

**SOUTH DAKOTA  
FALLEN HERO**



*Your  
Memory  
lives on in  
our hearts.*



*In Loving Memory*

*SPC Dennis G. Jensen*



*A Son of South Dakota*

*SD Army National Guard*

*10-9-1989 to 8-16-2011*

*Afghanistan*

## Before His Time Dennis Jensen

Born October 9, 1989, Dennis came into this world three months early, weighing 1 pound 11 ounces, and would fit in my hand. Truly a miracle for both him and his mother. A real fighter that beat every hand dealt to him, to become a person that knew nothing but love. He was a brother to all, that was in some ways color blind. Dennis didn't see people in colors, to him we are all the same – color, race, religion, etc – being able to see people in ways that most people have forgotten how to. Dennis loved everyone, especially both of his Grandmothers, his family, his heritage and his sister a lot (don't know that happened there).

It is truly amazing how many people's lives this man had become part of. Dennis had his passions, his goals in life and had made up his mind about his path in this world. He made up his mind at an early age to serve his country because he was very proud of his past military heritage. He carried his Badge of Honor on his chest that goes back many generations. Dennis always stood proud and always had a smile on his face. The man fought unbelievable odds throughout his life and beat them all to make the ultimate sacrifice for us.

Dennis was taken from this world on August 16, 2011, way before his time. To this day he still continues to affect our lives and will be missed but never forgotten.

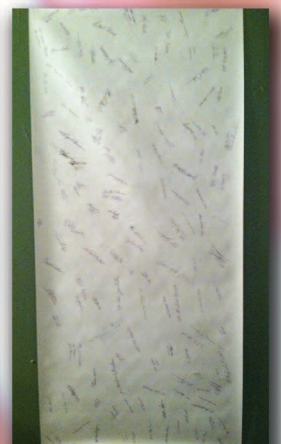
SPC Dennis Gregory Jensen

Before His Time

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.  
John 15:13*

*Told by Dennis' Dad - Glenn E. Jensen*





SPC Dennis Jensen was born October 9, 1989, three months premature, weighing 1 pound 11 ounces. He was in and out of the hospital for two and a half years, and then Dennis developed Epilepsy. He had his



SPC Dennis Jensen was born October 9 1989 3 months premature, weighing 1 pound 11 ounces. He was in and out of the hospital for 2 1/2 years, and then Dennis developed Epilepsy. He had his first grand mal seizure when he was 1 1/2 years old, 24 hours after he had his first set of shots. Dennis finally outgrew the epilepsy when he was 11.

Dennis was always the small skinny kid, a little nerdy, always in his own world, walking to the beat of his own drum. He was bullied, teased, people poking fun at him because his ears stuck out. He didn't care. He didn't cry about it. He didn't let them get to him. He just persevered. He was determined and he never quit. Due to his prematurity, Dennis couldn't float, and when he was on swim team, he always had to fight harder than everyone else to finish the race. He was always last, but he always finished, and came out of the water with a smile.

Dennis knew from when he was a little boy he was going to be a soldier. He was a huge fan of History, and we watched a lot of History channel, and war movies and documentaries. Dennis would bring his big storage tub of Legos and build whatever the movies was about. When we gave him those little boxes of special Lego kits, he would first throw the instructions away, and then add them to his collection. Dennis would take anything apart, just to figure out how to put it back together. Dennis and his Dad built their first engine together when he was 7 or 8. He was considering going to WYO Tech to be a mechanic when he got back from Afghanistan. he wanted to be in the trades, to work with his hands and to have dirt under his fingernails. Dennis loved video games, hunting, guns, family South Dakota and wanted more than anything to serve his country.

He comes from a long line of ancestors who served before him, and when he joined the military, he decided to go in the South Dakota Army national Guard versus the regular Army, so he didn't just become a number. He loved South Dakota, and wanted to serve his home State. Dennis volunteered to go with the 200th Engineer Company in 2010 when they called for volunteers. He took every class he could of training. He was determined to be the best he could be. He was so excited to deploy, and didn't want any distractions to hinder his mission. He told me he deliberately didn't have a girlfriend as he didn't want to be quote "worrying about what a a woman was doing" unquote when he was trying to focus on his mission.

Dennis was killed August 16 2011, 6 weeks after they arrived at Camp Leatherneck. The 200th was a Bridging Unit, and the previous mission had identified a faster way to assemble the decking when they were on a mission. That Tuesday was a training day, working out the kinks and the specs for the new plans. He and a female guard were directed to go under the 1500 pounds of decking as it was balanced on a forklift, secured by a strap to tighten the bolts from underneath. The strap broke, and Dennis was crushed under 1500 pounds of steel. He never regained consciousness, and died very soon after.

When the men in uniform showed up at our house, all I could thing about was after all of that??? After all of that fight to live, to survive, to finish, that he was taken out like that? Dennis was a fighter, and his love of Country and Family and his Scottish Heritage was in his words "Loud and Proud". His motto was "Lead Follow or get the hell out of the way." Dennis died at the age of 21. Specialist Dennis Gregory Jensen, South Dakota Army National Guard, 200th Engineer Company. We will forever miss your smile.

## **Christine Bestgen GSM**

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