

On July 5, 2003, we lost our friend Wayne Blackburn. He would have walked with us across the stage this May to receive his diploma, to share the joy of accomplishment and the excitement of beginning a new phase of our lives. This was not to be. God had another plan. He claimed Wayne as his own, and we are left with our cherished memories. Wayne will always be a part of our lives, a treasured thread in the fabric of our experience at Camden Military Academy.

Since last July we have all had time to ponder and to share our thoughts about Wayne. He was a young man who left a lasting impression upon nearly everyone he met.

Wayne was a loyal friend and brother. He kept his word when he gave it, and he was a staunch ally in defense of those he loved. He was also a mentor to younger cadets and sought to guide them on the right path.

Wayne had a quick smile and a ready wit that invariably cheered those around him. Many enjoyed his easy humor and the pleasure of his company. His pleasant and persuasive manner contributed strongly to his ability to lead.

Wayne was a born leader. He was a free spirit with a passionate heart, a magnet for followers. As a junior he was a first sergeant and a second lieutenant and would have returned this year as Captain Wayne K. Blackburn, Commanding Officer of Band and Staff Company.

As we go forward from this year and this place, we will often return in mind and heart. We will remember the good friend with the bright smile and the flash in his eyes, the bugler of our sophomore year, the first sergeant and lieutenant of our junior year, the one from whom taking orders was more of a pleasure than a duty. We will always remember Wayne Blackburn.

Goodbye

I remember that lonely July day
my heart started to cry
as I heard taps play

We held our salutes high
just as soldiers do
before their final goodbye

I could remember all the times together
the fun and the memories shared
in my mind will last forever

There is so much I might say
of all the love and friendship
but for now you have gone away

I am left with memories and love
in my heart and soul
and thoughts of you above

And I remember this is not the end
It's just a little wait
until we meet again

-Joshua Bumgarner

The words and thoughts in this memorial were contributed by the members of Band and Staff Company of the Camden Military Academy Cadet Corps and the Class of 2004. All extend their deepest sympathy to Wayne's family and friends and through their prayers invoke the blessings, sustenance, and healing hand of God.

"The Lord watches over you--
the Lord is the shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all harm--
he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming
and going, both now and forevermore."

-Psalm 121