



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Charles E. Bilbrey, Jr.

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Specialist Charles E. Bilbrey, Jr. was born in Binghamton, New York on May 10, 1986. Bright and inquisitive, with a strong sense of right and wrong, he was raised in Owego and graduated from Owego Free Academy in 2005. In 2003, Mr. Bilbrey and two friends founded a club at school for “gamers,” which is still active at OFA. He was Senior Class Treasurer and an active member of the football, lacrosse and track teams. Mr. Bilbrey was also an active member of the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 38, in Owego, finishing after 13 years as a Life Scout.

After a visit to the United States Military Academy at West Point, Mr. Bilbrey wanted to serve his country in the Army. He took deferred enlistment as a junior in high school and began basic training shortly after graduation. While still in school, Mr. Bilbrey had even studied in preparation for basic training. He trained as a Cavalry Scout and was stationed at Ft. Stewart, Georgia.

SPC Bilbrey deployed to Iraq in January of 2007 with the 5/7th Cavalry, and survived two vehicle bombings during the first three months of his tour. He carried Jolly Ranchers on patrol for Iraqi children who were thrilled by their colors.

On July 26, 2007, SPC Bilbrey volunteered for a mission to secure a roadway in the village of Saqlawiyah, Iraq. It was his habit to volunteer for missions on his days off. On that mission, he and two other soldiers were killed when their HUMVEE tripped an IED. SPC Bilbrey was 21 years old.

A college scholarship program was established at OFA in Charlie's name for students like SPC Bilbrey who possess a strong sense of honor, integrity and service to the nation.