

NOT VOTING—9

Coats	Murkowski	Toomey
Flake	Perdue	
Graham	Reid	
Kaine	Sanders	

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote, the yeas are 90, the nays are 1.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT MATTHEW VAIL THOMPSON

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I come to the floor to pay tribute to an American soldier who has given his last full measure of devotion to this Nation and to the noble pursuits of liberty and peace.

Twenty-eight-year-old SSG Matthew Vail Thompson grew up in Brookfield, WI, and was a proud member of the Army Special Forces. Tragically, on August 23, 2016, he became the second American this year to lose his life while on combat duty in Afghanistan.

Staff Sergeant Thompson was truly one of the finest among us. I had the honor of attending a memorial service for Matthew at his family's church in Brookfield, where hundreds of his friends and family members paid their final respects. They loved him, of course, but they also admired him. They told stories of a generous young man, adventurous, and always ready to make friends. His father spoke about and his pastor read us something Matthew wrote 10 years ago, a list of "all the little things" that make life sweeter. In effect, 10 rules to live by. It shows striking maturity, especially for a young man still in his teens when he and his best friend wrote the rules.

Now, the rules are actually quite deep, and there is an awful lot written, but I just want to read the 10 rules bullet points and just refer everybody to my Web site for the full rules and all he has written.

1. Never grow up.
2. Learn.
3. Never have any regrets.
4. Live for the moment.
5. Do what you love.
6. Pursue with a passion.
7. Never settle.
8. Always take time to listen and to talk.
9. Keep a positive attitude.
10. I need God and will live for Him.

His father gave an extraordinary eulogy about his son, and he asked the congregation at the very end—he hoped, the congregation would learn from what Matthew had written.

Matthew began college at Marquette University in Milwaukee. In paying tribute to Matthew, one of his fellow resident assistants said: "He was one of the best humans I ever knew." He transferred to Concordia University in California, where he earned a degree in theological studies and met his wife Rachel.

Rachel Thompson says Matthew was reluctant to date at first because of his plans to serve in the military. She said: "He knew he wanted to go into a really specialized, extremely dangerous job." His first thought was to spare her the possible pain.

That danger was real. Staff Sergeant Thompson served as a medic with America's elite forces in hazardous places. He was first deployed to Iraq and then to Afghanistan. The mission he and his unit were on was considered to be "noncombat"—advising Afghan forces on how to free their country from ongoing attacks by the Taliban, Islamic terrorists who seek to reimpose their oppressive rule. Their mission was noncombat in name only, but Staff Sergeant Thompson and his unit were patrolling "outside the wire." They were exposed to every danger. They were patrolling on foot, looking for improvised explosive devices left by an enemy that seeks to kill indiscriminately. One of those bombs went off, killing six Afghan soldiers, wounding another American soldier, and taking the life of Matthew—a courageous young man who was defending the liberties on which this Nation was founded, liberties our Founders said are the birthright of everyone on Earth.

For 240 years, our service men and women have defended those liberties, and they have paid a very high price. Since the Revolutionary War, more than 42 million men and women have served in our military, and more than 1 million of these heroes have died in that service. Staff Sergeant Matthews' home State has done its part. Since statehood, more than 27,000 of Wisconsin's sons and daughters have died in military service. Every one of us wishes they could have lived in peace, to fulfill their hopes and dreams, to enrich this country in ways we will never know. Every one of us is grateful that when freedom demanded such sacrifice, they stood on guard for America.

A nation's gratitude can scarcely comfort those who loved Matthew Thompson and who suffer his loss. His wife Rachel, his parents Mark and Linda, and his sisters Karen and Robyn—but also his extended family, his friends, and his band of brothers and sisters in the Army. Our hearts go out to them, and I pray they will find consolation and peace in fond memories, in spite of their loss.

But a Nation's gratitude, inadequate as it may be, is what Staff Sergeant Thompson is fully due. Rachel Thompson recounted her last conversation with her husband. Because she knew he was doing dangerous work, she said:

I was crying. I was afraid. And he would just listen and tell me he loved me and that it was going to be OK.

For America it will be OK, as long as men and women of the caliber and spirit of Staff Sergeant Thompson continue to stand on our behalf and in defense of our freedom.

May God bless and comfort Staff Sergeant Thompson's loved ones. May He watch over all those who answer our Nation's call. May God bless America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in honor of National POW/MIA Day, today I wish to pay tribute to our Nation's servicemembers who have been taken as prisoners of war, POWs, and those missing in action, MIA. I also pray for resolution for the military families who await answers about their loved ones and thank those who work to ensure that all our Nation's veterans are accounted for and their service is not forgotten.

A great source of pride and comfort in being an American is knowing that if we get in harm's way, strong and resourceful Americans stand with us. Unfortunately, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and even 70-plus years have passed since some Americans have gone unaccounted for while serving our Nation, and they have yet to be returned home.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency reports that more than 83,000 Americans remain missing from World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, the Cold War, and the Gulf wars and other conflicts. This includes 333 Idahoans who have not been recovered following World War II and 25 Idahoans who remain unaccounted for who served in the Korean war. Additionally, eight Idahoans went missing while serving in the Vietnam war and remain missing: Capt. Jon K. Bodahl, Capt. Curtis R. Bohlscheid, CPT Gregg N. Hollinger, ENS Hal T. Hollingsworth, SSG William B. Hunt, 1LT William E. Lemmons, LT Roderick L. Mayer, and Warrant Officer Jon M. Sparks. Their names and service must be fixed in our national attention.

My heart hurts for the thousands of military families who have remained in limbo all these years. We can never forget their pain and the enduring service of all our service personnel who have not made it home. We must be resolute in our duty to bring them home. That is part of our responsibility as a nation to those Americans who have answered