Press Release

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August 12, 2024

Fort Drum Public Affairs

Soldier faces charges in death of Specialist Jacob Ashton

Fort Drum, N.Y. – On August 12, 2024, charges were preferred against Specialist Riley Birbilas, a 10th Mountain Division Soldier, stemming from the death of Specialist Jacob Allen Ashton.

The general nature of the charges are premeditated murder and obstruction of justice in violation of Articles 118 and 131b of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The charges are allegations and Spc. Birbilas is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Spc. Birbilas is currently being held in pretrial confinement awaiting a preliminary hearing pursuant to Article 32, UCMJ.

Specialist Birbilas is originally from Kodiak, Alaska, and serves in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI). He joined the Army in 2021, and he attended Basic Training at Fort Benning, GA.  He has deployed to Iraq.

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Due to the ongoing investigation, there are no additional releasable details regarding the circumstances of Specialist Ashton’s death through Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs.  Follow on inquiries should be directed to Department of the Army CID PAO, CIDPAO@army.mil.

For specific queries as to the legal proceedings of the case, please reach out to the Office of the Special Trial Counsel, michelle.m.madej.civ@army.mil.