

## Severna Park soldier remembered for commitment, sacrifice



(Arianne Starnes-Teeple/For The Examiner)  
Family and friends help carry Marine Lance Cpl. Eric Herzberg who died last week in Iraq, to the hearse after the funeral service at St. Bernadette Parish in Severna Park, MD on Monday October 30, 2006.

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**SEVERNA PARK, Md.** - The steady march of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" broke the hush in the neighborhood around St. Bernadette's Church on Monday as mourners concluded the funeral services for Marine Lance Cpl. Eric Herzberg.

A guard of 10 Marines in dress uniform lined the short sidewalk from the doorway of the church to the waiting hearse, and saluted as the flag-draped casket was carried past.

Herzberg's parents, sister and brother grabbed onto each other for support as his casket was loaded into the vehicle.

Herzberg, 20, was a graduate of Severna Park High School. A well-known and well-liked athlete who played rugby and football, he was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division based in Camp Lejeune, N.C. Herzberg had been deployed in Iraq since July. He was killed Oct. 21 while on patrol in the Anbar province.

"He was like a brother to us, and we're all like family," said one of the pallbearers, who declined to give his name, and asked only to be identified as a "friend of Eric's."

Most in the group of seven young men went to high school with Herzberg and played sports with him. Two of them were also enrolled in military officer training programs. Once the casket was placed in the hearse, the friends huddled together in the middle of the crowd of friends and family leaving the church and "said a prayer in his memory." As they shared their memories, the pallbearers all put their hands on each other's shoulders in solidarity.

Herzberg was the second Severna Park native to die in Iraq in the last month.

During October, 101 Americans have died in Iraq, making it the fourth deadliest month of the war.

Herzberg will be buried today at Arlington National Cemetery.

Last week, Herzberg's family described him as someone who loved the outdoors, and who was deeply committed to his Roman Catholic faith. Friends and family said Herzberg felt he had found his calling in the U.S. Marine Corps.

"He was strong and he was hardheaded," his friends said Monday. "We're not going to forget him as long as one of us is alive."

As family and friends paid their respects, about two dozen members of the Patriot Guard Riders lined the church driveway with U.S. flags. Richard Beckwell, senior ride captain for Maryland, said the group was invited by Herzberg's family to be there for the funeral.

"It's an honor for me because this young man made the ultimate sacrifice for you to hold that pen, and for me to be here," Beckwell said. "It makes us better citizens."

Protestors from the Westboro Baptist Church in Westminster had announced they would protest at the funeral but did not show up.

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