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CAMPUS NEWS

CrossFit Gardner-Webb Begins New Homecoming Tradition in Memory of Staff Sgt. Jerry Gass Jr.

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON OCTOBER 6, 2021



▲ Staff Sgt. Jerry Gass Sr., center, 33, a Green Beret, died Aug. 3, 2014, while on a combat operation in Afghanistan.

Inaugural Memorial Hero WOD will be Held Oct. 23 with Proceeds Going to Scholarship Fund

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—CrossFit Gardner-Webb University will begin a new tradition this year for Homecoming—the inaugural Jerry Gass Jr. Memorial Hero WOD (Workout of the Day). The event starts at 8 a.m. on Oct. 23, and proceeds will fund student scholarships and the creation of the Jerry Gass Jr. Memorial Scholarship. For those who can't attend, donations to the scholarship fund will also be accepted.

Staff Sgt. Girard “Jerry” Gass Jr., 33, a Green Beret, died Aug. 3, 2014, while on a combat operation in Afghanistan. The 2003 Gardner-Webb alumnus was assigned to Company. C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C. and was deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



- ▲ A family portrait of Jerry Gass Jr. and his wife, Nancy, and their children, Charlie and Stella taken in 2014.
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He is survived by his wife, Nancy, and two children, Charlie and Stella.

“This event means my husband has not been forgotten,” shared Nancy. “It means my kids will have another opportunity to be made aware that their Daddy was someone special and is loved and appreciated for his service and for the type of person he was. The kids were babies when Jerry died. It’s been over seven years now and the kids are 8 and 9 years old. It means a lot for them to see at their current age that their father was someone really special.”

Gass was a Special Forces Medic and Sniper on his second deployment to Afghanistan. The last thing this hero did before his death was carry an injured teammate to safety, treat him, and get him off the battlefield. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal with “V” device, the Army Achievement Medal, and the Meritorious Service Medal among several other military commendations.

“Jerry saved many people as a Special Forces Medic during his two deployments,” Nancy related. “He always did good, because it was the right thing to do. Serving his country meant being there for the guys to the left and to the right of him. He never pretended to be fearless. He said everybody has fears. He said bravery is being afraid and doing it anyway. He was unstoppable. He was the ‘Quiet Professional’—the epitome of a Green Beret.”



- ▲ This photo was taken of Jerry Gass Jr. and Nancy in 2011 when he became a Green Beret.

Away from the battlefield, Jerry was everyone's best friend, Nancy remembered. "He would do anything to help anyone," she added. "He was so kind and caring, easygoing and funny. He always made everyone laugh and had a big laugh himself. You could hear it from across the room. He just genuinely cared about everyone else around him. He was a happy guy. He loved family more than anything and loved being a Dad." The Jerry Gass Jr. Memorial Hero WOD will be a partner event and is open to all GWU alumni, students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. Event [registration](https://competitioncorner.net/events/5738) (<https://competitioncorner.net/events/5738>) is \$25. Donations to the scholarship fund will be accepted [here](https://webbgive.gardner-webb.edu/project/27676) (<https://webbgive.gardner-webb.edu/project/27676>).

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.