


LOCAL/STATE 

## Funeral for doctor killed in Iraq

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 By Vernon Odom

**PHILADELPHIA - January 5, 2009 - (WPVI) -- It seemed like almost the entire medical community turned out Monday for the funeral of a Philadelphia surgeon Dr. John Pryor, who died while serving his country in Iraq.**

Dr. [Pryor](#)'s compelling story drew so much interest, his funeral was transferred from New Jersey to Philadelphia's mammoth Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul to handle the turnout.

Those in attendance included people who did not know Dr. Pryor personally at all.

"We know the full cost of what happens during wars," said Richard Finch, a veterans' services professional. "I think Major Pryor reflected the best of our community."

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Dr. Pryor was serving as a battlefield surgeon on Christmas Eve when a mortar round exploded near his living quarters in northern Iraq.

He was on his second tour of duty there.

The Moss brothers, also Army combat surgeons and who've also done multiple duty tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, trained with Dr. Pryor.

"He was very intriguing individual. He spoke to you, not through you or above you and he was a very human guy," said Major Vincent Moss. "We were very priveleged to work with him."

"He was one of those surgeons that stood above and beyond, and we has able to communicate well not only with the nurses

but the other surgeons and staff members," said Major Vance Moss.

The outpouring of grief from Pryor's family and friends was overwhelming. He leaves behind a wife and 3 young children.

Dr. Pryor had made his mark as the passionate leader of the trauma team at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

"He was just warm, open, had a good sense of humor. You felt comfortable around him," said Dayra Smith, a former research assistant. "He was a basic, decent human being."

"Very humble guy, a very genuine guy, passionate. He cared about the less fortunate. It's a tough loss," said HUP social worker Darin Tolliver.

One of the celebrants told the packed Basilica today that Major Pryor was a patriot and, quote: "We feel his loss very heavily. He loved his life here, he serviced humanity generously."

Doctor Pryor enlisted after the attacks of 9/11.

He was laid to rest with full military honors during a private ceremony in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

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