

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Soldier's funeral planned

Pfc. Shane Coleman killed in Iraq on Wednesday



Pfc. Shane Coleman

Sunday, November 2, 2008

By KIM BARTO - Bulletin Staff Writer

The family of Pfc. Bradley Shane Coleman, a local soldier who was killed last week in Iraq, tentatively plans to hold his funeral Friday, according to the funeral home handling arrangements.

Coleman, who was 24, died Wednesday of a gunshot wound, his stepmother has said. The Army has told family members Coleman's death is under investigation, Yolanda Coleman has said.

On Sunday, Kelly Ratcliff, director of Community Funeral Services, said the Coleman family tentatively plans to hold a visitation Thursday and the funeral Friday. Locations had not been chosen as of Sunday afternoon, Ratcliff said.

Shane Coleman and his wife of two years, Heather Coleman, have two children, Edward Shane, age 2 and a half, and Shyanna, 1. He and his wife had known each other since they were children and were married in May 2006, his stepmother said.

"His biggest thing was he liked spending time with his children and his wife," Yolanda Coleman said.

"He loved his children. They were the whole world to him," she added. His father called him "a great son. ... He was a sweet, loving, kind person who was always a gentleman," his stepmother said.

Coleman, a transportation specialist, enlisted in the Army in April 2007 and was sent to Iraq on his first tour in June. He was supposed to be home on leave in January 2009, his stepmother said.

"From the time he was a small child, that's all he talked about: going in the Army," Yolanda Coleman said.

He was in JROTC at Magna Vista High School but after graduating in 2003, he did not enlist immediately. Instead, he worked with his father, a brickmason, for a few years. Coleman was first stationed in Germany before being sent to a base in Iraq that the Army called "Q-West," his stepmother said. In Iraq, he was able to call his wife and talk "just about every day," Yolanda Coleman said, and the family also communicated through e-mail.

“He really liked the Army itself, but once he got to Iraq ... it was hard on him,” she said. “He told his daddy that what you see on the news and what he saw over there were like two different worlds.”

A representative from the Army went to Coleman’s wife’s house to break the news around 10 p.m. Wednesday, but the family found out about his death about an hour before when a friend posted something on Coleman’s MySpace page, she said.

“Shane was the kind of person where everybody he met wanted to be his friend,” Yolanda Coleman said. “We probably had 50 to 60 of his friends come by the house in last 24 hours, talking about what a good person he was.”

“You think you’re prepared for something like this, knowing he’s in a hostile situation. But nothing prepares you,” she added.

His body has been returned to the United States for an autopsy, which Coleman said is standard procedure. It will be several days before it is released to the family, Coleman said. Also surviving in addition to his stepmother are his father, Dale Bradley Coleman of Ridgeway; his mother, Dianne Vernon of Eden, N.C.; three sisters; two stepbrothers; and a stepsister.

Coleman is the sixth local military member who has died since the Iraq war began. The others are L. Cpl. Jonathan Bowling, L. Cpl. Demarkus Brown, Lt. Ryan Betton, Pvt. Daniel Fisher and Pfc. Mickey Jenkins.