

Maryland family mourns contractor killed in Iraq

Ryan Young, 32, had military career that included 8 years as Navy SEAL

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 9, 2005, 8:40 AM EDT



HALFWAY, MD -- Ryan Brandt Young, a Halfway native working as a contractor performing diplomatic security in southern Iraq, was killed along with three other contractors Wednesday when a bomb destroyed an armored vehicle in which he was riding.

Young, 32, graduated from Williamsport High School in 1990 and served in the U.S. Navy for more than 13 years, including stints as a Navy SEAL and Navy SEAL instructor, said his father, Greg Young.

Ryan Young -- who most recently lived in San Diego -- was in Iraq as a security contractor for Triple Canopy and was working with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

He was riding in the lead vehicle of a motorcade escorting someone from an airport to the U.S. Embassy in Basra when the bomb went off, said his mother, Pam Young.

Three other Triple Canopy contractors -- Ronald Hyatt of Calera, Ala., Robert McCoy of Refugio, Texas and Robert Pole of Miller Place, N.Y. -- were killed in the explosion.

Al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement posted on a Web site known as a clearinghouse of militant claims.

"We were told it was a devastating blast, that it was instant," Greg Young told *The Hagerstown Herald-Mail*.

Pam Young said when she last spoke to her son, about 10 days ago, "he was very happy, very up, but he usually was. He wasn't a person who was down."

The Youngs said their son had been in harm's way so many times that they tried not to think about the possibility that he would be killed.

He received a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for putting out a fire aboard the *USS John F. Kennedy*.

"Everyone else ran away from it and he ran toward it," Greg Young said.

He said his son once told him: "Dad, if anything should ever happen to me, I want you to know I enjoy what I'm doing. I'm doing what I want to do."

Ryan Young served as a Navy SEAL for eight years, the last three as a combat diving instructor. It was his childhood dream to join the SEALs, his parents said.

"He was a professional," said Wil Fisher, 32, who joined the Navy at the same time as Young. "He's done this for most of his adult life. It takes a unique individual to do that, to keep yourself in harm's way even after getting out of the military. ... I'm proud to say he's my friend."

Young spent his entire childhood in Washington County, attending Lincolnshire Elementary School, Springfield Middle School and Williamsport High. He played high school soccer and also played baseball and football growing up.

As an adult, Young competed in marathons and enjoyed surfing, mountain climbing and snowboarding. He graced the cover of the 2004 Men of the Navy SEALs calendar and worked occasionally as a model in California, once appearing in a commercial with former Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, his mother said.

Young recently earned a bachelor's degree in business management from National University in San Diego. Greg Young said he asked his son if he would ever use his degree, and he responded, "Dad, I just can't see myself cooped up in an office."