

DC3 Bruckenthal Memorial



On April 24, 2004, DC3 Nathan Bruckenthal and two U.S. Navy Sailors - Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Pernaselli and Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Watts, were killed while boarding a dhow that was approaching the Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) in Iraqi Waters.

The service members were part of a seven-man visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team from USS Firebolt (PC-10), a 174-foot Cyclone class coastal patrol boat conducting missions in the Northern Arabian Gulf in support of OIF. Other members of the team, three Navy Sailors and one Coast Guardsman, were injured but survived the attack.



Bruckenthal is the first Coast Guardsman to be killed in combat since the Vietnam War and the only to die in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

As the Firebolt's rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB) pulled alongside the dhow, a suicide bomber onboard the dhow set off explosives. The blast flipped the RHIB and threw its team into the water. The attack alerted other forces in the area to what was a coordinated

attack on Iraq's oil terminals in the Gulf and prevented further loss of life and irreparable damages.

Pernaselli, from Monroe N.Y., was 27 when he died. He is survived by his two daughters, Nicole and Dominique, his father John and mother Kathy.

Watts, from Knoxville, Tenn., was 28. He is survived by his son Jacob, his father Bill and mother Brenda.

Bruckenthal, from Smithtown N.Y., the youngest of the three, was 24. His wife of two years was pregnant with their first child when he was killed. He is survived by his daughter Natalie, his wife Pattie, his father Eric, his mother Laurie Bullock, his sister Noabeth, and his brothers Matthew and Michael.

Every April, PATFORSWA hosts a Memorial service to honor and remember our fallen Shipmates and the sacrifice they made.