

A criminal in one of our ports may think he is just helping his buddies smuggle in drugs, but inadvertently he may be helping to smuggle a weapon of mass destruction into the United States.

Earlier this year I offered an amendment to address this threat and ensure that serious felons are kept out of our ports. My amendment would have codified in statute the proposed regulations. The amendment passed unanimously and was included in the Senate-passed version of the Safe Port Act. Unfortunately, behind closed doors in the conference committee this amendment was almost completely gutted. The bill went from having language which prohibited 20 serious felonies that put our ports at risk to a list of just four—felonies so rare as to make the conference report language meaningless. I was extremely dismayed to see this language was stripped. I cannot understand who would oppose language that would ban serious felons from secure areas in American ports.

The ranking member of the Commerce Committee, the Senator from Hawaii, has stated in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that he supported the original DeMint language. I understand the chairman of the Commerce Committee, the Senator from Alaska, also supported the DeMint language. I am at a bit of a loss to conclude who in the Senate opposed this strong homeland security provision. Today the Senator from North Dakota said several of his colleagues did, but we don't know who they are.

While there does not seem to be a Senator who is willing to admit to opposing the provision, the longshoremen's labor union is more than happy to take credit for gutting the provision. Last month the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, in their newsletter, claimed credit for killing the provision. They stated:

Congress will return after the election in a "lame duck" session and work through part of November and December. We have heard rumors that Senator DeMint is particularly angry with the [union's] successful lobbying effort to strip his anti-labor provision. He may attempt to amend another piece of legislation, so the union will stay on guard to protect its members' interests.

Apparently they have, as we have seen today by the objection to this very commonsense measure. The unions are not stopping at just fighting legislation that I am proposing here to keep serious felons out of our port workforce. They are gearing up to mount a legal battle against the proposed regulations as well.

In response to a Wall Street Journal editorial on the subject, the union stated that the proposed regulations were "double jeopardy" and "unconstitutional." This is a clear indication that they have a legal challenge in mind. It seems clear now that once the regulations become final, they are going to take the Department of Homeland Security to court and that the proposed regulations are going to be bogged

down in lengthy legal battles likely for years.

The consequence will be that as we continue to fight this global war on terror, America's ports will be staffed by serious felons. Some may be tempted to come to the defense of the longshoremen with various so-called concerns: These individuals have paid their debt to society; barring these individuals is going to gut our port workforce; or that the crimes listed are somehow not related to homeland security.

These concerns are plain wrong. I don't disagree that convicted felons should be given a second chance. I hope they get back on their feet and become productive members of their communities. What I don't agree with is that we should give them a pass, literally and figuratively, to access the most secure areas of America's port infrastructure. When they are fresh out of prison, we should not trust them with the most vulnerable areas of our ports.

Second, I have heard that barring these individuals will empty the ranks of the port workforce. The facts don't bear this out. When the Department of Homeland Security issued nearly 350,000 ID cards for HAZMAT truck-drivers and subjected them to the same background check as I propose putting in the law, only 3,100 were disapproved, less than 1 percent. The workforce in the United States is elastic enough that we can pick up the few thousand longshoremen jobs opening up because the criminals in the port workforce had to be fired.

Finally, some are maintaining these are not serious crimes. I want someone to come down here and tell me which individuals he wants working at his local port—murderers, extortionists, drug dealers, arsonists, document forgers? I want to hear the rationale for stopping this important bill.

The list that the Transportation Security Agency came up with is a list of serious felons who represent a serious threat. It is going to keep these dangerous criminals out of our ports.

The bottom line is this: This bill applies nearly the same protections to seaports that already applies to our airports. It is a regime that has been successful. It will make our ports safer by keeping individuals who have shown a willingness to break the law out of our ports. This is very important. We can spend all the money in our treasury trying to screen cargo, and we have appropriated or approved a whole lot of money to secure our ports. But if we don't screen the people who work at our ports, we cannot expect to have effective port security. It is very unfortunate today that my Democratic colleague has taken this commonsense provision and objected to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. DEMINT. That is a good thing because I had finished my talk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). The Senator from Ohio is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. DEWINE. I thank the Chair.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN SHAWN ENGLISH

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a brave soldier who died while serving his country in Iraq. On December 3, 2006, Army CPT Shawn English was killed when his humvee struck a roadside bomb. Captain English, who served as an Army deep sea diver, was based in Panama City Beach, FL, but news of his death reverberated in his hometown of New Albany, OH. Captain English leaves behind his wife Tricia and three sons, Nathan, Noah, and Austin. Captain English was 35 years old.

Shawn spent nearly his entire adult life in the military—first as an enlisted soldier and later as a commissioned officer. He grew up in New Albany. As a boy, he raised 4-H sheep and played football for New Albany High School, where he graduated in 1990. Shawn joined the military when he was 18 and went on to attend college at Wright State University, receiving his degree in 1999.

Shawn joined the Army after high school and by the time he deployed to the war in Iraq, he was already an experienced combat veteran. He had served his country bravely years before in the gulf war in an armored cavalry unit. He later joined a Ranger battalion before becoming a diver.

Shawn's middle school teacher Debbie Smith says that he was always energetic and a delight to have in the classroom—that he was a student with a wonderful personality. He simply loved to learn. "He was dedicated to defending our country," Debbie remembers, "and particularly making sure that children were safe."

Those closest to Shawn remember him as a family man. "He was a very loving father and a wonderful brother," said his sister Dawn. "I received an e-mail from him at around noon on the Saturday before he died," said his brother-in-law, Todd. "It was in response to the pictures of the Buckeyes game that I sent him. He was very short (in the e-mail), but said that he was tired and that things were really intense. He asked that I pray for him."

Shawn's father-in-law Curt expressed his grief at learning the news of Shawn's death. "It's just so hard for us to comprehend," he said. "We're heartbroken. I could not—do not—love my own sons more than I loved that man. He was such a good man. He believed in his country and had a deep faith in God."

Shawn was in Iraq to train and lead Iraqi soldiers. He had been in-country since February 2006. As his brother-in-law said:

Shawn had the option to come home, but said he had an obligation to his men and wanted to finish what he started. . . . He

told me that when he came back that this was it. He had served 15 years and was going to look at other options to be closer with his family.

When they moved to Florida, Shawn and his wife Tricia quickly became active members of the community there. They belonged to the Woodlawn United Methodist Church, and Shawn coached youth soccer.

Shawn was able to return home to Florida on a short leave, during which he visited his son Nathan's elementary school class. During that visit, he discussed his deeply held beliefs about our country.

Shawn's father-in-law explained that "he stressed to [the students] how fortunate we are to be living in America, with the freedoms we have." In that meeting, Shawn talked about his work in Iraq and told the kids how much little things, like soccer balls, meant to the children in Iraq. The class collected soccer balls to send to the Iraqi children so that, like Shawn, they, too, could help make a positive difference in the country.

Shawn's friends loved him. Captain Nathan Surrey, one of Shawn's best friends, met him when they were both involved in Army management training in Missouri. In Captain Surrey's words:

We just clicked. We were fanatical Ohio State fans. We loved sports [and liked to talk about] our ideas on life. Our personalities were the same.

Captain Surrey also remembers what an excellent soldier Shawn was. Reflecting upon his friend's courage and dedication, he said that "you have to be in phenomenal physical shape and be pretty much fearless to be able [to be] anywhere in the world, any time." Echoing that sentiment, CPT Robert Newbauer, who served with Shawn for 6 years, said that "anything he did, or set forth to do, he was full of pride and passion."

Shawn was a dedicated soldier, but most importantly, he was a loving husband and father. His mother-in-law, Bev Daily, remembers how much his children meant to him. "Those kids idolized their dad," she said.

Shawn's family was able to see him one last time—just hours before his tragic and untimely death—when they spoke over video phone. In that conversation, Shawn joked and laughed with his sons. His family was grateful for this last opportunity to speak with him.

Shawn's life impacted so many people in so many ways. His family and friends will always remember his smile and strong sense of compassion. He served his country with courage and honor and pride—and for that, he will always be remembered.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep CPT Shawn English's family and friends in our thoughts and in our prayers.

SPECIALIST MARCO MILLER

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a brave and dedicated sol-

dier—Army Specialist Marco Miller, originally from Warren, OH. Just this past weekend, Specialist Miller was on guard duty in Baghdad, when a nearby military vehicle was hit by a mortar round. Specialist Miller was wounded by the resulting shrapnel and was transferred to a military hospital in Germany. On December 5, 2006, surrounded by family members, Marco died from his wounds. According to his mother Renee Daniels, the Army has awarded him the Purple Heart and will be promoting him to Sergeant in recognition of his bravery. Marco was 36 years old.

Marco's sister remembers that her brother loved to be active. He enjoyed sports and spent a lot of time working out in the gym. Though a star athlete in high school, he also had a passion for the arts. His mother remembers him as someone who had a lot of heart. "I am very proud of him," she said. "Very, very proud."

Marco grew up in Warren and graduated from Warren G. Harding High School in 1988, where he played baseball for the Panthers and was a running back for the football team. A serious student in high school, he always tried harder than anyone else. He attended the University of Akron and the University of Central Florida. An entrepreneur, Marco wanted to retire early, so that he could live "the good life."

Marco's close friend since before kindergarten, Mahar Hameed, said they had been playing football together since they were 8 years old. Marco was a tailback, and Mahar was a fullback. "I blocked for Marco for 10 years," he recalls. Even though Marco had moved to Florida, the two friends kept in touch throughout their adulthood. Mahar saw Marco as he was preparing to leave for Iraq. "I wouldn't say he was nervous," he said. "[Rather,] he just knew he had an obligation to fulfill. That's the kind of person Marco was. . . . I can only say he was one of the best people I ever knew."

Frank Thomas, Marco's high school football coach, remembers that Marco was extremely personable and had an infectious smile. He always worked to the best of his ability and took his goals seriously. As Coach Thomas put it, "He represented his country and family well."

On an Internet posting, one of Marco's former schoolmates remembers him as his guardian angel in school since 7th grade, even though they haven't seen each other in over 12 years. "We drifted in and out of each other's orbits through junior high and high school," he wrote. "I can't tell you how many times he magically appeared when I was in need of some support."

Marco moved to Florida in 1994, with his younger brother Demond. "We went to Florida with nothing," he recalled. "Marco was building a business." After graduating from Full Sail, a media arts college in Orlando, Marco put together a production company which did audio-

visual work, commercials, and other marketing tools for Disney and Universal Theme Parks, as well as local car and motorcycle clubs. Marco was also putting together DVDs for his Army buddies, and was hoping to combine his two careers in the future.

Marco's oldest sister remembers her brother's extraordinary sense of fun. "The last time he was home," she said, "he made sure he went to Cedar Point, so he could ride all of the rides [and] not just once. He loved the roller coasters. He loved sports cars, jet skis, and anything that was fast."

Marco's love of adventure was one of the things that made him decide to be a paratrooper when he joined the Army. Although this was his first tour in Iraq, he had served in the area during the first gulf war. His mother said that she wanted the public to know that Marco was a good son and a dedicated soldier. "He was proud to be in the military," she said.

Marco served in the military for nearly a dozen years—6 while on active duty in the early 1990s, and the last 5 as an Army Reservist. He enlisted in the Reserves after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

According to his mom:

Marco knew what he was doing. He volunteered to be in the military. He was considering signing up for another six-year term.

Tamia Michelle, Marco's daughter, was born just this past August, after he had been deployed to Iraq. Tragically, he was never able to meet her. Marco's sister Kim noted that Marco "was looking forward to being a father. He looked forward to doing all of the things that a father does with a daughter."

This has been a hard year for Marco's family. The last time they were all together was for the funeral of Marco's stepfather Anthony Daniels just this past May. Marco was helping his mother cope with the loss.

Marco's family does take some solace in knowing that he died doing what he wanted to be doing what he loved doing. They will always remember his patriotism and devotion to duty. As his brother said:

Marco lived a full life. He did everything he wanted. He traveled from the East Coast to the West and back. . . . He really lived up to his potential and lived life the way he wanted to do. He just felt that if he was going to serve his country, this was the best way for him to do it.

My wife Fran and I will keep the family of Marco Miller—his daughter Tamia Michelle, his mother Renee, his sisters Meka and Kim, his brothers Demond and Christoff, and his step-sister Carrie—in our thoughts and prayers.

STAFF SERGEANT SHAMUS O. GOARE

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Army SSG Shamus Goare from Danville, OH, who was killed on June 28, 2005, when his helicopter was shot down over Afghanistan. He was serving as the MH-47/Chinook flight engineer in the 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment,

based out of Hunter Army Airfield in Georgia. He was 29 years old. He leaves parents Judy and Charles and his brother Kortney.

Shamus graduated from Danville High School in Knox County in 1994. He became a flight engineer because he loved math, science, and engineering—and he excelled at all three. Shamus's father described his son as "a real quiet guy, but when he said something, you knew you really had to pay attention." His friends and family knew him to be pretty quiet unless he was talking about something he loved—such as cars and the military.

On August 1, 2005, Shamus would have celebrated 11 years in the Army as a special operations engineer. Being a member of the 160th Special Ops Aviation Regiment (Airborne) that flew Blackhawks and Chinooks, meant that Shamus took on very dangerous missions. On a special operations mission that would become his last, the Night Stalkers of the 160th were attempting to rescue Navy Seals who went missing in mountains near the Pakistani border.

Shortly before his death, Shamus had received a medal of valor for humanitarian work in Afghanistan. He was working with children, which was something his father said he loved. His eagerness to serve his community and his country was apparent when Shamus managed to trick his mother into signing the enlistment forms before he had even graduated from high school. He was 17, at the time, and according to his father, he thought "he'd get to see the world before he went to college."

Life in the military was a good fit for Shamus. It led him to a series of selfless and compassionate acts of heroism, many of which, he could not divulge to his family due to the nature of his work with the 160th's Night Stalkers. And true to their motto, Shamus never quit—even to the very end.

His father said that "Shamus really believed in what he was doing. He would always say if we don't fight over there, we'll have to fight here." His dedication to his duty would not allow him to tell his family where he was or what he was doing, but that didn't stop him from talking about home and what he would do when he got back to the United States.

One of his many hobbies was to drive around in his all-terrain vehicle. He would talk about his restoration project of a 1966 Buick Skylark a classic car that needed a new engine. Shamus also like to find time to restore old computers.

A quick study, he was mostly self-taught. His father recalls that "nobody told him how to do things—he just figured it out." Even in high school, his 40 classmates could see Shamus's analytical mind at work.

On a field trip to Wright Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton with his high school physics teacher, recalls seeing Shamus' mind at work. "He was calculating the estimated time of ar-

rival to see how it matched up to the teacher's time."

Another of Shamus's high school classmates, Missy Duncan, remembers being shocked when she found out that he had enlisted. "He was just so quiet," she said.

Stephanie Fritz, another classmate, said this about her friend:

We knew he was out of the country for the last two reunions, but we didn't know that he had done four tours over there. We're really proud of him. He was just the nicest person.

Missy and Stephanie were among the many students who paid tribute to the heroism of their fallen classmate by placing a flag display on the front lawn of Danville High School. A former history teacher of Shamus', Jim Holmes, first came up with the idea for the flag display. He talked about the display this way:

What Shamus said about us fighting over there, so we wouldn't have to fight over here, really touched me. I thought of all the men and women giving their lives so we can be free. I just thought it would be nice if we do something to [pay tribute] to them.

Helping to place the eight dozen flags that the American Legion and the local cemetery association donated, Missy said this, "Though we are all doing different things now, it's nice that we can still come together as classmates and honor one of our own."

Among Shamus's family members who came together to watch the flag display were his cousins Kim, Marsha, and Keith. Kim said that "It's so nice to see them come together and do something like this for Shamus." The pride and honor that they felt as the Danville High School alumni placed their flags in front of their school reminded the family of how Shamus had found his niche in life when he joined the military. Marsha recalled that "when Shamus would come home, he would stand so tall and so proud."

In the words of U.S. Army Chaplain Father Jim McNeely, as he remarked on Shamus's heroism:

There are two very important qualities necessary to be a hero—humility and self-sacrifice. The life of Shamus Goare embodies those two virtues, and that's why he is a hero. He was an unassuming young man. He did not seek fame and fortune. He didn't require his name to be spread in headlines, nor did he demand recognition for his achievements. His greatness lies in his quiet professionalism and love for others that drew him to military service. To him, doing his duty with excellence was satisfaction. And Shamus's duty as a soldier was to serve.

And now, it is our duty to remember and to honor Army Staff Sergeant Goare. My wife Fran and I continue to keep his family in our thoughts and prayers.

SERGEANT BRADLEY HARPER

Mr. President, this afternoon I wish to honor Marine SGT Bradley Harper, a native of Dresden, OH. Sergeant Harper was killed in Iraq on August 3, 2005, in a roadside bombing. The 25 years old sergeant was a communications specialist assigned to the Marine Re-

serve's 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, 4th Marine Division, based out of Norfolk, VA. He is survived by his wife Kendra, his parents Steve and Janet Harper, his sister Jenny, and his brother Daniel.

Brad—as family and friends called him—grew up in Dresden, where he attended Tri-Valley High School. Brad's friends and classmates remember him as an all-around good guy who was very well liked.

According to Kyle Powell, a former classmate:

There isn't one bad thing anyone could say about Brad Harper. Everybody knew him and everybody liked him. He always had a smile on his face. He always laughed. He was never in a bad mood.

Kim Waaland, athletic director at Tri-Valley Local Schools, remembers Brad from when he played on the offensive line for the school football team. He said:

He was a solid young man. [He was] a good friend and a good teammate. He made the most of his ability. He could always be counted on. He always wanted to do the right thing.

He also remembers that Brad was always interested in learning more or doing more to make the team better. He was not surprised when he learned that Brad had decided to become a marine.

Brad joined the Marines Corps Reserves as a teenager in Ohio and then went on to earn a degree in criminal justice from Zane State College. Tom Holdren, a criminal justice instructor at Zane State, said this about Brad:

I had a number of conversations with Brad while he was at school here. He often talked about wanting to be on the right side. He wanted to fix the things that were wrong in the world. I am sure he had a brilliant career ahead of him [and that] he served with honor. He was just that kind of young man.

After earning his degree, Brad moved to Virginia Beach in January 2004 to become a police officer. At the police academy, he graduated second in his class, and his peers selected him to serve as sergeant-at-arms. This was the beginning of a career dedicated to serving and protecting others.

Rene Ball, a Virginia Beach Police Department spokesperson, describes Brad this way:

[He was a stellar candidate. He was superb in the academy. He was one of those guys who, if another recruit fell behind, he'd go back and make sure that they were all right. Everyone on the force thought he was a great guy.

Those who worked with Brad remember him as an upbeat, eager policeman. Master Officer Harry McBrien was one of Brad's instructors during his time at the Police Academy. He said that Brad was often relied on to work with the recruits who were struggling. And, when the Academy staff tried to "stress him out a little bit," Master Officer McBrien remembers that Brad "just smiled" and kept going. He said the following about Officer Harper: Brad was an awesome guy who could handle anything. He was always smiling, had a great mood, and a positive

attitude. He was a role model for everyone else in the Academy.

Brad was upbeat before being deployed to Iraq. In an interview with *The Virginian-Pilot*, Brad said that "this is my chance to go, to do my part."

Brad's devotion to military service impressed everyone with whom he came into contact. Nick Beach, a fellow marine and friend, said that Brad was always an inspiration—someone who joined the Marines and decided to serve his country because of his caring heart. Nick said:

I think the reason there were so many junior Marines who looked up to Brad is because he was a true Marine. He led from the front and never let anyone fall behind. He would go back and give them a hand and bring them back up to the front.

Brad was dedicated to his marines and his job as a police officer, but he was also devoted to his family and friends. He loved his wife Kendra, whom Brad met while she was studying at Ohio University in Zanesville. According to Brad's sister Jenny, "Kendra was his world." They would have been celebrating their third wedding anniversary 2 weeks after Brad's death. After his passing, Kendra released the following statement about her husband:

In the eyes of those who knew and loved Brad, he is a real hero. He gave 100 percent in whatever assignment he undertook. He was proud to be a Marine and considered it an honor serving as an officer for the City of Virginia Beach 2nd Precinct Oceanfront. He will live on forever in our hearts.

Jason McBride met Brad while they were both in grade school. The two boys grew up together and both played football in high school. Jason was the best man in Brad's wedding, and there was no man better than Brad Harper in Jason's mind. While Brad was in Iraq, Jason heard from him about every 2 weeks through email. Jason received an email from Brad shortly before his death. Jason said that he was looking forward to coming home they could go out to a Buckeyes football game.

Jason said:

Brad was the best friend any guy could ever have. He would always go out of his way to help you. He'll always be my best friend and nothing will ever change that.

Brad's dedication to military service will never be forgotten. In the words of his sister:

Brad's bravery and courage, like all the others before him, will never be forgotten. He was a high achiever. Anything he ever wanted to do, he tried, and he achieved. He wanted to serve his country. He wanted to be a marine. He wanted to be a police officer. He had high hopes, and he wanted to go far.

Indeed, everyone who knew Brad misses him. Virginia Beach police officers memorialized his death by "draping the badge"—a traditional show of honor and brotherhood by police who place a black swath across their shields when a fellow officer is killed.

At Brad's funeral, MG David Bice said that Brad Harper "changed the world before our very eyes." Indeed he did.

Fran and I continue to keep the family of Marine SGT Bradley Harper in our thoughts and in our prayers.

STAFF SERGEANT CURTIS A. MITCHELL

Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to pay tribute to Army SSG Curtis Mitchell from McConnellsville, OH, who was killed on December 12, 2005, when an improvised explosive device exploded near the tank that he was commanding. He was 36 hours away from ending his second tour in Iraq while serving with the 3rd Squadron, 7th U.S. Cavalry, Company C, based at Fort Stewart, GA. He was 28 years old.

Staff Sergeant Mitchell leaves his wife Frances, his son Curtis, Jr., his stepsons Eric, Sean, and Alexander, his stepdaughter Keauna, his parents Edward and Regina, his brothers Charlie, Edward, Wayne, and William, his sisters Angie, Betsy and Regina, and his grandfather Buddy Cunningham.

Friends and family lovingly referred to Curtis as "Tony." He was born in Columbus and moved with his father and mother, just after kindergarten, to Malta, OH, in Morgan County, about 80 miles southeast of Columbus. He was a member of the Future Farmers of America at Morgan High School and went straight into the Army when he graduated in 1995.

Brian Smith of Los Angeles, CA, went to high school with Tony. He paid tribute to his road trip and FFA camp friend by saying:

He was a great guy, and I, for one, will be forever grateful for his service to America.

Martha Koon of Reynoldsburg, OH, describes her high school friend by also saying:

Curtis was a great guy. [He was] like a brother to me in high school. We shared a lot of fun times. He will be greatly missed.

Three of the Mitchell boys joined the military. Tony and Edward—known to family and friends as "Jimmy"—enlisted as marines, and William entered the Air Force. Charles said:

I worried more about Jimmy, but figured he was okay because Tony was with him.

Being stationed together, Tony and Jimmy were patrolling with the same unit in Iraq when the IED exploded that took Tony's life.

Tony Mitchell liked hunting, target shooting, fishing, playing video games, and anything at all that had to do with his children. He was a big Ohio State and Notre Dame football fan, but hadn't told his family which team he was rooting for in the 2005 Fiesta Bowl.

Tony's brother William graduated from Air Force basic training on December 9, 2005—a week before his brother's passing. He said Tony's death hasn't softened his decision to join the military. William said that "I'm going to do what my brother would have wanted me to do," which, was to stay in the military and serve his country.

William posted the following message to his late brother on an online tribute site. This is what he wrote:

You are my big brother, and I miss you. I just know that you are watching Jimmy and

me in our military career. I think about you all the time and how you inspired me to join the Air Force, because you thought about joining, but you went to the Army. I will never forget how much you loved your job, and it makes me love mine [even] more.

Tony was one of the first service-members to enter Baghdad at the start of the war and was part of the operation that killed Saddam Hussein's sons. His fellow soldiers knew him as a great leader, a great fighter, and a great man. He received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart and was one of the most "squared-away" soldiers in his unit, according to SSG Travis Wiley, a Company C member, who served with Tony during his first tour in Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Wiley said:

Tony always knew what needed to be done. All he'd say was "I got it," and you knew the mission would be complete. He took care of everyone else. He was a joyful guy. He didn't want to see anyone mad. He'd get mad, but only for about two or three minutes.

Tony served in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia, along with the two tours in Iraq. Tony planned on spending the rest of his career with the Army. He had recently signed an extension contract. Tony had been stationed for a few years at Fort Stewart, GA, where he lived with his wife of 1 year, Frances. Tony loved his family, was a good husband, and adored his young son Curtis, Jr.

Ronda Mitchell, Tony's sister, said that her brother "was a wonderful dad, son, brother, and uncle. He was always nice to people. I loved him because he was a good brother to me. He was funny and good to get along with."

Lora Thayer of Rolla, MO, paid tribute to her high school with the following message:

My heart grieves for the loss of such a wonderful and kind person. I graduated with Tony in 1995 and was a friend of his through youth group. My heart hurts, and I will never forget the wonderful person he was to all of us. He will be remembered, not just for his valiant death, but for the man he eventually became. He truly was the kind of person to put others before himself. He is a . . . hero, and I will never forget him.

No one will forget Army SSG Curtis "Tony" Mitchell. My wife Fran and I continue to keep his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I would also like to make another unanimous consent request that my colleague to the east from Tennessee, Senator ALEXANDER, be recognized for 15 minutes after Senator DURBIN, who will follow time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.