

"He wasn't a really nice guy; he wouldn't ever come up and want to know about you personally," Hinds said about Patton. "He just wanted to tell you what to do, but he was a good general."

Hinds and his brother enlisted after graduating from high school because his father didn't have enough money to send him to school. He was 18 years old.

"With about two weeks left in the war, I was the only (one) left in my platoon," Hinds said.

Family members of the deceased begin to arrive at Frankfort Cemetery. Vince LaFontaine—who has played in hundreds of Frankfort funerals since he was a teenager—warms up with scales, and the men take their positions.

The weather predictions were correct. The sky clears, the sun comes out and the air warms in time for the ceremony to begin.

Mauer stands in the doorway of the cemetery chapel where about 15 members of the deceased veteran's family sits. He signals the riflemen after the flag is precisely folded.

"Ten-hut," he says sternly.

The seven riflemen fire three shots that echo over the cliff and around South Frankfort before silence takes over, and the bugler plays "Taps."

"I've heard Taps' over a thousand times it seems, but it's always emotional for me," Wolcott says back at the VFW over a lunch of beef stew and corn bread.

Mauer says he never gets used to hearing "Taps" played, either.

"There's something about Taps'; it hits an emotion you can't really describe," he says.

Wolcott, who at 84 takes claim as the youngest of the four honor guard World War II veterans, was stationed in Europe from 1944 to 1947.

The four men sit at the circular table over lunch for about an hour before they decide they need to get home. They agree their health will decide when it's time to hang up their duties with the honor guard.

"When you become our age you don't look ahead too far," Napier said.

"We go day by day, but we'll be here as long as we can."

TRIBUTE TO LANCE CORPORAL DAVID MAYS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I stand before you today to commend and pay tribute to a Kentuckian who spent time with the Marines serving in Afghanistan in 2009. Although he was far from home and a visitor in a foreign land, LCpl David Mays of London, KY, treated the Afghan people with the utmost respect, proving that he exemplified the characteristics the U.S. Marine Corps upholds: character, compassion, honor, courage, and the integrity to always do what is right. Lance Corporal Mays enlisted during his senior year of high school at the age of 18.

In May of 2009, just 2 days before his second deployment with the Marines, David's firstborn son, Landon, came into the world. David left for Afghanistan before his newborn son was able to leave the hospital in London. Although David was greatly saddened about having to leave his baby boy behind, he proudly answered the call of duty, and for the second time David returned to the Middle East. However, this time around, David was a different man: he was a father now. Fatherhood caused

him to take an interest in the local Afghan children. David felt that interacting with the children helped him to not miss his own son as much.

David missed his boy back home terribly, but he would play with the Afghan children and buy them gifts. In turn, the children would offer David and his fellow marines fruit as a token of their gratitude. The kinship David and his men built with the local children was the foundation of a successful relationship with the local Afghan tribe leaders.

During his time overseas, David had limited contact with his family in Kentucky, but his mother, Wanda Caudill, sent letters and care packages as frequently as possible. She would also send photos of Landon. The gifts from home and the relationships David made with the local people, local children, and fellow marines all helped to console him until he finally returned home just before Christmas in 2010.

It had been almost a year since David had seen his son Landon, who was only 2 days old at their last meeting. There was no way that the little boy could have remembered his father's presence. But when David first saw his son Landon at the airport that December, Landon reached for him as if he had never left and kissed him three times.

David has since joined the London-Laurel County Rescue Squad and London Fire Department. He is still in the Marines Active Reserve, but he plans to stay as involved as he can in his 2-year-old son's life. David decided that missing 1 year of his son's life is enough, and he is not missing any more.

Mr. President, an article appeared in the Laurel County publication the Sentinel-Echo: Silver Edition in November 2011 that profiled the upstanding character of LCpl David Mays. I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

[From the Sentinel Echo, Nov. 2011]

FINDING FAMILY FAR FROM HOME (By Magen McCrarey)

He left his first-born son, Landon, at the hospital in May of 2009, born two days before his second deployment. David Mays, a lance corporal of the 1st Battalion, Fifth Marines, hoped to take Landon home for a warm welcome; instead he arrived in Afghanistan with one of his own.

"As we landed we heard bullets ricocheting off the helicopter," Mays said. "We were there, and there was no turning back."

The sweltering desert heat was in excess of 115 degrees as Mays and his squad walked three days with more than 100 pounds strapped to their backs heading towards Helmand Province. Their compound was far off from any city and water was limited.

With a shovel-like tool in hand, Mays began digging a hole for his bed and covered it with a tarp.

"Everybody dug their own hole, scattered, in case we got attacked by mortars," Mays said. "I told my buddy if we're worried about mortars, we dug our graves right here so it don't matter."

Mays always wanted to be a Marine. When Mays was in fourth grade at Cold Hill Elementary, his class received a visit from a U.S. Marine, a pilot shot down behind enemy lines and a Kentucky native. The Marine's recollection of brotherhood and camaraderie influenced Mays in more ways than just portraying an intriguing narrative.

"It was like a family away from your own family, and I'd get to see the world and meet people," Mays said.

He and a group of friends enlisted in the Marines their senior year of high school at 18 years old. They knew they may not be placed in the same company throughout their service, but they all had the same objective.

"We all had one thing on our minds: to become Marines together," Mays said.

The objective of the Marines within the Helmand Province was to win the hearts and minds of the Afghans. With the British recently vacating the country, Afghans were apprehensive about the Marines' arrival.

Tribe leaders would only converse with Marine commanders. They'd offer tips about the Taliban's whereabouts and when they were arriving in the area. The Taliban had a reputation for entering into towns at night.

Mays and his squad of four would respond to the information given and perform night operations to keep watch over a town. Walking 20 miles and back again to keep watch for suspicious travelers was a frequent and meticulous task.

"We did what we had to do. We were doing our job protecting each other," Mays said, "just like anybody around here will protect their family."

Contact with family via satellite while in Afghanistan was few and far between, but they received mail often. Mays's mother, Wanda Caudill, sent a letter every chance she got, and many care packages.

"She sent me newspapers and I knew exactly what was going on in London," he said.

Caudill also sent photos of Mays's son so he wouldn't feel as if he was missing out on his child's life. Away from his own child, Mays often thought about the children in Afghanistan.

"We'd give the kids rides on our shoulders, and we'd buy them stuff," Mays said.

The Afghan boys would offer fruit to the Marines and even allowed them to participate in their Muslim holiday of Ramadan. As the sun set, the day of fasting would cease and they would enter in an evening feast. They had offered a goat for slaughter to the men, and taught them how to give it a death without suffering.

"I think it made me think about when my son was going to get that age, and didn't make me miss him as much. But, of course, I missed him because he was my boy," Mays said.

After days of patrolling a foreign country, battling an unseen enemy, and losing men that were a part of his family away from home, Mays returned to his own. Days before Christmas 2010, Mays arrived at the Louisville airport greeting his family with one gripping hug after another, saving his son for last.

"I was scared he was going to cry and not recognize me," Mays said.

But Landon came right to him as if he never missed a beat. He reached for Mays and kissed him three times.

"My mom started crying and said, 'He never kissed nobody,' Mays recalled. "It was like I was gone only a minute or so."

After returning from deployment, Mays has learned to appreciate the small things in life and take advantage of every opportunity to serve the public, he said. He's joined the London-Laurel County Rescue Squad and London Fire Department. Mays has completed four years of active duty in the Marines and is currently in the four-year active

reserve program. He said if he didn't have his son before he began active duty, he would have made a career out of the Marines.

"I decided one year's enough," Mays said. "I'm not missing any more of his life." Landon is now two years old.

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT CHARLES HAYES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of MSgt Charles Hayes of London, KY. Master Sergeant Hayes served in the U.S. Air Force from 1972 to 1996, and was involved in both the Vietnam and gulf wars. Hayes volunteered to join at age 21 and continued to be a volunteer for the duration of his two-decade stint in the military.

During Hayes's extended period of time in the Air Force, he had the opportunity to visit a variety of foreign countries, including Germany, Turkey, and Thailand, just to name a few. Hayes enjoyed every aspect that went along with being a part of the Armed Forces. He flourished as a member of the U.S. Air Force in more ways than one.

What Hayes enjoyed most about the service was experiencing history in the making. Hayes remembers participating in the evacuation of Saigon, South Vietnam, in April 1975. It was a mission in which Hayes and his team were given the objective of recovering an American merchant ship that had been pirated by the Khmer Rouge navy. The ship was successfully recovered on May 13, 1975, and Hayes was an instrumental part of the operation, one that many of us remember paying close attention to while back home in the States.

Hayes also enjoyed the Air Force because it inspired its members to show initiative. In 1987, Charles was assigned public affairs duties for his section. He remembers how difficult and "utterly impossible" the men told him it was to get an article published in the base newspaper. Hayes took on the challenge of getting a story published head on, and that year he had 37 articles and 17 pictures with captions published in the newspaper.

Lt. Col. Richard Vaught recalls that Hayes was one of the best sergeants he has ever commanded. It wasn't unusual for those who worked with Hayes to speak highly of him. While serving as the squadron safety noncommissioned officer from 1990 to 1996, Hayes's unit received numerous honors and awards, including Best Small Unit Safety Program Award and Best Additional Duty Safety NCO Award.

Many different attributes have been used to describe Charles Hayes over the years. Talented, ambitious, reliable, and persevering are just a few of the countless positive references of the master sergeant. Lieutenant Colonel Vaught is recorded as saying, "Charlie always knew how to get everything when nobody else could. If you go to war, he's the one you want to go with

you. He'll get you everything and then some."

Charles Hayes exemplifies every characteristic of a successful member of our Nation's Armed Forces. His dedication and service to our great country over 24 years will most certainly not go unnoticed and is the very cause of my standing here today. It is my wish that my colleagues in the Senate join me in commemorating MSgt Charles Hayes at this time.

There was an article published in Laurel County's local news magazine, the Sentinel-Echo: Silver Edition, in November of 2011. The article highlighted Charles Hayes and the outstanding dedication he has shown throughout the years in his involvement with the U.S. military. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Sentinel-Echo: Silver Edition,
Nov. 2011]

A PART OF HISTORY (By Carol Mills)

Master Sergeant Charles Hayes, a Vietnam and Gulf War veteran, volunteered to join the United States Air Force when he was 21, serving from 1972 to 1996. He worked for 12 years in security police and 12 years in computers.

What Hayes liked most about his 24 years of service was being a part of history.

"While my part was very small, the unit I was assigned to (56 SPS, Nakhon Phanom RTAF, Thailand) was responsible for assisting in the evacuation of Saigon, South Vietnam, and Phenom Phen, Cambodia, in April 1975," 60-year-old Hayes said. "We were part of the recovery of the American merchant ship, Mayaguez, which had been pirated by the Khmer Rouge Navy. I lost 18 buddies on May 13, 1975, during the operation."

During the 1991 Gulf War, his unit (608 APS, Ramstein AFB, Ramstein, Germany) was responsible for shipping all munitions to the air bases in the desert, as well as thousands of tons of other supplies.

"I remember looking at what seemed to be miles of pallets and wondering when we would get them all shipped down range."

After the Gulf War, Hayes's unit was kept busy supporting United Nations' humanitarian missions in Eastern Europe and Africa. In 1992, one of Russia's largest cargo planes arrived at Ramstein AFB to receive donations. He was in charge of ground safety while his unit loaded the plane.

"We weren't able to use forklifts because the plane wasn't configured for them. Because I was all over the operation, the plane's crew must have figured I was a big wheel of some kind and gave me three cases of Russian vodka."

Hayes also liked the Air Force because it allowed him to show initiative.

"While sometimes routine duties were a little mundane, additional duties allowed personnel an opportunity to show initiative. In 1987, I was assigned public affairs duties for my section. I was told that it was almost 'impossible' to get an article printed in the base newspaper and utterly 'impossible' to get an article published anywhere else."

That year, Hayes had 37 articles and 17 pictures with captions published in the base newspaper. Two articles were published in command-level publications and two in a local newspaper.

Lt. Col. Richard Vaught said Hayes was one of the best master sergeants he ever commanded.

"He's the type that if you needed anything done, he always found a way to get it done when everyone else couldn't," he said. "He was the ultimate scrounger. I would say he was a very talented individual. Charlie always knew how to get everything when nobody else could. If you go to war, he's the one you want to go with you. He'll get you everything you need and then some. He just knew how to use all the various avenues. I was quite happy to have him in my command."

From 1990 through 1996, he was assigned the additional duty of squadron safety non-commissioned officer. During his tenure as safety NCO, his unit received a Best Explosives Safety Program Award from both the command and USAF as well as a Best Small Unit (under 600 personnel) Safety Program Award. He also received a Best Additional Duty Safety NCO Award.

Hayes also liked associating with other patriots.

"When situations got tough, everyone got tougher," he said. "We all regarded a challenge as something to overcome, not something to shy away from. Esprit de corps was highest when things were toughest. I served with some of the best people in the world."

Hayes enjoyed the opportunities the Air Force had to offer. "I always held the attitude that I was stationed in the best section of the best squadron on the best Air Force base in the United States. I learned that education was the least expensive hobby a person could have and completed a master's in education before I retired."

During his service he traveled throughout the British Isles, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, Turkey, Thailand, and several other countries to a lesser degree, and has driven through every state except Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. He has also been to Alaska and Hawaii during his service.

Before Hayes had lived in London, Ky., for five months, he had spent more time in London, England, than in London, Ky.

2012 NATIONAL DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to pay my respects to the victims, survivors, and heroes of the Holocaust. April 19, 2012, marks Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is observed during a week-long memorial, the National Days of Remembrance, created by Congress in 1980 and led by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Through this year's theme, "Choosing to Act: Stories of Rescue," we remember the courageous men, women, and children who stood up and saved lives, at grave risk and sometimes deadly consequences to themselves. On the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising and the liberation of European concentration camps, we honor all who embraced their own humanity to save others, abandoning self-interest for selfless bravery.

This week of commemoration that spans Sunday, April 15 to Sunday, April 22, is deeply personal. My father came to this country in 1935 to escape persecution. Speaking barely any English, he set down my family's roots with very little but memories of loved ones who had perished in the Holocaust and faith in the American dream.

The Days of Remembrance is a living memorial, altered by every citizen who