



## ***Biographical Sketch***

### **U.S ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

*PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE, FORT BRAGG, NC 28310 910-432-6005*

## **Staff Sergeant Gene Arden Vance, Jr. Operation Enduring Freedom**

Staff Sgt. Gene Vance, 38, was a cryptologic linguist assigned to Support Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 19<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) with the West Virginia National Guard. He was killed in action May 19 during Operation Enduring Freedom when his unit came under intense fire while on patrol in eastern Afghanistan.

Gene was born on Nov. 30, 1963, in Frankfort, Germany. He was a 1981 graduate of Oceana High School in Wyoming County, West Virginia.

Gene attended Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Ga., for Communications Systems Circuit Controller in 1983. In 1988, he completed the Primary Leadership Development Course at Fort Ord, Ca. He served in various active-duty assignments both in the United States and overseas from June 1983 until June 1990.

He joined the Army Reserve as a supply specialist in the 646<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company, Kingwood, W.Va., from January 1992 until October 1992. During this period, he completed the Petroleum Supply Specialist Course.

He then joined Company C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 19<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne), in October 1992. In 1994, he transferred to Support Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 19<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne). He was later awarded the military occupational skill of voice interceptor in 2001.

Gene's military education included the Communication System Circuit Course, the Primary Leadership Development Course, the Petroleum Supply Specialist Course, the Basic Airborne Course, the Special Forces Command Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Advanced International Morse Code and the Persian-Farsi Language Course.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star for valor, the Purple Heart, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal (2<sup>nd</sup> Award), the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Parachutist Badge, the



West Virginia Distinguished Service Medal, the West Virginia State Service Ribbon, and the West Virginia Distinguished Unit Award.

After his death, Gene was awarded a bachelor of arts degree from West Virginia University, where he had taken classes before his deployment to Afghanistan.

He was also posthumously promoted to staff sergeant.

National Guard historians believe that Gene was the first Guardsman killed in direct combat since a New Hampshire National Guard soldier was killed in Vietnam in 1969.

Gene is survived by his wife, Lisa Selmon Vance, his daughter Amber, and his mother, June Carrol Steele.