



Lance Corporal Phillip David Vinnedge, USMC

Operation Enduring Freedom 2009-2010

LCpl Phillip David Vinnedge died the way he lived - serving others. Phillip was born February 22, 1991 in Spokane, Washington. In 1996, Phillip and his family moved from Spokane, Washington to St. Charles, Missouri. Phillip graduated from Francis Howell Central High School and also attended Lewis and Clark Technical School where he was named student of the year in the school's welding program. He was a wrestler, a Boy Scout, a skydiver, a competitive trap shooter and a welder. Above all, he was a compassionate person who wanted to serve others. Be it organizing a benefit at age 14 for the victims of hurricane Katrina or just offering a shoulder to a friend having a bad day, that is Phillip's legacy.

On September 11, 2001, Phillip was 10 years old. That is when he told his parents he was going to join the military to protect his family and country. At age 18, in September of 2009, Phillip's dream was fulfilled when he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He wanted the toughest job they had...infantry. Phillip was assigned to an infantry unit; 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, where he was trained as an Anti-Tank Missileman, better known as a "TOW Gunner".

In September of 2010, Phillip's battalion was deployed to Sangin, Afghanistan for Phillip's first deployment. Two weeks later, on October 13th, 2010 Phillip was driving the lead vehicle, a MATV, on a security patrol. Also in the vehicle were Cpl Justin Cain, LCpl Victor Dew, and LCpl Joe Rodewald. While crossing the Sangin Wadi (dry riverbed) a large IED was remotely detonated, killing all 4 instantly.

Phillip's military awards include the Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Navy Sea Service Ribbon and NATO Medal.

For years, Phillip talked of getting a classic Chevy truck. Prior to his deployment to Afghanistan, he vowed when he returned home he would find and restore one. Phillip was not able to fulfill his dream. However, in the days following his passing, the decision was made to make his dream come true by restoring a Chevy pickup in his honor.

A 1951 Chevrolet 3100 was painstakingly restored and after 350 hours of airbrushed artwork, it became a true memorial. The project was named "Fallen Hero's Dream Ride". Fallen Hero's Dream Ride not only honors Phillip, but also the other 24 Marines that were killed during the 3/5's seven-month deployment. It is used to raise awareness of the sacrifices made by our military service members.

