

MEMORIAL DAY

SPECIAL EDITION OF BLACKHAWK SHOOTING
SPORTS' NEWSLETTER



HONORING TWO BRAVE NAVY SEALS

Memorial Day, a day we set aside to remember all those who sacrificed their lives to serve our country. This special issue of the Blackhawk Shooting Sports newsletter will highlight two specific American soldiers that have a personal connection with one of our own employees. However you choose to spend this holiday, have a great day celebrating your protected freedoms here in the U.S.A.

Nicholas Spehar and Jesse Pittman were two Navy SEALs who were both killed in action on August 6, 2011 (EXTORTION 17). The SEALs were riding in the CH-47 Chinook helicopter when it was shot down by a rocket-propelled grenade in Wardak province, Afghanistan. The helicopter was carrying these two SEALs along with 28 other American soldiers. It was the deadliest incident for U.S. forces since the war in Afghanistan began.

To honor these two SEALs, Blackhawk Shooting Sports had plans to dedicate both the indoor bays in their honor since before the range was open. Blackhawk's instructor and RSO, Shane Anderson, came to Jeff proposing the idea of the dedication for his fellow SEALs, and Jeff didn't hesitate to support his request.

You can find a plaque outside of each bay at Blackhawk Shootings Sports that displays a photo of the soldiers along with a brief description explaining their story. This Memorial Day newsletter is dedicated to expanding on their stories a little more so our customers have a better understanding for who these men are that sacrificed their lives for our freedoms.

**Content in this newsletter was gathered from multiple online sources about the two veterans*

JESSE PITTMAN

SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATOR 1ST CLASS
(SEAL)

APRIL 20, 1984-AUGUST 6, 2011

About:

Jesse grew up in Willits, California, a small lumber town known as a "working community" where physical labor was valued more highly than sports. Jesse was a hands-on worker. He hauled hay, worked in a mill, and split all the wood by hand that would heat his family's home throughout the year. He shared a love for hot-rods with his father and older brother, who described Jesse as hardworking, respectful, and funny. After working two seasons for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), where his father also worked as a heavy equipment operator, Jesse decided to join the military. Friends were surprised when he told them he wanted to become a SEAL, but no one doubted he could complete the training. Despite being a leader on his fire crew and having a good career ahead of him as a firefighter, Jesse made it clear becoming a SEAL was his passion. "He liked to be challenged, and I think that challenge is what drew him to both of those careers," his friend Chris Wilkes told the San Francisco Chronicle.

Obstacles:

Overall Jesse was in good shape, but he wasn't a strong swimmer. After he enlisted, he asked his friend and fellow firefighter Frank Hunter to help him learn to swim.

"On our first day...Jesse got in the pool and started to dog paddle. I told him, 'You might have made a mistake. Maybe you should see if you can get out of this thing,'" Hunter said.



Military Timeline:

Jesse enlisted in the U.S. Navy on March 17, 2005, and went on active duty to begin basic training on August 17, 2005. He completed basic training at NTC Great Lakes, Illinois, in October 2005, and then attended the Defense Information School at Fort Meade, Maryland, from October 2005 to February 2006. Petty Officer Pittman next attended Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training at NAB Coronado, California, from March to September 2006, followed by Jump School at Fort Benning, Georgia, in October 2007, and finally Naval Special Warfare Advanced (SEAL Qualification) training from November 2006 to April 2007. His first assignment was with SEAL Team FIVE at NAB Coronado in April 2007.

Military Achievements:

Jesse was a Platoon Team Member and Afghan Partnering Unit Team Leader for a Joint Task Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from August 6, 2009 to October 30, 2009. During this period, Petty Officer Second Class Pittman was directly responsible for the tactical and garrison actions of a local National assault team. Due to his superior leadership, their performance on numerous direct action missions resulted in the capture or elimination of numerous enemies, which included several Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders.

The distinctive accomplishments of Petty Officer Second Class Pittman reflect great credit upon him, the United States Navy, and the Department of Defense.

After high school, Jesse battled wildfires in the rugged mountains of Northern California. As an elite Navy SEAL, he went on nighttime raids in Afghanistan, missions both dangerous and top secret. The Pittman family, and everyone who knew him, remembers him as a hero and a wonderful person. Jesse is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California.

"He embodied the part of the SEAL creed that said SEALs are common men with an uncommon desire to succeed." -Jesse's father

Sources:

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/09/local/la-me-jesse-pittman-20111009>

<http://ftebrand.com/imnohero-jesse-d-pittman-petty-officer-first-class-seal-u-s-navy/>

NICHOLAS SPEHAR

SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATOR 2ND CLASS
(SEAL)

OCTOBER 19, 1986-AUGUST 6, 2011

About:

Nick grew up in Chisago City, Minnesota, a small town of about 4,700 people. Just like the rest of his family, he was known as a down-to-earth, nice, everyday, salt-of-the-earth kind of person. He played football and baseball for Chisago Lakes, starred on the swimming team and was an academic letter winner. He was a big kid, a powerlifter, who was not as soft spoken as his brothers. Ultimately, Nick was the type of guy that if he said he was going to do something, he did it.

Legacy:

Even if you don't know Nick Spehar, if you drive on Interstate 694 or 35E in the northeastern metro area of Minneapolis, you know his work. The 24-year-old was a welder and construction worker on the crew that "unwove the Weave," the notorious intersection of two freeways in the St. Paul suburbs.

What Nick really wanted to do, though, was defend his country; a yearning he'd felt since he'd watched the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. The Spehars are a Navy family, and Nick wanted to be a SEAL—the best of the best.



Military timeline:

Nick enlisted in the U.S. Navy on August 25, 2006, and went on active duty to begin basic training on March 15, 2007. He completed basic training at NTC Great Lakes, Illinois, in June 2007, and then attended Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training at NAB Coronado, California, from June 2007 to February 2008. Next, he attended Naval Special Warfare Advanced (SEAL Qualification) Training at NAB Coronado and at Kodiak, Alaska, from February to August 2008, followed by service with SEAL Team FIVE at NAB Coronado in September 2008.

Military Achievements:

Nick's decorations include Army Commendation Medal, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Rifle Marksmanship Medal and Pistol Marksmanship Medal. He earned the coveted position of Honor Man in both Naval Special Warfare Lead Breacher and Naval Special Warfare Sniper School.

During his time, Petty Officer Spehar deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom multiple times. He was part of a secretive and elite special operations team.

Nicholas was a leader by example, a tireless worker, and an elite warrior. He led his life with dedication and integrity. His deep love and his devotion to his family were unparalleled. Nicholas had a deep Catholic faith, and he is buried at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"His 'yes' meant 'yes,' and his 'no' meant 'no,'" said his father. "If you found yourself in a jam, or needed help—getting out of a snowbank, financial difficulty, or physical danger—he was the man you wanted with you."

Sources:

<http://ftebrand.com/todays-badass-nicholas-p-spehar-petty-officer-second-class-seal-u-s-navy/>

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2011/08/11/minnesota-seals-identified>

<https://thefallen.militarytimes.com/navy-special-warfare-operator-petty-officer-2nd-class-seal-nicholas-p-spehar/6567927>