

in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for basic training.

"We dug man holes and stayed in them for 24 hours," Rivas remembers. "This was one of my favorite parts of being a Marine."

In September 2004 he was sent to Camp Johnson, North Carolina, for Personal Administration School to learn basic administration procedures of the Marines. Then in November the same year he went to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, in Camp Pendleton, California, where Rivas worked on a daily basis in administration.

Rivas was deployed to Camp Fallujah, Iraq, in January 2006 with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group. While there, he held administrative support duties, as well as tower duty, where they would stand for 16-hour shifts in the tower, watching to make sure no one entered the base from their positions. He worked at a gate on the base, scanning all the eyes of the Local Nationals that would enter the base to work.

"The living conditions were not so bad," Rivas said. "We had hard-standing buildings to sleep in at night and then we had trailers that had showers and bathrooms. We had a chow facility to eat so we didn't have to eat the MRE's unless we were out on patrols for a few days. So, overall, the living conditions were okay."

After returning from Iraq, he held multiple administrative and supervisory positions at Camp Pendleton, California, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Yuma, Arizona.

In November 2012, Rivas was deployed for his second tour, this time sent to Kabul, Afghanistan, with the United States Forces Afghanistan, working with the Navy and Air Force to make sure every servicemember received their awards before departing to the U.S.

Also in Afghanistan, Rivas was on the drive team, responsible for safely transporting civilian military employees, servicemembers and high-ranking officers around to different bases in Afghanistan.

Living in a five-story building that included everything inside, such as a gym, their rooms (with a restroom in each one), and Wi-Fi connections, Rivas said this was the best living conditions he had ever had.

Rivas is married to Elizabeth Chaves Rivas and they have four kids, Lizette Marie Arizmendi, Ruben Fernando Arizmendi, Antonio Miguel Rivas and Kaylani Aziana Rivas.

"I want everyone to know she is the reason that I had a long successful Marine Corps career," Rivas said. "My kids are my life and the greatest joy in the world is being a father."

TRIBUTE TO JAMES P. SIMONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to U.S. Army veteran and former CPT James P. Simons, one of our Nation's and the Commonwealth of Kentucky's brave heroes from the Vietnam war.

From June 1966 to June 1967, Mr. Simons served as a lieutenant in Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, Airmobile, in South Vietnam. During the first 9½ months of his deployment, then-Lieutenant Simons flew unarmed OH-13 helicopters as a scout pilot, flying deep into enemy territory, above the jungle, to search for insurgents below. Lieutenant Simons would radio back enemy locations to his post, and American forces would move in.

Lieutenant Simons logged an incredible 1,430 flight hours during the first 9½ months of his deployment. He often flew four and five missions per day, landing every few hours to refuel and returning to the air a short time later. Ten- and 12-hour days spent flying in enemy territory were not uncommon. During a period in which scout pilots were scarce, Lieutenant Simons remarkably flew missions on 27 consecutive days.

Captain Simons has received numerous medals for his heroism and service during the Vietnam war. They include: the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and two Air Medals—a rarity—which were needed to appropriately represent the 625 combat missions Lieutenant Simons flew in Vietnam. In addition to these medals, former Captain Simons has received three Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Distinguished Service Cross.

Mr. Simons received Purple Hearts for each of the combat wounds he sustained; he was injured twice when the helicopters he was piloting were shot down by enemy fire. The third injury occurred when the enemy launched a nighttime mortar attack and a mortar exploded in Lieutenant Simons' tent. Following the attack, Lieutenant Simons was transported to a field hospital where he had 26 pieces of shrapnel removed. After sustaining his third combat injury, Lieutenant Simons was no longer permitted to fly due to the number of times he had been wounded. He spent the remaining 10 weeks of his tour in Vietnam serving our military and our country in other capacities.

Mr. Simons received the prestigious Distinguished Flying Cross due to his valiant action on November 24, 1966, during a search-and-destroy mission near Bong Son, Vietnam. Lieutenant Simons was flying ahead of U.S. ground forces to locate areas concentrated with enemies when he took on machine gun fire. In the face of this attack, Lieutenant Simons conducted reconnaissance of the area to assist with the ground mission. As he took on heavy enemy fire his helicopter eventually was shot down. Lieutenant Simons fortunately was not wounded, and he bravely assisted an injured crewmember in seeking cover before the two were evacuated.

Less than 1 month later, on December 17, 1966, Lieutenant Simons carried out acts of bravery for which he ultimately was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the military's second-highest decoration for a member of the U.S. Army. He received this award for his "extraordinary heroism" during yet another ground search-and-destroy mission near Bong Son, Vietnam.

Lieutenant Simons was leading a helicopter scout group screening ahead for U.S. forces on the ground. During heavy exchanges of ground fire, Lieutenant Simons flew low and in harm's way to mark enemy positions with

smoke grenades. As the battle continued, Lieutenant Simons saw that U.S. troops below him had become stranded. In response, he dropped grenades on enemy bunkers and continued to fly low to attract enemy fire so his fellow American servicemembers could be rescued. Lieutenant Simons took a number of actions at tremendous personal risk, and his heroism and selflessness ultimately saved the lives of three of his fellow comrades.

Former Captain Simons' courageous military service on behalf of the United States during the Vietnam war deserves the recognition of this body. Thus, I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in honoring Mr. James P. Simons today.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY OLKEWICZ

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, I want to talk about the worst kept secret in the Senate. Nancy Olkewicz is really great at her job. I have depended on her many times as have many others in this Chamber. She has had many roles in the Senate, and she has been spectacular with all of them. She has served under chairmen like the late Senator Robert C. Byrd, Senator HARRY REID, and me. Over the years, she has been given many challenging assignments, and she has never failed to deliver. It is with great pride and some sadness that Nancy has announced her plans to leave the Senate Sergeant at Arms and retire from the Senate this summer. We celebrate her 36 years with us. She will be very much missed.

Many people in Washington see their professions as just jobs. For Nancy, her work has meant much more than that. The agencies she helped fund and the people she has worked with are her second family. She has been working in the Senate since she was 19 and an aide to Senator Paul Sarbanes. Nancy practically grew up in the Senate. Her countless friends and the respect she has earned from both sides of the aisle are a testament to her accomplishments and her demeanor.

If you want to see a monument to Nancy's work here, look no further than the Senate rain garden. This innovation has been capturing and filtering runoff from parking lots to reduce storm water flooding and keep pollutants from entering local streams and rivers for 10 years now. This remarkable project could not have happened without Nancy's work for the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee. Thanks to her tenacity and pleasant—but stern—oversight, the Senate rain garden was completed on time and under budget. Today, the Senate rain garden stands as a constant reminder of sustainability and stewardship every day for the visitors and staffers on Capitol Hill.

I could go on much longer talking about Nancy. She is accomplished, humble, and kind. Many of us in the