
Robert William Grodt

Grodt, Robert William LATHAM Robert William Grodt, 28, of Latham was killed in Raqqa, Syria, while trying to take back the city from ISIS forces on July 6, 2017. He, along with six others, including Nicholas Warden of Buffalo, were killed by an improvised explosive device during a fierce firefight. Rob was fighting alongside an international coalition supported by the U.S. as a member of the YPG, or the People's Protection Units, an all-volunteer army that is the primary force behind the Syrian Democratic Forces. Rob arrived in the Capital District in the most unexpected way, back in 2011, and changed the way those who knew and loved him looked at life, forever, for the better. He was brilliant, charismatic, full of charm and a passionate desire to make the world a better place for all its people. Ultimately, this led to his untimely death in Syria, where he had gone because of the depth of his caring for the Kurdish people in their struggle for autonomy, and to rid the world of Daesh (ISIS). His greatest legacy, besides his beloved daughter, was a life truly spent fighting for what he believed in. Rob was born February 23, 1989, in Mountainview, Calif., and grew up in Simi Valley, Calif. He earned his bachelor's degree from U.C. Santa Cruz in sociopolitical and economic philosophy, minoring in journalism. He immediately began to pursue his passion, his first jobs working as an activist and campaign manager for the Alliance for a Better California, the ACLU and Amnesty International. His desire to make the world a better place brought him across country in September of 2011 to be a [journalist](#) and field medic for Occupy Wall Street. It was here where he met his future partner, when he came to her aid after she was pepper sprayed, an event caught on video and propelling the movement into the public eye. The two remained together from that moment on, and they settled into life in the Capital Region. In 2012, Rob became the father of a beautiful girl who he cherished. Before leaving for Syria, he had been employed for the past three years with Price Chopper, working his way up through the management program to assistant produce manager. Rob leaves behind his partner, Kaylee Clarke Dedrick and four-year-old daughter, Tegan Kathleen Grodt of Albany; his loving parents, Wayne and Tammy (Steffani) Grodt of Simi Valley, who we thank so much for sharing Rob with us. It was a priceless gift. Rob also leaves behind four sisters, Stephanie (Eason) Meghann (Conforti), Kaitlyn and Emily; and brother John; his grandmother, Regina Steffani; and many beloved nieces. He will also be deeply missed by his "almost in-laws," Charles and Martha Dedrick of Albany; and his rescue "pittie," Link. Special thanks to the global Kurdish Community and the YPG, who have been so supportive of our families. Their struggle with Daesh is truly the world's struggle. A Go Fund Me page has been set up for Robert Grodt to benefit his daughter, gofundme.com/memorial-for-rob-grodt-family.

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