

Governor Mike Pence
Vet Bridge Dedication
November 11, 2013
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Thank you Jim Brown, Director of the Indiana Department of Veteran Affairs for that generous introduction.

It is a privilege to join you today to dedicate this bridge on Indiana Highway 46 between Columbus and Nashville in honor of Marine Sergeant Jeremy R. McQueary.

It is with due respect that I dedicate this bridge in his honor and memory.

Originally built in 1964, the 186-foot-long bridge, which will now be officially known as the Sgt. Jeremy R. McQueary U.S.M.C Memorial Bridge, was rehabilitated in 1998.

The bridge carries two lanes of State Road 46 over the North Fork of Salt Creek in Brown County. This three-span bridge is popular for tourists and vacationers alike accessing downtown Nashville from I-65, and carries nearly 11,000 vehicles on an average day.

The Sgt. Jeremy R. McQueary U.S.M.C. Memorial Bridge pays tribute to a man who put on the uniform to defend our nation's freedom and made the ultimate sacrifice. A man who, in his heart, was nothing short of a true servant leader.

Sgt. McQueary of Nashville was only 27 years old when he was killed by an improvised explosive device on February 18, 2010, during a combat offensive in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. He was serving his first tour in Afghanistan, after serving two previous tours in Iraq.

Sgt. McQueary was a motor vehicle operator assigned to 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force.

From an early age, Sgt. McQueary was inclined to join the Marine Corps. He was inspired by his late father, Dallas McQueary, who worked as a Bartholomew County Sheriff's reserve deputy, and motivated by a strong desire to serve. He also comes from a long line of military veterans.

He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps following his early graduation from Columbus East High School in 2002. Sgt. McQueary's courageous service earned him the Purple Heart Medal, a prestigious honor bestowed upon those who have been wounded or killed while serving with the U.S. military. He also received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the National Defense Service Medal,

the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the NATO International Security Assistance Force Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon and the Good Conduct Medal.

But I think Sgt. McQueary's greatest honor was his family—his beloved wife Rae and their son, Hadley. Sgt. McQueary demonstrated what it means to be a true family man. His contributions to this community and nation are invaluable.

And so, for his service, for putting on the uniform, wearing it with pride and serving under circumstances so few can understand, we owe a debt of gratitude to Sgt. McQueary which can never be repaid.

As we gather today on this important holiday, Veterans Day, let us also take time to remember those now serving our nation all over the world—to stand with those who stand for us.

Winton Churchill said, "We sleep soundly in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm."

Stand with those who are ready to do what they need to protect this nation and preserve our freedom, must be in our hearts today.

And we must ever dedicate ourselves to ensuring that this nation provides our military with the resources they need to get the job done and come home safe.

It was Elmer Davis who said, "This nation will remain the land of the free so long as it is the home of the brave."

Let us all reflect on the courage, honor, and loyalty of our armed forces. May we strive to emulate their example everyday in our own lives.

The memory of Sgt. Jeremy R. McQueary shall never perish and will live on in the hearts of many for generations to come.

And so, today it my great honor and privilege to dedicate this bridge to Sgt. Jeremy R. McQueary—a beloved, brave Marine. We remember him for his commitment to ensuring freedom for our nation and his patriotic service and devotion to duty. We thank his family for the sacrifice they have made as well. Sgt. McQueary is truly one of Indiana's finest and a Hoosier Hero.

Thank you and God Bless.