



LISA LOCKHART IS RUNNING FOR ARMY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 5 SHARON T. SWARTWORTH

Died November 7, 2003 Serving During Operation Iraqi Freedom 43, of Warwick, R.I.; assigned to the Judge Advocate General's Office, Headquarters Department of the Army, Pentagon; killed in action when a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter was shot down Nov. 7 in Tikrit, Iraq.

CW5 Sharon T. Swartworth was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1959 and grew up in Warwick, Rhode Island. Sharon graduated from high school in Warwick, R.I., and rose through the ranks to become warrant officer of the Judge Advocate General's Corps, which runs the military justice system. She enlisted in the Army in 1977 immediately after high school and completed Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Georgia.



In 1981, Chief Swartworth completed the Legal Specialist Course. Sharon attained the rank of Sergeant First Class and was selected to become a Legal Administrator in the Judge Advocate General's Corps in 1985. In June 1999, Chief Swartworth was selected as the Warrant Officer of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. On July 21st in the same year, she assumed that position, serving as the primary advisor to the Judge Advocate General (JAG) of the Army in all matters concerning Legal Administrators in the United States Army. Swartworth, who was adept with computers, also was director of operations for legal technology for the JAG Corps.

Old neighbors recall Sharon as focused and maintained a close-knit community, organizing progressive dinners for her cul-de-sac, parties on her deck, and Christmas ornament and cookie exchanges. "She was a very generous person with her time and with her home," said a friend and neighbor. Another close associate recalled that Sharon was thrilled by the birth of her son and often walked around the neighborhood with him.



Her height, given as 5 feet 2, was deceiving, says a friend who describes Swartworth as both “pretty and pretty tough,” and a “positive, outgoing woman who was sweet and soft-spoken and smart and strong.” Athletic and an avid runner, she participated in road races, and it appeared that she “knew everybody at the Pentagon,” a work colleague said. Although the family had moved to Hawaii, Swartworth kept an apartment in Alexandria so that she could continue working at the Pentagon.

“She really loved the Army,” a fellow Army soldier said, taking to it, according to her father, like a “duck in water.” The Army gave her opportunities for travel and advancement. She had parachuted from airplanes and was a good sharpshooter and “a dedicated soldier,” her father said.

Swartworth told friends and family that she felt she had narrowly escaped the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon. She had moved her office shortly before and the incoming plane hit her old office directly. “She told me the nose of the plane was in her office,” Mayo said. Afterward, she helped the families of those killed that day, said a neighbor at the time. “That hit her very hard,” she said. “All of us in the neighborhood spent a lot of time listening to her and helping her through that.”

Sharon visited Rhode Island prior to traveling on her final trip to Iraq. She told her family that if anything happened to her in Iraq, she wanted to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. “As she was walking out the door,” her father said, “she turned to her brother and said, ‘If I don’t make it back, you’ll have a nice service to go to at Arlington.’”

CW5 Swartworth, the JAG Corps’ top warrant officer, was going on the trip to boost the morale of the soldiers responsible for administering military justice when her helicopter was struck by unknown enemy ordnance in Tikrit, Iraq. The day after the crash, would have been the 44th birthday for Swartworth. She is survived by her father (who lives in Litchfield, Maine), her husband (a Navy Veteran), and her son. She is the first and only judge advocate legal administrator to die in combat and, as the recipient of a posthumous Distinguished Service Medal, is the most highly decorated warrant officer in JAG Corps history.

