

Todd A. Kraft

★ Memorial Scholarship ★

1964-1983

“... gave his life in order that we may have peace and freedom in these United States.”

Todd Anthony Kraft was born March 13, 1964, to Ray and Christine Kraft of Devils Lake, North Dakota, the fourth of five sons. He completed his elementary education at St. Joseph's Grade School and grades seven through nine at St. Mary's High School. After a fire closed St. Mary's, he attended Devils Lake Central High School and graduated in May of 1982. Todd served as an altar boy at St. Joseph's Catholic Church for many years. While working at two jobs—at the 2 Spot Café and the Wiseman Standard Service Station—Todd participated in many projects and high school sports, especially enjoying skiing and high school ROTC. After graduating from high school, he chose to join the United States Marine Corps.

Todd left Devils Lake on July 8, 1982, for Camp Pendleton near San Diego, California, for his basic training. He came home to Devils Lake for Christmas in 1982 and then left for Camp Le Jeune, North Carolina, where he served until October 1983 when the U.S. Marines were the peace-keepers in Beirut, Lebanon. Todd and his fellow Marines left Norfolk, Virginia, aboard the *USS Manitowoc* but were diverted for a short time to Grenada where Todd participated in the action that resulted in the rescue of American citizens from the island and the restoration of democracy there. The *Manitowoc* then proceeded to Beirut.

These Marines were there for two weeks and two days when, on December 4, 1983, a mortar scored a direct hit on the sandbag bunker at the Beirut airport where Lance Corporal Todd A. Kraft and seven other

Marines lost their lives in action while serving the United States.

At the Mass of Resurrection celebrated for Todd, Fr. Gerald Busher proclaimed, *“That young man faced cruelty to mankind in hatred of war. He was determined to give his life that we might have freedom. Todd, rest in peace. Once a Marine, always a Marine, even in eternity.”* The mayor of Devils Lake, Dennis Riggan, in proclaiming the flying of flags at half-staff on December 12, 1983, said *“Lance Corporal Todd Kraft has inspired the citizens of this community by his brave and valiant sentiments conveyed by a public letter. It is altogether fitting and proper that the citizenry of Devils Lake honor the memory of the gallant son of our city.”*

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of Devils Lake raised a sum in excess of five thousand dollars to fund a scholarship in memory of Todd Kraft, *“who gave his life in order that we may have peace and freedom in these United States.”*

Todd is survived by his parents, Ray and Christine Kraft; his older brothers Terry, Steven, and Randy; and his younger brother, Danny.

In a letter Todd wrote to his family, to be delivered in the event of his death, he said, *“I want you all to be happy. I don't want sorrow or grief ... I know it's hard to sacrifice a little, but believe me, it sure makes you feel a lot better. It is said, ‘Those who give shall receive.’”* In this spirit, the Todd Kraft Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually based on financial need, with preference given to persons who have been honorably discharged from service in the Armed Forces of the United States. ★

