



**18th Engineer Brigade
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PRESS RELEASE

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Engineers pay final respects to fallen 54th Eng. Bn. heroes

Story by Spc. Aislinn Amig, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs

BAMBERG, Germany – Soldiers, civilians and family members packed the Bamberg Community Chapel on Warner Barracks here March 30 to bid farewell to two fallen Soldiers from 541st Engineer Company, 54th Engineer Battalion.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Gire, 28, of Chillicothe, Ohio, and Pfc. Michael C. Mahr, 26, of Homosassa, Fla., died March 22 in Afghanistan's Logar Province of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked their unit with an improvised explosive device, rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire.

Capt. Michael Frazier, the 54th Eng. Bn. rear detachment commander, read the remarks of the 541st Eng. Co. commander, Capt. Brandon Drobenak, given March 26 from Forward Operating Base Shank in Afghanistan.

“No words can describe the pain that we feel. There is nothing that I can say to make this easier. Some things can't be explained. That's what faith is, not always being able to understand or know why things happen,” stated Drobenak in his remarks letter. “Ultimately, God has a plan. Staff Sgt. Joshua Gire and Pfc. Michael Mahr are exceptional Soldiers who will be greatly missed.”

Soldiers who worked alongside Gire and Mahr expressed their condolences and shared with others the true character of each man.

Sgt. Antonio Bradshaw read from a letter written by Capt. Nassar Jabour.

“For me, and I'm sure for many others, (Gire) was my rock, my courage, my heart. As a young platoon leader in Afghanistan who thought he knew everything, I had two squad leaders and a platoon sergeant who really did,” Jabour wrote in his letter. “Just knowing he was there made me stronger. His courage was contagious. I never wanted to let him down.”

In a letter read by Spc. Kelly Rice, Pfc. Tyrell Wothe talked about his friend, Mahr.

“He always saw every job through till the end. Every time we had a mechanical problem with one of (our vehicles), Mahr would always be the first one down to maintenance and the last one to leave,” stated Wothe in his letter. “He always worried more about us than he ever did himself.”

“The families of these Soldiers will always be in our thoughts and prayers. They must know that their loss is not in vain,” stated Drobenak. “We will honor their sacrifice by always doing our very best and completing our mission. We must take this very sad event and bond together in order to defeat the enemy. This is what they deserve and what they would expect from each of us.”

Gire is survived by his wife Jacqueline, his son Nicholas, and daughter Riley.

Mahr is survived by his wife Stephanie, and their son Jaden.



Sgt. Antonio Bradshaw, a team leader with the 54th Engineer Battalion, remembers Staff Sgt. Joshua Gire and Pfc. Michael Mahr during their memorial ceremony March 30 at the Bamberg Community Chapel on Warner Barracks in Bamberg, Germany. Gire and Mahr died of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked their unit in Afghanistan's Logar Province March 22. (Photo by Spc. Aislinn Amig, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs)



Sgt. Antonio Bradshaw, a team leader, and Spc. Kelly Rice, a combat engineer, both with the 54th Engineer Battalion, render a final salute to Staff Sgt. Joshua Gire and Pfc. Michael Mahr during their memorial ceremony March 30 at the Bamberg Community Chapel on Warner Barracks in Bamberg, Germany. (Photo by Spc. Aislinn Amig, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs)



Col. Paul Paolozzi and Command Sgt. Maj. David Clark, the 18th Engineer Brigade command team, pay final respects by placing brigade coins in remembrance of Staff Sgt. Joshua Gire and Pfc. Michael Mahr during their memorial ceremony March 30 at the Bamberg Community Chapel on Warner Barracks in Bamberg, Germany. (Photo by Spc. Aislinn Amig, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs)