



ALLIANCE, Ohio -- U.S. Army 1st Lt. Ashley White died in Afghanistan last week working on a mission that she believed in, her friends say.

White, 24, a native of Alliance, **was killed Saturday near Kandahar Province** when the assault force she was with triggered an improvised explosive device, the Army said in a statement. Two other soldiers, Kristoffer Domeij, 29, and Christopher Horns, 20, also were killed.

"She believed in what she was doing, and she wanted to take part in something that was bigger than herself," said Laura Dodson, who served with White in the North Carolina National Guard. "I got an email from her, and she said she was enjoying the mission, and she missed her family. She was looking forward to coming home."

As of Monday, 6,230 U.S. soldiers were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. Of that number, 135 were women, the Washington Post reported.

White was a member of a cultural support team that aided special operations forces. The support teams, made up of women, are trained to deal with women and children in war-torn countries, an Army spokesman said.

She deployed to Afghanistan in August. She was married to Army Capt. Jason Stumpf, who is stationed in Fort Bragg, N.C.

Sonjia Ferenac attended Kent State University with White, where they studied athletic training. They were in the same classes and often studied together. White, Ferenac said, graduated in December 2009. Ferenac called White upbeat, down-to-earth and selfless.

"She made you a better person just being around her," Ferenac said.

White was assigned to the 230th Brigade Support Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, North Carolina National Guard. She was commissioned in the Army as a medical service corps officer.

White will be posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

A family spokesperson said the family has declined to comment. Information about services was unavailable.

Besides her husband, White is survived by her parents Robert and Deborah White, her twin sister Brittney and her brother Josh, all of Alliance, the Army reported.

Plain Dealer news researcher Jo Ellen Corrigan contributed to this story.