



## **TAMMY FISCHER IS RUNNING FOR ARMY SGT. MAJ. BARBARALIEN BANKS**

Army Sgt. Maj. Barbaralien Banks Died April 6, 2005 Serving During Operation Enduring Freedom

Mother mourns daughter killed in Afghanistan chopper crash  
Associated Press

HARVEY, La. — The last time Sylvia Clofer spoke with her oldest daughter, Army Sgt. Maj. Barbaralien Banks, Banks was getting ready to board a transport helicopter for a flight across Afghanistan.

The next morning an Army chaplain and two officers were at Clofer's home. Clofer braced for bad news. She knew it would be about Banks, 41, or another daughter, Sgt. 1st Class Cassandra Jeanpierre, who was serving with the New Orleans-based 377th Theater Support Command in Kuwait.

"I knew something happened to one of them," Clofer said.

The CH-47 Chinook transport helicopter Banks boarded had crashed, killing 18 military and civilians in the largest single loss of U.S. life in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

The Defense Department on Monday publicly acknowledged that Banks was on the flight, the day after the agency told Clofer that DNA tests done at Dover Air Force Base, Del., confirmed her daughter was among the dead.

Banks, who joined the Army 17 years ago, was the mother of two grown children and a grandmother of three.

She was born in New Orleans, moved to Alabama to live with a grandmother and returned when she was 13, Clofer said. She graduated from Alfred Lawless High School.

Banks enlisted after she moved to Harvey, Clofer said.

Clofer managed to smile Monday evening as she thought about the highlights of her oldest daughter's military career, such as the day she pinned a medal on Bank's chest after she was promoted to sergeant first class.





“When she was stationed in California, she wanted me to pin the medal on her,” Clofer said, recalling the ceremony. “She gave a speech to her soldiers. They were crazy about her. She was very dedicated.”

Banks was stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, since May 2003 and was a senior food management supervisor assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, according to the Army. Another Schofield-based soldier, Master Sgt. Edwin A. Matos-Colon, 42, of Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico, also died in the crash.

Jeanpierre, an Army reservist who has been in Kuwait for a little over a year and has had her tour extended another year, will return home soon to help bury her big sister, Clofer said.

She said she hopes Jeanpierre does not have to return to the Middle East.

“I couldn’t take losing another,” Clofer said.

