

Fallen Soldiers Canegata and Lake Praised as Warriors

by Melody Wiggins

Jan. 24, 2007 -- The two V.I. National Guard soldiers killed Saturday when a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter went down near Baghdad were identified Wednesday as Lt. Col. David C. Canegata III of St. Croix and Sgt. First Class Floyd Everett Lake of St. Thomas.

The Department of Defense is still investigating the cause of the crash.

All 12 people aboard were killed, military officials said. Adj. Gen. Eddy Charles described the fallen soldiers as "heroes" and "warriors." Condolences have poured in from all over the Virgin Islands as residents express their sadness and grief for the soldiers.

Canegata is survived by his wife, Shenneth Benjamin Canegata, and his four children, Nicole, David-Mychal, Andre and Jessica. He is also survived by his parents and many relatives and friends.

Lake is survived by his wife, Linda, and five children: J'Nelle, Floyd Jr., Andre, Keeshawn and Tamile.

Gov. John deJongh Jr. and Lt. Gov. Gregory Francis, in a joint statement Wednesday, expressed great sadness and profound sorrow at having received military confirmation of the death of two guardsmen in Iraq.

"The death of these two Virgin Islands soldiers is a reminder that even as we do our work here, our men and women in uniform who have served and are now serving in both Iraq and Afghanistan are putting their lives on the line for our country and for the freedoms we hold so dear," deJongh said.

Canegata, 50, assumed duties as dep. chief of staff for Operations and Planning-J-2-J3 of the V.I. National Guard (VING) on May 1, 2005. He served as primary advisor to the adjutant general (AG) on matters relating to intelligence, security operations, military support, training, aviation support and counter-drug operations. He also served as a channel of communications for the AG to Chief National Guard Bureau and other agencies, as required.

The St. Croix soldier began his military service in 1995 and was commissioned as an ordnance officer following officer candidate school at Fort Benning, Ga. and officer basic course at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. He had additional skills in the personnel-management field, strategic planning and policy functional area and graduated from the U.S. Army Master Fitness Training School.

Lake, 43, was a member of the V. I. Army National Guard. He served in Title 10 active-duty status at the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va.

The St. Thomas soldier enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1988 and served two years as a stock-record clerk at Fort Polk, La. Following completion of his regular army tour, Lake



Lt. Col. David C. Canegata III of St. Croix (left) and Sgt. First Class Floyd Everett Lake of St. Thomas.

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joined the V.I. Army National Guard in 1990, and served with distinction as the material control and handling supervisor for the 662nd Field Service Company on St. Thomas. In 1991 he moved to St. Croix and served as the warehouse foreman at the office of the USP&FO.

DeJongh and Francis called on all Virgin Islanders to pray for the families of the fallen soldiers, who deJongh encouraged to "keep their faith in God and on the future." He continued, "We will become the shoulder to lean on in the trying days ahead."

The fallen soldiers served with honor, said Delegate Donna M. Christensen.

"Words are not enough to express the sadness that I feel about the passing of our brave heroes, Sergeant First Class Floyd Lake and Lt. Colonel David Canegata III," Christensen said in news release from her Washington office. "They were among our best and served their country and our islands with honor. I would like to extend my sympathies to their families, friends, and to the National Guard family, for whom this loss is personal.

"As has been said many times before, you are the ones who have borne the brunt of this conflict, and we salute your strength and your fortitude. On behalf of myself, my husband -- who himself served for many years as a member of the National Guard -- my family and staff, I express my sympathies to the families."

Senate President Usie R. Richards issued a news release on behalf of the members and staff of the 27th Legislature.

"Virgin Islanders have again sacrificed two of our native sons in demonstration of our commitment and loyalty to the interests of the United States of America," Richards said. "Lt. Col. Canegata and SFC Lake represented the courage, skill and determination of our Virgin Islands National Guard soldiers who are prepared to serve our country where and whenever they are called upon."

The deaths prompted Sen. Alvin Williams to praise the men while lamenting the war.

"They have made the ultimate sacrifice," he said in a news release from his office Tuesday. "I salute Lt. Canegata and Sgt. Lake, who demonstrated their commitment to the democratic values and principals on which this great country was built, and who now join the ranks of so many young Americans who have fallen in this terrible war."

The Department of Defense also released the names of the other 10 soldiers killed along with Canegata and Lake, they are:

Col. Brian D. Allgood, 46, of Oklahoma; Staff Sgt. Darryl D. Booker, 37, of Midlothian, Va.; Sgt. 1st Class John G. Brown, 43, of Little Rock, Ark.; Command Sgt. Maj. Marilyn L. Gabbard, 46, of Polk City, Iowa; Command Sgt. Maj. Roger W. Haller, 49, of Davidsonville, Md.; Col. Paul M. Kelly, 45, of Stafford, Va.; Cpl. Victor M. Langarica, 29, of Decatur, Ga.; Capt. Sean E. Lyerly, 31, of Pflugerville, Texas; Maj. Michael V. Taylor, 40, of North Little Rock, Ark.; and 1st Sgt. William T. Warren, 48, of North Little Rock, Ark.

Canegata's awards and decorations include: the Army meritorious service medal, Army commendation medal with one oak-leaf cluster, Army achievement medal with one oak-leaf cluster, Army reserve component achievement medal with four oak-leaf clusters, national defense service medal with one bronze star, Armed Forces Reserve medal with bronze hourglass device, Army service ribbon, Army component overseas training ribbon with the numeral five, V.I. meritorious-service medal, V.I. commendation

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medal with the numeral two, VING long and faithful service medal with the numeral three and the V.I. emergency-service ribbon with the numeral three.

His civic affiliations include: member of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard, member of the National Guard Association of the United States, executive council member of the Boy Scouts of America, vice president of Men of Honor (mentorship organization for young men) and mentor in the Boys to Men Mentorship Program.

Canegata's military assignments include platoon leader -- maintenance support activity, detachment commander -- troop command, commander -- maintenance support activity, personnel officer (S1) -- 104th troop command, operations-training officer (S3) -- 104th troop command, mobilization planner -- HQ territorial area command, training officer -- HQ territorial area command, branch chief, training branch, J2-J3 directorate -- joint force HQ, VING, action officer, NGB plans and readiness division, DCSOPS - J2 -- J3 -- joint force HQ, VING.

In 2004, Lake transferred to the National Guard Bureau. He was assigned as the Army National Guard G4 Logistics Non Commissioned Officer at the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Virginia. Lake was responsible for 100 percent property accounting for computers, supplies and automation equipment valued at over \$3 million. He established and implemented the Unit Level Logistics System S-4 that served over 250 personnel within the G4. Lake set himself apart as a soldier of the utmost professionalism and dedication. His leadership and care for fellow soldiers and civilian personnel effectively enabled the G4 and the Army National Guard Directorate to maintain its highest levels of readiness.

Lake deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, in 2006 to serve as the property book non-commissioned officer for the Army National Guard Bureau Liaison Team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He further distinguished himself in this assignment.

A 1984 graduate of the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, Lake completed the following military courses and training: material control and accounting specialist course at the Quartermaster Center and School at Fort Lee, Va.; primary leadership development course (PLDC), automated logistical specialist, basic non-commissioned officer course (BNCO), advanced non-commissioned officer course (ANCOC), radiation-protection officer course, central issue facility manager course (GIF) and transportation and storage of hazardous materials course.

Lake was awarded the Army commendation medal, the Army achievement medal, the Army good conduct medal, the national defense service medal, the global war on terrorism service medal, the NCO professional-development ribbon with a number-three device, the humanitarian service medal and the overseas training ribbon.