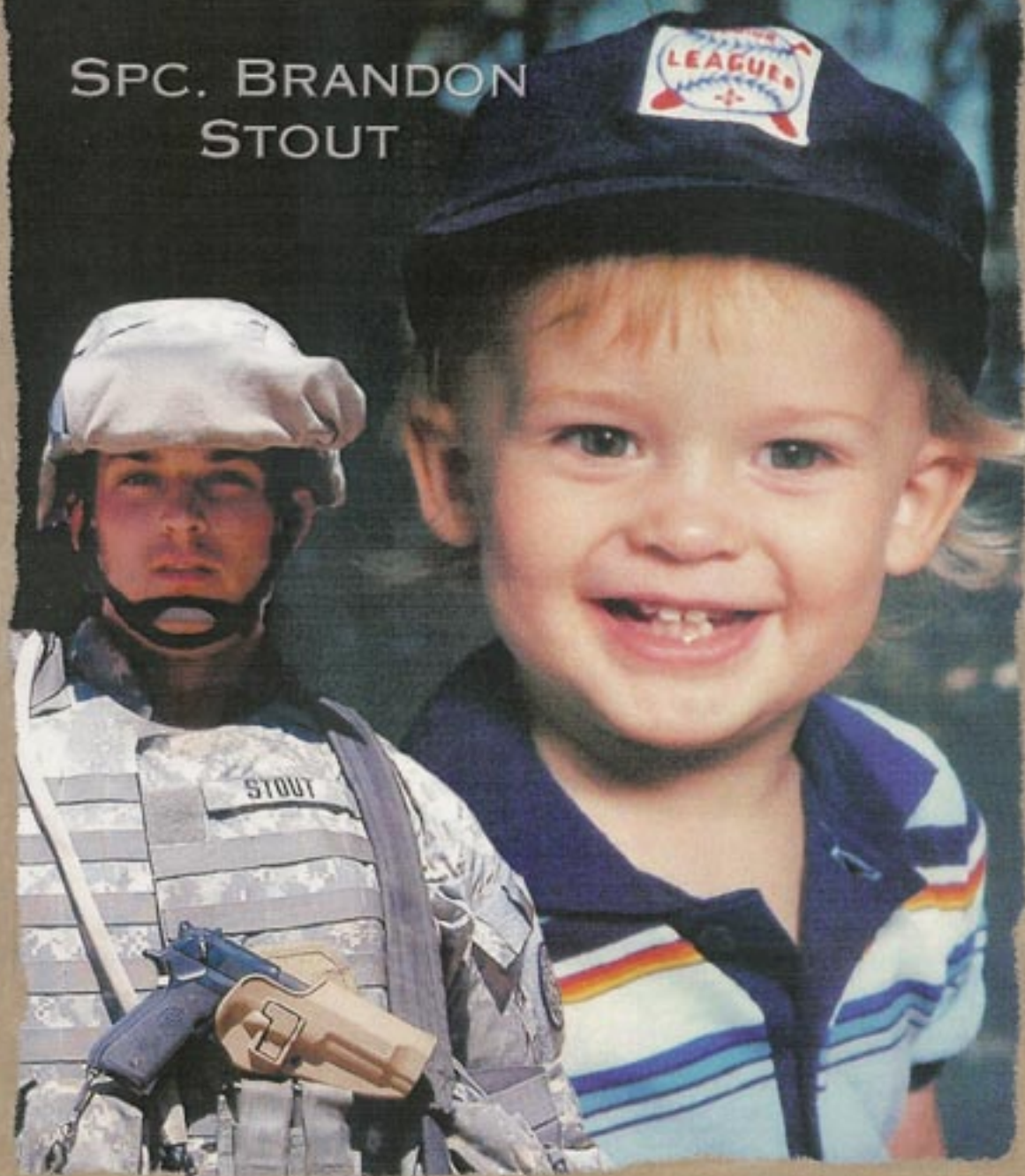


SPC. BRANDON
STOUT



BRANDON'S LIFE STORY



Some of us live long lives adrift in the world, aimlessly searching for their calling, and their purpose. Brandon Stout was a young man who always knew he was a part of God's plan, and devoted his life to serving his Lord. He was so devoted in every part of his life, to his wife, to his family, and especially to his country. There are many things about this world we can't understand, yet this much we do: Brandon was a gift to us all.

Brandon's story began on a cold December day in 1983, in the bustling city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Those were simpler times in so many ways, as the Cold War slowly began to thaw, giving us a sense of hope. On December 7, 1983, Bill and Tracy (Vronko) Stout had their own reasons for hope, with the birth of their first child, a baby son they named Brandon.



Brandon's little brother Adam came along two years later, and the two would always share a special bond. His parents eventually divorced, and each remarried, bringing six more siblings into Brandon's life.

Brandon grew up in Northern Kent County, spending most of his schooling years in Kent City. He spent his childhood running through the apple orchards out back and spent countless hours fishing in their creek where he formed his deep love for the outdoors, enjoying all God's creation. He also grew up with a



powerful love of the Lord, which became his light during the dark times. While in high school, he became very active in his church's youth program, becoming a student leader. His crazy and fun personality not only created a special bond with the leader, but with many of the younger kids as well.

Brandon attended Kent City High School, where he graduated from in 2002, and where he was so popular and active. He very much specialized in socializing in high school, making many friends and keeping everyone well entertained with his antics. An avid golfer, he played on the golf team, and also sang in the choir. A huge history and government buff, he also anchored the Quiz Bowl team that won a state title. Always a very quick-witted young man, he was also the class clown, enjoyed dressing as the school mascot (an Eagle) and was voted Prom King, too!

After high school, Brandon attended Great Lakes Christian College in Lansing, following his faith. Just like in high school, Brandon didn't see the point in many of his classes there. He had a voracious appetite for subjects that interested him, but he was a finicky "eater"! After a year there, he realized he needed to make some decisions in life before continuing his education.

Brandon might not have found his calling at college, but he did find his true love. One day he met a beautiful young woman named Audrey Hinken, a fellow freshman at the small school. With a little prodding from their friends, Brandon finally asked Audrey for a date on her 18th birthday. That first date consisted of Brandon 's friends serenading her while they enjoyed some Slurpee's. (They were poor college kids, remember.) That's all it took for the two of them. They





began dating, fell in love, and got engaged on New Year's Eve, 2004. The young couple was married on May 20, 2005 and enjoyed a beautiful honeymoon in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, where they went hiking and of course, played some golf, the game he taught her and they enjoyed so much together.

Brandon also accepted Audrey's family as his own, having never liked the term "in-laws." They of course accepted him as their own, too, and were very proud of their new son and brother.

By then, Brandon had found a career, as well. After his first year in college, he joined the Michigan Army National Guard, hoping to serve the Lord as a Chaplain's assistant. He was instead assigned to duty as an MP, yet saw this as God's plan for him to better relate to his peers. After his basic training at Fort Leonardwood, he became even more resolute in his willingness to serve his country, and proud of his duty.

He returned to Michigan with the reserves, and he and Audrey lived in Lansing so she could continue college. He worked some delivery jobs, for a local florist and for FedEx, which he enjoyed for being on the road with his thoughts and his radio. He later worked at the Capital City Airport for the Transportation Safety Authority.

In early 2006, he learned he would be deployed with his unit to the Middle East. He and Audrey moved to Grand Rapids to be closer to their family, awaiting his call to duty. He left July 9, 2006 for more training, and arrived in Kuwait on the first of October, before finally deploying



to Baghdad. There he helped train the Iraqi police force, giving him close contact with so many people who needed his help. Seeing so much misery around him, Brandon began collecting soccer balls from people back home, to give to the needy children of Iraq, just one more display of his enormous heart and powerful faith. Serving in Iraq was his mission, but doing the Lord's work was his calling.

He kept in close contact with his family and Audrey while overseas, through email, and instant messenger. He also wrote of his faith and his fears on his webpage on Myspace.com. "The Lord has taught me many lessons on this deployment, all of which will stay with me until my very end," Brandon wrote. "However, none more important than the lesson of praising Him in life's STORMS - and this is a storm like nothing I have ever seen and one like most people never see ..."

In the darkness of the Iraq war, Brandon used his faith - and humor - as a light for those around him. He was forever optimistic, and loved to make people laugh, and at 6-foot-4, people looked up to him both literally and figuratively. He was the type of man you were just drawn to, by the pull of his personality.

Brandon was a man of such powerful conviction, as well, and never afraid to speak his mind, never afraid of what people might think of him. He believed in himself, in what is right and what is just, and most of all, he believed in the Lord.

Tragically, Brandon was killed serving his country on Monday, January 22, 2007, after his vehicle struck a roadside bomb.

Brandon was an amazing young man, so devout in his faith, so passionate in his love. He was a loyal son and brother, loving husband and faithful friend to so many. He was proud and honored to serve his country, and especially the Lord. Brandon always knew God had a plan for him. We were so blessed to be a part of it. He will be so greatly missed.



Surviving are his wife, Audrey Stout; his parents Tracy and Jeff Anderson, Bill and Tammy Stout; Gary and Laurie Hinken; his siblings: Adam Stout, Andrew, Elizabeth, Stephanie and Kristina Anderson, Callie and David McGee (Devin), Stephanie Stout; his wife's siblings Lisa and Dusty VanderMeer (Natalie), Marianne and Lindsey Hinken; along with his grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends. The service to celebrate his life will be held on Monday, February 5 at 1 PM at Remembrance Reformed Church, 4575 Remembrance Road, with interment to follow in Chubbuck Cemetery in Kent City. Relatives and friends are invited to meet with Brandon's family at Heritage Life Story Funeral Home - Alt & Shawmut Hills Chapel, 2120 Lake Michigan Drive NW on Saturday and Sunday from 4-8 PM. For those who wish to make a memorial contribution, a Scholarship Fund in Brandon's name is being established at Great Lakes Christian College in Lansing, Michigan. To read more about Brandon's life, to share a favorite memory or photo or to sign the online register, please visit www.lifestorynet.com



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