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2005 Dallastown graduate killed in Afghanistan

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1st Lt. Daren Hidalgo was killed in the Afghanistan on Sunday (Submitted)

York, PA - First Lt. Daren Hidalgo came from a family that followed a philosophy in which each member, somehow, should contribute to their country.

"My boys all decided to go into the military," said Jorge Hidalgo, father of the late Daren Hidalgo.

A 2005 graduate of Dallastown Area High School, Daren Hidalgo, 24, was killed Sunday near Mama Kiriz, Afghanistan, while conducting combat operations, according to the website of the 2nd Cavalry Association and Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations.

He was assigned to G Company, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Rose Barracks, Germany.

After high school, Daren Hidalgo received a U.S. Military Academy appointment to West Point. His father and older brother, Miles Hidalgo, also attended West Point.

Daren Hidalgo graduated from the military academy in 2009 and then completed a year's worth of training before heading to Afghanistan, Jorge Hidalgo said.

Daren's father described his late son as hard working and willing to take on a challenge. He remembered his son's smile. He said Daren was kind-hearted and the "sparkle in everyone's eye."

Jorge Hidalgo had previously served as a vice president and general manager of the Harley-Davidson plant in Springettsbury Township. He left the company in 2005. Currently, Jorge Hidalgo and his family live in Waukesha, Wis.

Aside from his military career, Daren Hidalgo was "one heck of a good athlete," his father said.



Daren Hidalgo (SUBMITTED)

Dave Gable served as Daren Hidalgo's wrestling coach in 10th through 12th grade in high school. He said Daren Hidalgo was an outstanding wrestler - a district qualifier who was only a match or two away from a state championship. "He was the type of person that everybody loved," Gable said. "He had a magnetic personality, a big smile, and was generally happy about everything that was going on."

Phil Bayliss said he and Hidalgo were best friends from the time Hidalgo moved to the York County area when both were in fifth grade. Bayliss, now of Philadelphia, graduated with Hidalgo in 2005. "Everyone was always joking around with him," Bayliss said. "He had the best smile you could ever imagine ... infectious and contagious."

Sometimes, it surprised people who didn't know him to find out he was in the military, he said. "You think of someone serious and stern," Bayliss said. Hidalgo was "just the opposite."

Bayliss thinks most people will remember "the happy-go-lucky kid who would do absolutely anything (for anyone), whether a friend or someone you just met."

When he was still a senior at Dallastown, Daren Hidalgo started a campaign to adopt Marine Lance Cpl. Richard Warner, who was a friend of Hidalgo's older brother. The students sent Warner letters and care packages. In 2005, Daren Hidalgo attended a ceremony at his high school in honor of Warner, who was killed by a car bomb.

Hidalgo is the 14th soldier lost during the regiment's tour in Afghanistan, said Chris Golden, executive director of the association. The association received notice from the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, he said, because the association represents the Germany-based regiment in the U.S.

Hidalgo's body will be flown into Dover Air Force in Dover, Del., base Tuesday morning, mortuary affairs said.