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82nd Airborne Division
Public Affairs Office
Fort Bragg, N.C. 28310-5000
Phone (910) 432-0661
After Duty Hours (910) 366-9979

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82nd Airborne Division Paratroopers Killed in Action

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – Two 82nd Airborne Division Paratroopers were killed while conducting combat operations on Saturday, January 11 in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The incident remains under investigation.

Staff Sgt. Ian Paul McLaughlin of Newport News, Va. and Pfc. Miguel Angel Villalon of Joliet, Ill., were both assigned to Company B, 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division when they were killed by an Improvised Explosive Device.

“When our Nation called for its best Airborne Combat Engineers to deploy into harm’s way, Staff Sgt. McLaughlin and Pfc. Villalon answered without hesitation. They lived their motto, ‘Essayons,’ and embodied the values of the All American Engineer,” said Col. Art Sellers, Commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. “Their loved ones are now surrounded by a caring community offering comfort and assistance through this difficult time.”

Maj. Gen. James Mingus, the 82nd Airborne Division Commander added, "These paratroopers represent the very best of our Nation and our Army. Three time volunteers, they went when our Nation called and paid the ultimate sacrifice. They will be honored, mourned, but never forgotten and we are committed to taking care of their families for life."

McLaughlin joined the Army in 2012 and after completing Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training, he was assigned to the 68th Engineer Company, 62nd Engineer Battalion at Fort Hood, Texas as a Horizontal Construction Engineer. In 2016, he was assigned to the 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N. C., where he served as a Horizontal Construction Engineer and later as a Squad Leader. This was his first combat deployment.

McLaughlin’s awards and decorations include the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with “C” Device, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Good Conduct Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Combat Action Badge and the Basic Parachutist Badge. He was a 2018 graduate of the U.S. Army Advanced Airborne School Jumpmaster Course.

McLaughlin is survived by his wife and four children.

Villalon joined the Army in 2018 and after completing Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training in 2019 at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., he was assigned to the 307th Airborne

Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., where he served as a Combat Engineer. This was his first combat deployment.

Villalon's awards and decorations include the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with "C" Device, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

Villalon is survived by his mother of Chicago, Ill. and father of Brownsville, Texas.



Staff Sgt. Ian Paul McLaughlin

Pfc. Miguel Angel Villalon
(contributed photo)