

Victims of the April 27 tornadoes

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Robert, Tori and Rebekah Tittle

Robert and Kerry Tittle were raising their nine children in a two-story home in rural western Pulaski County near Paron.

After Sunday's tornado, the debris of the Tittles' home appeared daunting, but as family members began to dig through it, it quickly yielded priceless treasures.

Robert, 48 — who died along with two of his daughters, Tori and Rebekah — is survived by a large family of strong faith. The seven surviving children are: Whitney, 19; Emily, 17; Isabella, 12; Noah, 9; Mollie Rose, 6; Asa, 4, and baby Joshua, 8 months.



Rebekah Tittle



Robert Tittle



Tori Tittle

Gentle Tori, 20, was the oldest. She adored her black Labrador, Abby, and hoped to one day become an animal trainer.

Rebekah, 14, took a grin and laughter to every setting, and was known for her enthusiastic high-fives. She loved books and film.

On Monday, Emily found her parents' wedding photo in the rubble.

On Tuesday, Whitney gasped loudly when she stumbled across a wooden remnant of Rebekah's cedar hope chest. Squatting in the ruin, she lifted it and traced Rebekah's engraved name with her forefinger.

Later, there was another surprise: a tangle of signs that had once hung on the children's treehouse, which also was toppled by the tornado. One board read: Eagles Nest Gang. Others bore the children's names painted in yellow.

Whitney and Emily also collected the many books scattered throughout the yard. The Tittle children are avid readers. The family runs an online book business called Reformation Kidz. Emily pounced on two books she hadn't yet read.

The Tittles belong to The Bible Church of Little Rock. Robert worked at Family Life, a Christian ministry that focuses on marriage and child-rearing. He also was an advisory board member of the Home Educators of Greater Little Rock. He loved woodworking and camping.

Daniel Wassom

Daniel Wassom of Vilonia was devoted to his family and lived his life focused on others. He was a natural protector, a secret prankster and a caring friend.

He hid his jokes so well that some weren't traced back to him until last week, years after he surreptitiously plugged whistlers in an exhaust pipe or slapped a crude bumper sticker on a friend's car.

Brian Swanson, the friend and the target in question in both shenanigans, said he never suspected Daniel was the culprit.

"That's the funniest stuff about the pranks that he pulled. They were in total secrecy," said Swanson, a technical sergeant who worked with Daniel. "He pulled one over on me for four years."

As a C-130 evaluator loadmaster, the highest qualification for his position, Daniel served in the Air National Guard. He was a master sergeant, "teaching the teachers," his friends said. And even though he was an instructor who didn't have to go into combat, he volunteered to be deployed and served in Kuwait in 2010.

At work, Daniel had a nickname for everybody and wouldn't start his day until "everyone in the office was good," said his friend Thomas Cossey who is also a technical sergeant.

"When he'd come into work, he'd swing the door open. ... It didn't matter how he was doing. He wanted to know how other



Daniel Wassom

people were doing," Cossey said. "He was my best friend."

Daniel handled things in-person with a quiet respect, Chief Master Sgt. Sean Harre said.

"I'm better for knowing him and working beside him," he said. "I don't think there's anyone you could talk to who wouldn't say the same thing."

He loved his wife, Suzanne, and their daughters, Sydney and Lorelai. On Sunday, the couple lay over the girls and shielded them from the storm as it tore through their home.

Daniel died protecting his family.

"To say he loved them and was a great daddy was truly an understatement," said his sister-in-law, Tereasa Cole. "I don't think that Lorelai would have made it if he hadn't been there. ... Those little girls were his life."

— *These stories were compiled by Chad Day, Claudia Lauer, Cathy Frye, Jeannie Roberts and Aziza Musa.*