

Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, CO. Charles was killed in a vehicular accident. He was 21 years old and was on his first tour overseas. Also killed in the accident was his battle buddy, 25-year-old SPC Trinidad Santiago, Jr.

Army 1LT Brandon Landrum of Lawton, OK, was a 26-year-old husband, father of two children, Army officer, and graduate of Cameron University. He was among five soldiers who died on May 4, 2013, after they were attacked by an enemy IED in Maiwand, Afghanistan. Brandon and his soldiers were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, at Fort Bliss, TX. Brandon enlisted in the Army in 2005 and deployed to Iraq 3 years later. Upon receiving his commission in May 2011, he graduated the Infantry Basic Officer Leaders Course and Airborne School. First Lieutenant Landrum is survived by his wife, one son, and one daughter.

Our soldiers and airmen demonstrated courage and honor by volunteering for service in the Army and Air Force. While the deaths of these brave men are tragic, their lives encourage all of us to demonstrate courage and honor commensurate with their sacrifice. The fact that these men died alongside their fellow warriors is a reminder for us to stick by our men and women in uniform who continue to fight the enemies of our country. God bless them, and God bless their families.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, it has been my practice over the past decade to honor the men and women of law enforcement during National Police Week.

This week is National Police Week. The annual candlelight vigil at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial will take place this evening. I should mention that 2013 marks the 25th anniversary of the candlelight vigil. This year, the names of 320 officers killed in the line of duty are being added to the memorial. These 320 names include 119 officers who were killed during 2012, plus 201 officers who died in previous years but whose stories of sacrifice had been lost to history until now.

Alaska did not suffer a law enforcement casualty in 2012. However, we have suffered three since the beginning of 2013, and I would like to take this opportunity to remember the three Alaskans who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the heroes they are.

Today I recognize three men, each of different backgrounds but all united in their bravery and willingness to go the extra step. John 15:13 says: "There is no greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." In Alaska, where we treat strangers in need of a helping hand as friends, these three individuals demonstrated a spirit

not only worthy of their profession but that of a State and a people forever grateful for their sacrifice.

THOMAS MADOLE

In law enforcement there is spirited debate over who walks the toughest beat in America. The men and women of corrections think they have won that debate hands down, but I would suggest that Alaska's village public safety officers, or VPSOs, our first responders in the last frontier, are formidable contenders.

Alaska's VPSOs wear all four hats of first response. They are at the same time police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and search-and-rescue coordinators. They are the sole first responders in the bush villages of Alaska—villages with populations that might number 400 to 600 people—and carry out their dangerous work with no backup in the immediate community. The closest backup is often an Alaska State trooper in a rural hub, who must fly in to the village by air—assuming weather conditions allow the troopers to fly. I would submit to you that our village public safety officers, who patrol unarmed, in fact walk the toughest beat in America.

Thomas Madole, age 54, was the village public safety officer in Manakotak, AK. Manakotak has a population of about 400. It is in Alaska's Bristol Bay region. Ninety-four percent of its residents are Alaska Native descendants of the original people to occupy the area. Officer Madole was killed on March 19, 2013 while responding to a report of a possibly suicidal person. He was unarmed. His assailant was not.

There is much to say for how Officer Madole lived his life. He will be remembered as a man of peace. An ordained minister of the Assemblies of God Church, he preached and mentored in the Yupik hub community of Bethel Alaska for 6 years before moving to Manakotak.

Patricia Zulkosky, a board member of the Bethel Assemblies of God Church, referred to Madole in this way: "He was a man of God, he walked his talk." And in the community of Manakotak, Madole is remembered as a friend and a role model for the youth as much as a cop.

MEL NADING AND TAGE TOLL

Alaska is remarkable for many reasons, among which that the wilderness begins literally beyond the backyards of our homes. The Alaska State troopers rely extensively on aviation resources to get where they need to go and their pilots are some of the best in the world.

Mel Nading, originally a Hawkeye from Manchester, IA, was hired in December 2000 to be the primary pilot for the Alaska Department of Public Safety's Helo-1. Helo-1 bore the tail number "N911AA."

During Mel's 13 year career, he was the primary search-and-rescue pilot for the department and interacted with

other agencies to coordinate search and rescue efforts, going on almost-weekly missions. Mel also provided air support for law enforcement missions. In 2012 alone, Mel flew over 200 hours logging 73 rescues and 13 medical evacuations. He recovered eight bodies and assisted with two arrests.

In 2008, Mel and trooper Sergeant Bryan Barlow shared the Governors Denali Award Peak Performance for saving the life of a kayaker caught in a bore tide. During that daring rescue, Mel was able to hold the helicopter steady and close to the waters as Barlow leaned out and pulled the kayaker from Turnagain Arm, saving the man's life. This act was but one of many saves he made in his career.

These remarkable numbers, however, are just a small part of what made Mel a valued member of the team. He was well known and well respected among the search and rescue community and was known for his attention to safety.

Trooper Tage Toll, of Talkeetna, joined the Alaska State troopers in 2003 after spending 2 years with the Kansas Highway Patrol. He served in Fairbanks, Glennallen, and Northway. Then in September of 2009, he transferred to Talkeetna at the gateway to Denali National Park. He was an expert marksman and a member of the regional SWAT team what we in Alaska refer to as the SERT. Like Mel, Tage was also a pilot and loved to fly his Super Cub.

On March 30, the Alaska State troopers dispatched Helo-1 to rescue a snowmachiner who crashed near Larson Lake, 7 miles east of Talkeetna. Mel flew from Anchorage to Talkeetna, picked up Tage and began a search. The pair found the snowmachiner around 10 p.m. They intended to fly to a nearby gas station to rendezvous with EMS personnel. The helicopter crashed a little over an hour later, and there were no survivors.

This National Police Week, as America focuses on the daily sacrifices of what those in law enforcement refer to as the "Thin Blue Line," I am honored to share the stories of these three outstanding Alaskans, who paid the ultimate sacrifice, with the Senate. In valor, there is hope.

WWII VETERANS VISIT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, on May 19, 89 World War II veterans from Montana will be visiting our Nation's Capital.

With a great deal of honor and respect, I extend a hearty Montana welcome to each and every one of them.

Together, they will visit the World War II Memorial and share stories about their service. This journey will no doubt bring about a lot of memories. I hope it will give them a deep sense of pride as well.

What they achieved together almost 70 years ago was remarkable. That memorial is a testament to the fact that a grateful nation will never forget

what they did or what they sacrificed. To us, they were our greatest generation. They left the comforts of their family and their communities to confront evil from Iwo Jima to Bastogne. Together, they won the war in the Pacific by defeating an empire and liberated a continent by destroying Hitler and the Nazis.

To them they were simply doing their jobs. They enlisted in unprecedented numbers to defend our freedoms and our values. They represented the very best of us and made us proud.

From a young age I remember playing the bugle at the memorial services of veterans of the first two World Wars. It instilled in me a profound sense of respect that I will never forget.

Honoring the service of every generation of American veterans is a Montana value. I deeply appreciate the work of the Big Sky Honor Flight, the nonprofit organization that made this trip possible.

I say to the World War II veterans making the trip, I salute you. We will always be grateful, and we will never forget your service or your sacrifice.

RECOGNIZING STEPPING STONES CENTER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 50th anniversary of Stepping Stones Center, which serves the needs of people with disabilities in Greater Cincinnati and inspires independence and pathways to helping people achieve their potential. I have visited Stepping Stones on several occasions and have always been impressed by their work.

Stepping Stones Center was founded in 1963 when a handful of parents and friends of children with disabilities established Cincinnati's first day camp for children with disabilities. These passionate and loving parents wanted their children to have opportunities like those of their siblings, friends and neighbors.

Over the years, Stepping Stones has continued to expand, broadening the scope of services and the ability to reach more families. In the early years, Stepping Stones' services focused on traditional day camp opportunities, which were enhanced to provide therapeutic benefits including outdoor activities, arts and crafts, swimming and games.

In 1971, the region's first on-site infant stimulation program was developed and Stepping Stones helped launch Cincinnati Mothers of Special Children in 1974.

Partnering with the Rotary Club of Cincinnati, programming for a second campus was developed for Camp Allyn in Batavia, augmenting summer programs with year-round educational programs, overnight camps and initiating services for adults.

In response to the growing needs of children with autism, Stepping Stones launched its innovative Step-Up program as Greater Cincinnati's first al-

ternative education program for students with severe autism and extreme behaviors in 2004. Today, Step-Up serves students from 14 school districts in the region. In 2013, Stepping Stones launched the region's first sensory needs respite and support program for children with autism and other sensory needs and extreme behaviors, filling a critical need for ongoing overnight recreational respites.

Since its founding, thousands of high school students in Greater Cincinnati have been trained and have served as volunteer camp counselors, learning the benefits of giving back to their communities and gaining an understanding of occupations that serve those with special needs. Many special education teachers, therapists and disabilities professionals in Greater Cincinnati can trace their vocations to summers volunteering at Stepping Stones.

On this occasion I would like to recognize Stepping Stones Center and honor the founders, Margaret—Peggy—Geier, Minor LeBlond and Mary T. Schloss, the trailblazers who identified a need, envisioned a solution, and then worked tirelessly to make Stepping Stones happen. I salute the volunteers, staff members, donors and parents who carry on their spirit every day, continuing to build pathways to independence for people with disabilities. It is a privilege to recognize this 50 year anniversary, and I wish Stepping Stones all the best for the future.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT TRISTAN MYKAL WADE

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize and honor the extraordinary service and ultimate sacrifice of SGT Tristan Mykal Wade, of Indianapolis, IN. Sergeant Wade was serving in the U.S. Army, assigned to the 573rd Clearance Company at White Sands Missile Range in Afghanistan. He was serving a 9-month deployment and his unit was scheduled to return to White Sands in April.

On Friday, March 22, while serving in Qarah Bagh District, Ghazni Province, Afghanistan, enemy forces attacked Sergeant Wade's unit with an improvised explosive device and he was killed. Command Sgt. Major Joe Medlin of Rock Hill, the ranking enlisted man for the task force, stated Sergeant Wade was:

An outstanding soldier and a true hero. He will certainly be missed by his unit and all of us in Task Force Prowler.

White Sands Missile Range Commander BG Gen. Gwen Bingham said:

We thank him for his outstanding service and sacrifice. We will never forget him. Our brave men and women perform a multitude of missions in a magnanimous way in Afghanistan and all places around the globe. They do so selflessly without any expectation of anything in return.

Certainly, Sergeant Wade is a shining example of this selflessness and patriotism.

An Indianapolis native, Sergeant Wade attended three different high schools while a freshman. He enrolled at Southport High School at the beginning of his sophomore year and joined the football program, which had endured a 10-year plus stretch of losing seasons. Head football coach Bill Peebles remembered Tristan as a cocky young kid who wanted to catch touchdown passes and become a Friday-night star. Although Coach Peebles didn't expect much from Wade, Tristan represented the epitome of the program's goal—excelling in the classroom, in training and on the field. Over the following 3 years, Coach Peebles watched Tristan grow into a leader who helped turn the football program into a winning program. "He went from wanting to be a Friday-night hero as a skinny sophomore, to being a Friday-night hero," Peebles said. Sergeant Wade graduated from Southport High School in 2009.

He carried into the Army his enthusiasm for sports where he was a member of the Army volleyball team. Friends and family remember how he enjoyed practical jokes and dancing. But most important to Sergeant Wade was his precious daughter Skylynn of whom he wrote, "She is my world and I'll truly miss her while in Afghanistan."

While still in high school, Tristan volunteered for the U.S. Army, following in the footsteps of his father SGT Daniel L. Wade who had been to Afghanistan in 2004, and his uncles. He knew he would likely be deployed to active combat zones, but as he was known to do all his life, he demonstrated courage and conviction. "No matter how scared he was, he never showed it," his mother Tisa Wade said.

Sergeant Wade was respected and appreciated by his fellow soldiers for his professionalism as well as his personal qualities. As LTC Andre Balyoz pointed out in his eulogy, Sergeant Wade was:

A natural leader, the type who took charge and made things happen. He always took care of and protected his Soldiers.

And although the gravity of his mission was always with him, Lieutenant Colonel Balyoz said that:

Tristan was someone who was always happy, always in a good mood and he could very quickly cheer up those around him. His positive attitude was certainly contagious.

Prior to his service in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Sergeant Wade served in Iraq. During those deployments he earned the Army Commendation Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Iraqi Army Good Conduct Medal and the Combat Action Badge. On April 6, 2013, Sergeant Wade's family was presented the Bronze Star and Purple Heart in honor of the supreme sacrifice he made for his fellow Americans and the United States.

Sergeant Wade is survived and mourned by his wife, Alisha Morales of Las Cruces, NM, his mother Tisa Wade and father Daniel Wade, Jr., both of Indianapolis, and his daughter Skylynn