



JOHNATHAN TAYLOR

Johnathan Taylor HOMOSASSA, Fla. Marine Corporal Johnathan Wesley Taylor, 23, of Sugarmill Woods, Homosassa, Fla., formerly of Hickory, died Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2011, when a nearby improvised explosive device detonated while his Marine Corps Unit was on foot patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville, N.C. Johnathan joined the Marines in November, 2006, and graduated from Boot Camp, Parris Island, S.C., in February, 2007. He served four tours, leaving on his first seven-month deployment from Camp Lejeune on Oct. 29, 2007, to Anbar Province, Iraq. In May, 2009, he began his second seven-month deployment in Helmand Province, Afghanistan and was air-lifted into a Taliban stronghold. In July, 2010, he was the first in his unit to volunteer for another six months in Afghanistan (replacing a Marine who had lost his life). Upon his return to Camp Lejeune, he assisted in the training of 140 new recruits and went back with them again to Helmand province, leaving on Jan. 12, 2011. His awards include the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the NATO Medal-ISAF Afghanistan. Corporal Taylor was born in Hickory at Frye Medical Center on Aug. 14, 1987. He attended St. Stephens elementary School, was baptized at St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Hickory, on Jan. 10, 1988, and had his first communion there on Easter Sunday, April 4, 1999. He moved with his parents and two brothers to Florida in August, 1999 at age 13, where he became a member of St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Crystal River, Fla. Taylor graduated in May, 2006 from Lecanto High School (Citrus County, Fla.), where he played tight end on the football team and was a member of the school's Army ROTC program. During his high school years, he was also a member of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps at Admiral Farragut Academy, St. Petersburg, Fla., from which he graduated in July 2003 as the Honor Cadet (Nautilus Division of Charlie Company). Johnathan was preceded in death by his grandfather, Ralph Taylor, of Hickory. Survivors include his parents, Mark Sr. and Deborah Green Taylor; two brothers, Mark Jr. and Christopher Taylor, and two nephews, Mark III and Mason Taylor, all of Homosassa, Fla. Other survivors are his grandmother, Ruby Taylor Wyly and step-grandfather, Robert Wyly, of Hickory; grandparents, John and Andie Green, and uncle and aunt, Arnie Ray and Jeanie Burch, all of Virginia; uncle and aunt, Larry and Melanie Taylor Garver of Keedysville, Md.; a cousin, Nicholas Garver, of Maryland, and cousin, 2nd Lt. Heather Garver, headquartered at Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, N.M. He is also survived by other aunts and uncles and a number of other cousins of Hickory, Virginia, Texas, and Canada. Corporal Taylor's body was returned to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, on Friday evening, Feb. 25, 2011, arriving around 8 p.m. on a 747 jet from Germany. His immediate relatives were in attendance and took part in a dignified welcoming home ceremony, arranged and conducted by Marine Corps Chaplain, Charles Rowley.

Arrangements are being made for a memorial service in March in Citrus County, Fla., and Corporal Taylor earned the right to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Va. Memorials may be made to St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 629 8th Street, Hickory, NC 28601; to St. Timothy Lutheran Church, U.S. Hwy. 19, Crystal River, Fla. 34429; or to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, Gift Professing Center, P.O. Box 96628, Washington, D.C. 20090-6628 (for completion of the National Museum of the Marine Corps., Dumfries, Va.)

Written by Mark and Debbie Taylor, published in the *Hickory Daily Record*, March 1, 2011.