, friends and comrades of the fallen Airmen met the memorial marchers at their final destination, where they presented the batons to Col. Steve Spanovich, the Special Tactics Training Squadron commander.

A baton engraved with the name of Staff Sgt. Timothy Davis was presented to the Special Tactics Training Squadron commander during a ceremony Oct. 16, 2009, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Sergeant Davis, a fallen combat controller who was assigned to the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron, and 12 other special operations forces members were honored in an 824-mile rucksack march from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field where the baton will be permanently displayed. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes)

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Sergeant Davis' baton was carried by Sergeant Carter, and Sergeant Davis' family was there to escort the baton as it was presented to Colonel Spanovich.

"Timmy was my best friend and I just wanted to give him something back," Sergeant Davis said. "Rucking was something he loved to do and I felt like this was the best way to honor him and everyone else who has fallen as well. (Sergeant Davis) would have loved this. He would've been the guy at the front the whole time telling everyone to hurry up."

