

FOX 43

A York County high school holds tribute for fallen soldier **The lobby of Dallastown H.S. turned into tribute for First Lieutenant Daren Hidalgo**

Jaime Garland Staff reporter 5:01 p.m. EST, February 23, 2011

DALLASTOWN, YORK COUNTY—

A York County School District is paying tribute to a 2005 graduate killed in the line of duty.

Daren Hidalgo, a Dallastown High School grad, was killed in Afghanistan on Sunday. He was performing combat operations with the Army's Second Stryker Brigade.

On Wednesday, a memorial was set up in the high school lobby to honor his memory. Members of the school's Junior ROTC program stood watch as teachers, friends and students stopped by to pay their respects.

"When I heard he died and I saw it was his picture, it just broke my heart... Daren was one of those students that when he saw you his smile lit up the room, he was enjoyable to be around, he brought joy to everywhere they went," said Health Teacher Patricia McKinney.

"As faculty we think who we would want a Dallastown student to be, our community, he epitomized that; Daren was just a great kid when he was here," says Dr. Alan Fauth, Principal of the high school.

"He's not going to ever be able to take a breath again, hug anybody again or touch anybody again, he's an amazing person and I've never been proud of anybody like I am of him," says Ali Merrifield, who grew up with Daren.

Healing from this loss will take quite some time for the entire Dallastown community.

To help, a public memorial service for First Lieutenant Hidalgo will be held at the high school this Sunday at 1:00 p.m., all are welcome.

Two funerals are being planned, one will be in Wisconsin where his parents live. The other service will be at held at West Point, where he was a 2009 graduate; that is also where he will be buried.