



Andy OLSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 15

February 6, 2018

Representative Jennifer Williamson
Chair of the House Committee on Rules
Salem, OR 97301



Chair Williamson and Committee Members,

Re: HCR 202...1st Lieutenant Frederick “Fred” Pokorney, Jr.

This is truly an honor to bring this measure before you. First Lieutenant Pokorney started his career as an enlisted man. He ended it as an officer. At 6-foot-6, he played center on a Tonopah, Nevada, High School basketball team that was runner-up for the state championship in 1989. “He was a nice looking, tall, muscular kid,” said Joann Cody, assistant sheriff in Nye County.

Frederick E. Pokorney, Jr., was born in Oakland, California, on August 20, 1971. “His mother left when he was one”, said his father, Fred Pokorney Sr., who lives in Branson, Mo. The elder Pokorney had not spoken to his son in more than five years. “It’s sad, but I don’t know much about his life,” his father said. “He had his own life and didn’t want to have much to do with me.”

Fred moved to Nevada with his father, a construction worker, for temporary employment at a missile test range near Tonopah. After his father left, his son stayed in Tonopah, living with the Nye County sheriff and his basketball coach. “He was my son,” former sheriff Wade Lieseke said.

From there, Pokorney Jr. made his own way in life. People who knew him say he was a very good person — independent, polite, and friendly. “He was a good student, very diligent,” said Art Johnson, who taught him auto mechanics for two years. He received a football scholarship at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. An ankle injury ended his football career and led him to find his passion...with the United States Marine Corps.

In 1993, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and finished at the top of his boot camp class. While he was stationed at the Naval Submarine Base Bangor - Silverdale, Washington he met Rochelle...better known as Chelle. She was a nurse in the local community. He and Chelle would marry in 1996.



Chele encouraged him to apply to the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP), which provides a pathway for outstanding Marine Corps enlisted personnel to become commissioned officers. In 1997, that brought them to Oregon State University in the ROTC program. He majored in anthropology and graduated in 2001. He would receive his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant.

Their daughter, Taylor would be born at the Corvallis Good Samaritan Hospital. Upon graduating from OSU, 2nd Lt. Pokorney, 31, Chele and Taylor moved to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. There...they purchased a home. A former neighbor Dave Sodeman of Salem shared, "He was a wonderful dad and husband. He'd do just anything for you."

In 2003, he was deployed to Iraq with the 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, serving as an artillery forward observer.

On March 23, 2003, in the vicinity of An Nasiriyah, Iraq, 2nd Lieutenant Pokorney's unit was ambushed, but despite heavy and sustained enemy fire, he showed great courage in expertly directing and coordinating artillery fire from his exposed position before being mortally wounded. He died two years to the day after he was commissioned. He was awarded a posthumous Silver Star for his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy" and his display of "courage under fire during the engagement through rapid decision-making and confident actions." He was promoted to 1st Lieutenant posthumously. Marines who survived the attack testified to his bravery, skill and selfless sacrifice, which saved the lives of many of his fellow Marines, including Ben Williams, whom he personally rescued while under harrowing enemy fire.



Chelle Pokorney touches her husband's casket as daughter Taylor, 2, holds the flag during Lieutenant Frederick Pokorney, Jr.'s funeral Monday, April 14, 2003 at Arlington National Cemetery

First Lieutenant Pokorney was the first Marine to be killed in Iraq. In accordance with his wishes, he was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on April 14, 2003.

I urge your support of this measure.

Sincerely,



Andy Olson