

the ability to inspire confidence in his troops and young leaders. He always led them from the front, and he ensured they were successful in any and all endeavors. We saw this at the outset of the Iraq war in 2003 when, as the assistant division commander for maneuver for the 3rd Infantry Division, he helped to spearhead the invasion, maneuvering the division from Kuwait to Baghdad in a record 22 days. We saw it in Afghanistan in 2003–2004, when he was the commander of Combined Joint Task Force-180. We saw it again in Iraq in 2008 when, as the commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq during the period when the surge forces were drawing down, he helped to achieve greater stability in the country. We saw it once more in Iraq in 2010–2011 when, as commander of U.S. Forces-Iraq, he oversaw the successful completion of Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn.

In an age of tweets and blogs, General Austin never seeks the limelight, preferring to let his actions speak for themselves. He is a consummate professional, and our Nation and its Armed Services will feel the loss of this distinguished officer, gifted leader, and highly decorated warrior. I join my fellow members of the Senate Armed Services Committee in expressing my respect and gratitude to GEN Lloyd Austin for his outstanding and selfless service to our Nation. I wish him and his wife, Charlene, all the best.

REMEMBERING COLONEL THOMAS SCHAEFER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor a beloved U.S. Air Force hero, COL Thomas E. Schaefer, who sadly passed away on May 31.

In 1979, Colonel Schaefer was among those taken hostage in Iran while serving as a senior military attache to the U.S. Embassy. From November 4, 1979, to January 20, 1981, Colonel Schaefer survived 444 days of captivity, but never allowed his ordeal or his captors to undermine his spirit thanks to a strong faith in God. To keep his mind alert during that time, he read over 250 books, walked over 200 miles in his room to keep warm, and studied German.

Throughout this time, he overcame this adversity with bravery, endurance, and a spirit that became an inspiration for his friends, family, and all Americans—many of whom greeted him with open arms in 1981 following his release when he returned to his hometown, Rochester, NY.

Originally from Rochester, NY, where much of his family and many friends still reside today, Colonel Schaefer made a lasting impact on the community through speaking publicly about his experiences. He wanted each and every person to know that they possess an inner strength which allows them to overcome any challenge that may present itself in their lives.

Colonel Schaefer was a brave man, who endured the unthinkable, and his sacrifices should be remembered forever.

Thank you.

REMEMBERING FELIX AND MARIA NORAT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would like to honor the memory of SGT Felix Norat and his wife, Maria, two remarkable New Yorkers who were interred at Arlington National Cemetery last week. Sergeant Norat was a WWII veteran who served in the Army's 45th Infantry Division. His bravery and heroism earned him a Bronze Star for Valor, as well as a Purple Heart. Maria was a native of Puerto Rico who worked for the War Department in New York City. Maria and Felix were married nearly 70 years, a testament to their love and devotion to one another. I would like to commit their story—a quintessentially American story—to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD today.

Mr. Norat's unit, the 45th Infantry of the Army, was one of the most battle-tested divisions of the entire war, and Mr. Norat was still among it when the division came to Munich days before the Germans surrendered.

Mr. Norat's late wife, Maria, upon moving to New York, rented a room from her future mother-in-law, who noticed Maria's penmanship and asked her to rewrite her letters to her son who was fighting in Europe. Often, Maria would include a note of her own at the bottom of each letter, encouraging Felix and wishing him well. She later recounted, in an interview with the local newspaper, "I was telling him how proud we were that he was serving this great country and how beautiful that was," she said. "I never thought I was going to fall in love."

But that is what happened. When Sergeant Norat returned home and met Maria, it was love at first sight. For Maria, it was nice to meet the man whom she would encourage and write; love came more gradually. The couple courted for 2 years and married in November 1947. Sergeant Norat attended Brooklyn College for engineering and worked in the construction business after 2 years. He and Maria bought oceanfront property and built the Ocean Beach Motel in Montauk Point, NY.

Though life moved on, the wounds and aftershocks of war did not so quickly fade. Throughout the year after he returned home, if Felix heard anything that resembled a mortar whizzing by, he would instinctively take cover, a result of several close encounters with mortar fire. During the invasion in southern France, he sustained a serious injury from a mortar shell, resulting in an extended hospitalization in Italy and for which he earned a Purple Heart. In his later years, he also recounted the story of a stroll that saved his life. Felix reported

that, a few yards into a walk down the trench he shared with three other GIs from the 45th Infantry, a German shell hit close by, killing two of his friends and taking off the arm of the third. Felix often recounted seeing photos of his friends' children and lamented that they "never knew what happened to their father."

Felix and Maria sold the motel in 1984, retired, and moved to Naples, FL, a few years later, where they spent their final years in retirement reflecting on the war and on their lives together.

Let the record show that this body recognizes the faithful service of Felix and Maria Norat and their contributions to this country. May their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren accept the thanks of a grateful nation.

Thank you.

HONORING OFFICER ASHLEY GUINDON

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the extraordinary life and service of a true hero and dedicated public servant whose time was tragically cut short, Officer Ashley Guindon of Merrimack, NH.

Born and raised in Merrimack, NH, Officer Guindon graduated from Merrimack High School in 2005. She later joined the Marine Corps following graduation, honoring the service of her father, New Hampshire Air National Guard member David Guindon, who passed away after returning from serving in Iraq.

In her high school yearbook she wrote, "As I take flight it only makes me closer to [you] daddy. Mom, thanks for everything it'll be a long road but we can manage and it will only make [you] stronger." Underneath her picture in her high school yearbook, the caption read, "live for something rather than die for nothing." Officer Guindon did live for something. She lived for her country and she answered the call of duty.

Officer Guindon began her career with the Prince William County Police Department in Virginia and was sworn in as a police officer on February 26, 2016. Tragically, she was killed in the line of duty on her first day.

Officer Guindon responded to an emergency call on her first day of duty as an officer with the same sense of professionalism and dedication demonstrated by the very best of our law enforcement community. Officer Guindon responded quickly and compassionately, embodying her true spirit of selflessness. Her caring manner and desire to help those in need will not be forgotten.

Officer Guindon left behind her mother, Sharon, and her beloved family pug, Scout. We are deeply saddened by the loss of Officer Ashley Guindon, an extraordinary young woman who served our country and her community with honor, courage, and dedication. She