

‘An American Hero’: Capitol Police Officer Who Died After Riot Honored in Capitol Ceremony

The remains of the late U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick, who died in the aftermath of the breach of the U.S. Capitol by violent protestors on Jan. 6, now lies in honor at the building he was protecting just prior to his death. A ceremonial arrival took place last night at 9:30 p.m.

President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, made a surprise visit to the Capitol Rotunda late Tuesday to pay their tribute to the slain police officer, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday. In a Tuesday press briefing, Psaki said Biden had previously spoken with members of Sicknick's family "to express his condolences and sympathies to their tragic loss."

Though a final cause of death has not been determined, the U.S. Capitol Police said in a statement after Sicknick's death that "He was responding to the riots on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol and was injured while physically engaging with protesters. He returned to his division office and collapsed. He was taken to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., announced the planned honors for Sicknick last week. This morning, members of Congress were invited to attend a viewing period from 7-9 a.m. followed by a congressional tribute at 10:30 a.m. Sicknick is only the fifth person to lie in honor in the U. S. Capitol Rotunda, a distinction reserved for private citizens (anyone not a

government official or military member). A ceremonial departure for Arlington National Cemetery is planned for later in the day.

“The family of U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick thanks the Congressional leadership for bestowing this historic honor on our fallen American hero,” Sicknick’s family and longtime girlfriend, Sandra Garza, said in a statement. “We also wish to express our appreciation to the millions of people who have offered their support and sympathies during this difficult time. Knowing our personal tragedy and loss is shared by our nation brings hope for healing.”

Sicknick, 42, of South River, New Jersey, enlisted in the National Guard six months after graduating high school in 1997, then deployed to Saudi Arabia and later Kyrgyzstan. He joined the Capitol Police in 2008. Like many of his fellow officers, he often worked security in the Capitol itself and was known to lawmakers, staff and others who passed through the building’s doors each morning.

Rep. Roger Williams, R-Texas, attended this morning’s viewing and tweeted out his gratitude for Sicknick’s sacrifice:

This morning I paid my respects to U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick. Officer Sicknick gave his life protecting the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, where his courage undoubtedly saved lives. We will forever be grateful for his sacrifice.

– Rep. Roger Williams (@RepRWilliams) February 3, 2021

Sen. Tom Carper, D-W. Va., also tweeted his respect:

This morning, I gave one final salute to Officer Brian Sicknick, an American hero who protected the Capitol, our democracy, and my colleagues with his life. He now lies in honor. My condolences are with his brothers and sisters in

the Capitol Police force and all his loved ones.

– Senator Tom Carper (@SenatorCarper) February 3, 2021

These congressmen echoed the sentiments of former Vice President Mike Pence, who also expressed his sympathy on Twitter after learning of Sicknick's death.

Officer Sicknick is an American hero who gave his life defending our Capitol and this Nation will never forget or fail to honor the service and sacrifice of Officer Brian Sicknick.

– Mike Pence (@Mike_Pence) January 8, 2021

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