

**SOUTH DAKOTA  
FALLEN HERO**



*Your  
Memory  
lives on in  
our hearts.*



*In Loving Memory*

*SSG Gregory A. Wagner*



*Mitchell, SD*

*SD Army National Guard*

*11-26-1970 to 5-08-2006*

*Iraq*

Memorial Service for  
Staff Sgt. Gregory A. Wagner  
May 20, 2006  
11:00 a.m.  
Corn Palace  
Mitchell, South Dakota

*I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom  
shall I send and who will go? And I  
answered, Here am I! Send me! Isaiah 6:8*

Welcome/Opening Remarks	Mr. Curt Hart
National Anthem	Alyssa Persson
Invocation	Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joe Holzhauser
Celebration of Life	Chaplain (Maj.) Lynn Wilson
Comments by Distinguished Guests	Mr. Jim Bridge
	Senator John Thune
	Brig. Gen. Raymond W. Carpenter
	Governor M. Michael Rounds
Vocals	Kassie McManus Marek
Award Presentation	Master Sgt. Michael Jones
Video Presentation	Staff Sgt. Lee Kayser
Irish Blessing Prayer	Kassie McManus Marek
Benediction	Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joe Holzhauser



## STAFF SGT. GREGORY A. WAGNER

Staff Sgt. Gregory A. Wagner, age 35, of Mitchell, died May 8, 2006 in Baghdad, Iraq. Mass of Christian Burial will be 11 a.m. Monday May 22, 2006, at St. Mary of Mercy Catholic Church in Alexandria, SD with burial and full military rites at St. Mary of Mercy Catholic Cemetery-Visitation will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday May 21, 2006 at St. Mary of Mercy Catholic Church in Alexandria with a wake service beginning at 7 p.m. Sunday. Arrangements are under the direction of the Will Funeral Chapel of Mitchell, SD.

SSG Gregory A. Wagner was born in Mitchell, SD on November 26, 1970. Greg started his military service during his senior year at Hanson High School, enlisting with the 665th Maintenance Company in Mitchell, SD. He reported to basic training at Fort Leonard Wood on June 1, 1989. On June 20th, 1990 SSG Wagner again reported to Fort Leonard Wood for Advanced Individual Training as a 62B Construction Equipment Mechanic.

After returning that fall, Greg entered Mount Marty College in Yankton, SD and began his nursing degree. In 2001, SSG Wagner changed MOS's and became a 63W Track Vehicle Mechanic and transferred to HHC 153rd Engineer BN in Madison, SD. Soon after completing the 63Y MOSQ as a Recovery Vehicle Operator, SSG Wagner became a Motor SGT of CO.B, 153rd Engineer BN in 2002 and received a 63B MOS. He transferred to A-Btry, 1/147th FA located in Mitchell, SD in the fall of 2003.

SSG Wagner was called to active duty in support of OIF 05-07 on June 13, 2005. His leadership and medical skills were valuable assets to train subordinates while all the squad leaders and higher leadership were taking advance training at Ft. Dix. After three months of intensive training at Ft. Dix, SSG Wagner arrived in Iraq where he was assigned as a Team Leader with 3rd Platoon, 1st Squad. He was tasked with training Iraqi Police and securing the safety of the Iraqi people. SSG Wagner lived the warrior ethos and was a top notch NCO who always placed his soldiers' needs before his own. On May 8, 2006, SSG Wagner was tragically killed when his vehicle was struck by a massive Improvised Explosive Device while returning from an Iraqi police station.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star (Posthumously Awarded), the Purple Heart (Posthumously Awarded), the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, The National Defense Service Medal with "M" Device, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Non-Commissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, the South Dakota Distinguished Service Medal with Four Oak Clusters, the Combat Action Badge (Posthumously Awarded), the Expert Marksmanship Qualification Badge, and the Driver and Mechanic Badge. SSG Wagner was a key to the strength management of A-Btry and had recruited his nephew Ryan who was very proud of his uncle's service record. He was an active member of the American Legion and had carried on his late father's duties of calling the roll during Memorial Day observances.

Grateful for having shared his life are his mother, Velma "Blondie" Wagner; four brothers, Daniel (Lynette) Wagner, Sioux Falls, SD, Leonard (Joni) Wagner, Pryor, OK, Steven (Donna) Wagner, Sioux Falls, SD, Kenny (Deb) Wagner, Mitchell, SD; two sisters, Joanne (John) Osnes, Blackhawk, SD, Carol Lynn (Scott) Campbell, Watertown, SD; 20 nieces and nephews, Jennifer, Jessica and Jacquelyn Osnes, all of Blackhawk, SD, Katey and Nicholas Wagner, Sioux Falls, SD, Nicole (John) Gates, Spavinaw, OK, Brent Wagner and his fiancée Angela, Pryor, OK, Matthew and Jenna Wagner, Pryor, OK, Julie Ann, Amanda, Danielle and Kristina Wagner, all of Sioux Falls, SD, Lacey, Pfc. Ryan, Ashley, and Trevor Wagner, all of Mitchell, SD, Carli, Christopher and Emily Campbell, all of Watertown, SD; one grand-niece Jaycee Konechne, Mitchell, SD

He was preceded in death by his father, Charles on June 25, 2002.

Hi little brother,

I know you will never get this, and I know it will come back undeliverable, but just in case; I needed to write to you anyway. I just can't seem to delete your email address. I keep going to my inbox hoping to see an email from you. It's been a week now since we said good-bye to you. It still hurts so much, and I know it will hurt for a long time, but I never dreamt that I would be going through this. I've panicked once already because I was afraid I had forgotten what your voice sounded like. I tried to calm myself by remembering how you would call me "Dizzy" or "Witchy pooh" and that helped because it reminded me of how your eyes would be lost in your cheeks when you smiled at me. I miss telling you to grow up and listen to you stretch the story a little bit more to make it sound even more dramatic. I wish I could hear those stories again. Speaking of which, I wanted so bad to go up at the Wake and tell you and everyone else that you really are NOT adopted and that I was truly proud to be called your sister; but I just couldn't get up there in front of all of those people without crying again. I am very proud to be your sister. You have become my hero and I just wanted to let you know that I love you and thank you for everything that you have given me for the last 35 years. I have so many memories of us horsing around. I really didn't have any memories of my childhood until I went home the day we found out you were killed, and walked through the shelterbelt. All of those days we spent out in the sheep barn cleaning manure out and playing with the cats and their kittens; I can remember going up in the big barn and swinging on the rope and falling down into the big hole where we threw bales down for the cows. We'd have races running from the downstairs of the barn up the steps; through the bale stacks, swinging on the rope and jumping into a big pile of hay.

I remember the Easter we went out to the big barn and there was "Speedy" that damn horse - arnory cuss -- he would only go when he wanted to and I remember us trying to pull him so that he would give us a ride when we wanted one. I wish I could go back 30 years so that we could get off of the bus after school and walk home from the highway - remember when Lassie would meet us and we'd run home -- or doing dishes after supper and fighting about who was going to sing the next song while we were supposed to be cleaning up the kitchen. Shenna Easton never did sing "Morning Train" as good as we did. And then we grew older. I'm sorry that we didn't make it more of a priority to get together on the weekends. Can I have a do - over? Please???

I wish you could have been with us tonight. You should have seen Carli tonight; she did a great job pitching. They didn't win the second game; but they all did very well. She was so excited when she would strike someone out. Christopher starts baseball tomorrow night, he won't be playing tomorrow; but will once his sunburn heals. I'll bet he listens to me next time. O:)

Since I don't see you in person anymore; can you maybe help keep an eye on the kids for me while they're home by themselves this summer? I worry about them being home alone, but I know they are big kids and need to have responsibility. I'm really having a difficult time with Christopher listening to us maybe you could "give him direction, and encouragement to listen". I'd sure appreciate any help you can give me with him. I hate to have to yell all the time at him. I just get so frustrated when I ask him to please do something and he just continues to sit in front of the television. Thanks little brother if you can help.

I'm sorry that I doubted that you were listening to me when I talk with you. I hope that you are happy with dad and everyone but I really do need to tell you that I sure wish you were still here. I know that is selfish and maybe I'm just jealous that you have learned all of life's lessons that God had in mind for you and the rest of us are still here left to cry because we won't be able to feel you give us a hug or hear your voice.

I love you little brother. I am so very proud of you - take care Greenteeth; I love you

Dizzy/Witchy pooh

His unit called him "Pops" but I remember my youngest brother Greg as just a big kid at heart. New Years Eve, St. Patrick's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Notre Dame Football Season, opening weekend of pheasant hunting, Thanksgiving, and Christmas were all made even more special because Greg was always there with his great big infectious smile. That smile and his presence will never be replaced, but seeing the smiles on the faces of the two little girls his unit "adopted" lets us all realize that his smile lives on along with his memory.

Proud brother of a true American hero,

Lenny Wagner