



## KYLIE WEAST IS RUNNING FOR ARMY SPC. SARINA N. BUTCHER

19, of Checotah, Okla.; assigned to 700th Brigade Support Battalion, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma National Guard, Tulsa, Okla.; died Nov. 1, in Laja Ahmad Khel, Paktya province, Afghanistan, of wounds caused by an improvised explosive device. Also killed was Army Spc. Christopher D. Gailey.

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2 Oklahoma soldiers killed in Afghanistan

The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — A female soldier and a fellow Oklahoma National Guard member have been killed in combat in Afghanistan.

The Department of Defense announced Wednesday that 19-year-old Pfc. Sarina Butcher of Checotah and 26-year-old Spc. Christopher Gailey of Ochelata died Tuesday when their vehicle was attacked with an improvised explosive device in Paktya province.

The Oklahoma National Guard says Butcher is the first female Oklahoma National Guard soldier to be killed during wartime and also is the youngest Guard member to die in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. She joined the National Guard in April 2010.

Gailey enlisted in the National Guard in 2004 and was previously deployed to Iraq in 2007.

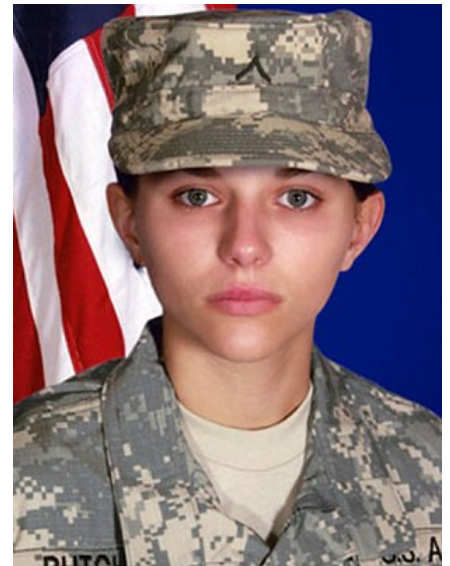
Both were assigned to the Tulsa-based 700th Brigade Support Battalion, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

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Fallen soldier followed grandfather, brother into military service

The Associated Press

PRESCOTT, Ark. — An Oklahoma Army National Guard soldier killed in Afghanistan earlier this month was a fun-loving daughter, sister and mother, as well as a passionate fighter who died defending the country she loved, family members and friends said Friday.





Hundreds gathered at Brazzel-Cornish Funeral Home to remember Spc. Sarina Butcher, a Crosssett, Ark., native who grew up in Checotah, Okla., the Tulsa World reported.

Butcher, 19, was killed in Afghanistan's Paktia Province on Nov. 1 when the vehicle in which she was riding was hit by a roadside bomb. She was the first female Oklahoma National Guard soldier to be killed during wartime and also was the youngest Guard member to die in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

"She was fun-loving," Butcher's grandfather, Clayton Mills, said during the funeral. "She would make a joke out of anything to get people to laugh."

Butcher came from a military family, following in "her grandfather's and brother's footsteps," the Rev. Rayford Mills, Butcher's great-uncle, said.

Rayford Mills recalled that when Butcher was a child, she saw him and his wife planting flowers in the garden outside. She asked if she could help, he said.

"She planted those flowers just as carefully as she could," he said. "And she served her country as long as she could, as bravely as she could."

Clayton Mills said that was just the kind of person she was.

"She was barely 5-foot-2, and her heart was bigger than she was," he said.

Rep. Mike Ross said she will be remembered for more than being so young when she died.

"She will be remembered for being an outstanding soldier," Ross, D-Ark., said.





On the way to the gravesite in McCaskill, several people could be seen standing along the route, holding signs thanking Butcher for her service.

At the cemetery, a 21-gun salute rang out, and folded flags were given to her family members.

Butcher is survived by her mother, Dana Bailey and stepfather, Howard, of El Dorado; her father, James Mills and stepmother, Cheryl, of Checotah, Okla.; her daughter, Zoey Butcher, of El Dorado; grandparents, Clayton and Martha Mills, of Checotah and Betty Terrell, of Hope, Ark.; and her brother, Anthony "Tony" Mills, of Ely, Nev.

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USO center to bear name of fallen Okla. soldier  
The Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — A new United Service Organizations center in Afghanistan will bear the name of an Oklahoma National Guard member who died there last year.

The center opened at Bagram Air Base over the weekend is being named after Spc. Sarina Butcher, the first female Oklahoma National Guard member to be killed in combat.



*Sarina Butcher with her daughter, Zoey, and former husband, Timmy Butcher*

The 8,500-square-foot USO facility will provide a theater, telephones, Internet access, a library and other amenities to soldiers who are stationed there or are passing through.

The 19-year-old Butcher died Nov. 1 when the vehicle in which she was riding was hit by a roadside bomb. Butcher, a single mother, served with Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Butcher was born in Crossett, Ark., but lived in Checotah.

She is buried near Hope, Ark.

