



Hurlburt school adds name to its memorial

[Mona Moore](#)

2010-05-26 20:01:23

HURLBURT FIELD — Paula Smith has been to countless memorial ceremonies since her son, Senior Airman Bradley Smith, died last January.

“Each one is like ripping open a wound,” said Smith, who traveled from Illinois to be at the Tactical Air Control Party memorial dedication Wednesday morning. “But I wouldn’t have missed them for the world.”

Wearing a locket containing a photo of her son and labeled “baby boy,” Smith fought back tears as she talked about the tight-knit family of tactical air controllers and referred to all of them as her sons.

One “son,” who was injured in the Operation Enduring Freedom incident that took Bradley Smith’s life, eulogized Smith at the ceremony.

Senior Airman Mike Malarsie met Smith in 342nd training Squadron Tactical Air Control Party school at Hurlburt.

The school is the starting point for all tactical air controllers in the Air Force. The airmen go on to advise Army and Special Operations units in battle and coordinate air attacks.

Malarsie said Smith would spend his lunch hour training and doing pull-ups in the hot sun. When asked why he was training so hard, Smith said he had two reasons: wife, Tiffany, and daughter, Chloe. Both attended the dedication.

“He was always a family man. He always wanted to be an example for his daughter, Chloe,” Malarsie said.

Malarsie lost his sight in the Jan. 3 ambush that killed four people. When an improvised explosive device injured Malarsie and several others, Smith volunteered to pull out the injured people while still under attack. A second explosive device then detonated, killing Smith and three Army soldiers.

Malarsie had not been back to Hurlburt since graduating from the 342nd training Squadron TACP school. He was pleased with the year-old memorial erected between two school buildings.

The memorial now lists three graduates of the program killed in action. Staff Sgt. Jacob Frazier and Airman 1st Class Raymond Losano were added last year. Smith’s is the only new name.

Malarsie called the memorial an awesome tribute.

“It’s sad that they need it, but it’s great that they’re doing it. It was an honor to be here,” Malarsie said.