

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator ISAKSON and I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LIEUTENANT ROBERT WILSON COLLINS

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me and my colleague, Senator ISAKSON, in honoring the life and commitment of 1LT Robert Collins of Tyrone, GA.

Lieutenant Collins grew up in the small town of Tyrone in Fayette County, where he attended Sandy Creek High School, played football on Friday nights, where he became a standout student that would take him to the halls of West Point, and where he attended Hopewell United Methodist Church with his family every Sunday morning.

On the 7th of April 2010, Lieutenant Collins made the ultimate sacrifice when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle on the streets of Mosul, Iraq. He was 24 years old.

To me, it is a particularly difficult situation because Lieutenant Collins was one of my appointees to West Point. He graduated from West Point in 2008 and became an officer in B Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Regiment of the Armor Unit, 3rd Infantry Division, based at Fort Stewart, GA. He deployed to Iraq in the autumn of 2009.

Lieutenant Collins served as his platoon's commander. While in Iraq, his unit was charged with improving security and the quality of life for the Iraqi people. He and his men also provided security for the recent successful Iraqi elections. They were dedicated to the goal of a democratic Iraq and sought to help its people lead normal, safe lives.

Robert's friends have described him as a man of great compassion. He was a natural leader who truly found a calling in the honor and patriotism of service in the U.S. Army. He has been described by his superiors as a young man who performed his duties courageously, without hesitation, and without reservations because, after all, he was a soldier in the U.S. Army.

As a small token of gratitude and remembrance for the ultimate sacrifice paid by Lieutenant Collins, I am pleased to join Senator ISAKSON in urging our colleagues to rename the post office in Tyrone, GA, as the "1st Lt. Robert Wilson Collins Post Office Building" in Lieutenant Collins' honor. Nothing we can do can ever repay the

debt and the ultimate sacrifice this young man has made, but this will ensure his name lives on, not just in his friends' and families' hearts but in the heart of his hometown.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I am pleased to join the senior Senator from Georgia, my friend SAXBY CHAMBLISS, to pay tribute today to Robert Collins.

This naming of a post office is most appropriate in Tyrone, GA, and it is most appropriate because of the great sacrifice of this young man, whose story, as Senator CHAMBLISS says, is compelling.

One interesting point I wish to make is that he was the son of two lieutenant colonels retired from the U.S. military. His mother, LTC Sharon L.G. Collins, and his father, LTC Burkitt "Deacon" Collins, spent more than 20 years in the U.S. military.

His mother said: We never asked him to follow us into the family business—being the military—but he did follow us into the family business in large measure because of what happened on 9/11/2001.

Following that tragic day in American history when he watched the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers, he expressed to his parents a desire to join the U.S. military. His mother responded, along with his father, by making an appointment for him to visit West Point. They dressed him up in his very best outfit and took him to West Point.

Upon leaving Tyrone, one of his friends stopped him before he got in the car to go to West Point and said: Why are you dressed up so well?

He said: Because my mom and dad are colonels.

That is the kind of young man he was—respect for his parents, the U.S. military, and the greatness of our country.

He applied to West Point. Senator CHAMBLISS appointed him to West Point, and he was there with distinction. And later in 2009, he went off to serve the U.S. military. Unfortunately, on April 7, he made the ultimate sacrifice for the people of this country.

It is only appropriate in every way possible that we pay tribute to the young men and young women who sacrifice for us so all of us can enjoy the freedom of our country.

I am pleased, I am honored, and I am proud to join Senator CHAMBLISS in naming this post office in Tyrone, GA, after First Lieutenant Collins, who was a member of B Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, GA.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING MAURICE "MO" BAILEY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, as I mentioned, this has been a very difficult week for our military and our veterans communities in the State of Alaska. On Tuesday of this week we came together in Sitka, at Sitka Air Station, the Coast Guard air station there, to honor the memory of three members of the U.S. Coast Guard who gave their lives in a very tragic accident, the crash of an H-60 Jayhawk helicopter. This was off the coast of Washington on July 7. It was a real tragedy for the Coast Guard families as a whole. The community of Sitka is one that truly embraces the men and the women of the Coast Guard. In addition to being the ones who pluck the fishermen out of the sea when they are in jeopardy or at risk, these are the men and women who are helping in the local churches, helping with Boy and Girl Scouts, coaching the kids. They are truly members of our community. The loss of these three men is very painful for us all.

I attended that ceremony on Tuesday in the hangar in Sitka. After I left, I took the flight back to Washington, DC. I took the redeye. When I arrived on Wednesday morning I was informed of the passing of a very dear friend of mine, a gentleman who made a profound contribution to the lives of so many of Alaska's veterans. I am speaking today of an individual by the name of Maurice Bailey. We called him Mo. Mo was from Wasilla, AK, and he was a disabled Vietnam era veteran who fought the VA bureaucracy to obtain his earned benefits.

He fought for himself and he was successful in that, but he went beyond that. He devoted the rest of his life to ensuring that the challenges of Alaska's veterans were not forgotten. He focused his efforts on those veterans who live in more than 200 rural communities that are not connected by road to the rest of Alaska or certainly to the continental United States. These are the communities of bush Alaska.

In 2003, Mo founded Veterans Aviation Outreach. This is an organization of volunteer pilots who travel to rural Alaska, to the communities that are hundreds and hundreds of miles from the nearest VA facility. He and his other volunteers did what the VA simply was not doing. They sought out those forgotten veterans and helped them in every way they possibly could.

When you listen to the stories about what Mo did and what the Veterans Aviation Outreach group did, it was a little bit of everything. They helped the veterans fill out applications for their benefits. Oftentimes it meant volunteering to fly a veteran to Anchorage for a medical appointment or perhaps raising the money for an airplane

ticket. In so many of our very rural, very remote communities, there is no road. You don't get in your car and drive. So for the veteran to go for care, they may be traveling hundreds of miles. They don't have the money to do so. So Mo would bring his guys together or he would get in his plane and he would fly out there and pick them up.

Sometimes the help meant delivering moose meat, clearly a very desired food staple in rural Alaska. Sometimes it meant building a wheelchair ramp in a veteran's home. This was an all-volunteer operation. It functioned on raffles and bake sales. All too often the money came straight from the pockets of its own volunteers.

We are a State that reveres all of our veterans. In Alaska we are home to more veterans per capita than any other State in the Union. We are also known as a very strong State for voluntarism. Support for veterans is clearly the rule. In many of the communities it is difficult to provide for that level of support, but we figure out a way to do it anyway.

It is universally acknowledged that there was something exceptional about Mo Bailey. His was a life of selfless service, sacrifice, and humility. He was truly a cut above the rest, and that is a pretty strong statement when you consider the many veterans who call Alaska home. But Mo never sought recognition for himself. He was so humble. But this did not stop his friends from ensuring that he received the recognition he had so honorably earned. In 2007, Mo was awarded with the prestigious Alaska Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award. I do not believe I am overstating when I say today that we mourn the loss of one of our State's most significant veteran leaders.

Mo Bailey was born in 1939 and grew up in Memphis, TN, during the Jim Crow era. The story goes he was looking up at the B-17s flying overhead and he told himself: Someday I am going to be flying those. Mo recounted, in a 2009 interview published in the *Frontiersman* newspaper:

Black people there said they didn't think this would ever happen. But at 7 years old I knew this is the United States of America and you can do anything you want to do. That was my heart's desire.

Those were Mo's words.

Mo enlisted in the Army at the age of 17. I say to the pages down here, he joined the Army at 17. He forged his father's signature on the consent form. Then he served 20 years. He pulled two tours in Vietnam and one in Alaska. He was a helicopter crew chief and a gunner.

Then, upon retirement from the Army, he decided to stay in Alaska and get involved in our community. He became a private pilot and a flight instructor. He was a trained Veterans Service Officer and he served as president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 903 in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley.

It was not too long ago that Mo discovered he had leukemia, but he said it was not going to slow him down. In an interview in the *Frontiersman* newspaper Mo said:

I feel as though I'm probably on somebody else's time. But that's OK. There is no quit. No way, no how. I'm never going to prepare myself to die. Never.

Mo really did live his life and live it large.

I got a call in early January. I was traveling and I got a call from my staff person out in the Mat-Su Valley and he said: Mo has leukemia. He is not doing well. He is in the hospital and this may be it.

I called the hospital. A man answered. I asked to speak to Mo. The guy on the other end said, "Well, this is Mo."

I said: Mo, you sound pretty healthy. He said: Yes, they tell me I am not going to make it. They tell me I am done. I am in the hospital. But I just don't feel like dying. I don't feel like I am ready.

I said: Mo, you don't sound like you are going anywhere. You sound like you have got a lot of fight left in you.

Mo said: You know, there are some things I want to do. I have been working on this veterans gathering. It is a big gathering in the valley with so many of our Alaskan veterans. I have got a lot of things to do. I have got some things I want to give you. You know, I am focusing on that.

I said: Mo, I will see you in May at the gathering.

This was January and he had been told this was pretty much the end. But in May Mo hosted the gathering in Palmer, his annual day-long event that provides Alaska vets across the generations an opportunity to spend time with one another. They listen to music. They donate something to the Veterans Aviation Outreach, and they have a lot of fun.

There are some speeches, too. You can't go to any veterans gathering without a speech or so. But at that May gathering, Mo honored me with a Veterans Aviation Outreach jacket. It has my name on it and I am an honorary member of the Veterans Aviation Outreach.

Mo stood with me there and we both talked about the fact that, back in January, May looked like it was a long way away. But Mo is a fighter. Mo was not one who was going to go out easy.

At those many speeches I told those at the gathering that as much as I can do, as much as I want to do for our veterans, I am here in the Senate to help Alaska's and all veterans. I said: Mo, I will never hold a candle to you, but I sure promise to try. And I promised to try to do more, and today I renew that commitment in Mo's loving memory.

Many of us who were gathered there thought that event was going to be Mo's "last hurrah," and indeed that is the way it turned out. But Mo continued to fight right up until the very end on Tuesday evening.

I could go on for a while about Mo's work in service to the Alaska veterans community, but I would suggest it is probably a more powerful statement, a more powerful story, if it is done in Mo's own words. I ask unanimous consent that two articles, one from the *Vietnam Veterans of America* magazine and the other from the *Anchorage Daily News*, be printed in the *RECORD* at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I place these articles in the *RECORD* not only because Mo's legacy needs to be preserved in history, not only to do justice to the tremendous contribution of Mo Bailey, I am really hoping these articles will catch the attention of some of the senior officials within the VA. Reading about the gaps in service Mo Bailey sought to fill might challenge the VA to think a little bit harder about how it can improve its service to other rural veterans. At the very least, it might cause the VA to acknowledge the debt it owes to people like Mo Bailey and so many others in our veterans service organizations who are giving of their own time, their own energy, their own money, to fill these gaps. So maybe, just maybe, Mo's story, which has been an inspiration to so many of us in Alaska, will also inspire the VA to do more and to do better.

On behalf of all of my Senate colleagues, I express my deepest condolences to Mo's wife Ann and all of those who have been touched by Mo Bailey's generosity and kindness.

EXHIBIT 1

REACHING THE UNREACHED IN ALASKA VETERANS AVIATION OUTREACH

(By Jim Belshaw)

In the course of his 20-year Army career, Maurice Bailey, president of VVA Chapter 903 in Mat-Su, Alaska, pulled two tours in Vietnam and one in Alaska. He thought Alaska was a "cool place" and went back there to live. It was different from anything he'd known, and he liked things that were different. Since 1980, the mechanic-turned-pilot has flown small fixed wing aircraft around the state. With a handful of other veteran-pilots, he's hoping to turn those long years of experience in the air into something that will help Alaska's aging veteran population.

As Bailey himself got a little older, he said he decided to put in for "some VA disability stuff Agent Orange-related and PTSD. Just a whole gamut of stuff." He said the VA experience "wasn't a cakewalk," but when it was done the VA found him to be 90 percent disabled. That got him to thinking about other veterans. 74,000 of whom live in Alaska, some in remote villages far from any kind of service, Alaska being a good place to be alone if that's your desire. There are 234 villages in Alaska. They range in population from 50 to 500. A big town might have as many as 2000.

"A lot of people are hiding," Bailey said. "They just wanted to run away. They just don't want to be bothered."

He'd spent many year flying to such places. While he noticed the large number of veterans, he didn't give it much thought until he went through his own VA experience. He wondered how many of Alaska's

veterans might be so far removed that they didn't know they had benefits coming, let alone how to get them.

He became a veterans service officer. It seemed the natural for him. He met men he hadn't expected to meet.

"I met World War II guys," he said. "One guy in particular, a tough old guy 84 years old. He was gut shot twice, medically discharged, and given a 30 percent disability. He quietly disappeared into the wilds of Alaska. When I met him, he was still flying airplanes. The oldest guy I saw was 90 years old.

He says he doesn't mean to criticize the VA when he says it needs to do outreach. He thinks that if the VA did a credible job of outreach, it would be overwhelmed by the needs of veterans. He thought perhaps a smaller number of people working on a modest scale might be a good place to begin.

Maurice Bailey got together with other veteran pilots—Tom Baird and Joe Stanistreet (no longer with VAO) and Chuck Moore—to talk about the possibility of doing outreach themselves. Bailey had been doing it on his own for a year and asked his friends if they'd like to join him. A fourth later joined the group—Jim Kendall, a photographer and navigator.

From these conversations grew Veterans Aviation Outreach, Inc., three veteran pilots flying their own airplanes to reach people who live "off the road" in a place not known to have many roads. Many of those veterans live in what is described as "survival mode", barely existing, often finding comfort in alcohol, only to have the alcohol lead to unemployment.

From the beginning, Bailey said, trust was the critical factor in the success they've had. Because of his long experience flying around Alaska, he came to know many of the distant veterans. It made a difference when he broached the subject of benefits. By way of illustration, he tells of another veteran who went to a small village where no one came out to greet him. But when Aviation Outreach went to the same place, they signed up 29 people in two days for health care and benefits.

"These guys have seen me around these villages and they trust me," Bailey said. "I know most of them. I know their kids."

Bailey said Moore, with whom he served in Vietnam 38 years ago, is a key player in the effort and the pilot with the most experience.

"He was a young pilot (19) and I was an old man (25)," Bailey said. "He flew gunships. He left the Army and went into the Navy to fly jets. He flies 90 percent of the missions for VAO. At this time he also flies for the State of Alaska. We have three pilots and four airplanes. Chuck owns two airplanes and the other two are owned by Tom Baird and myself."

Tom Baird underscores the importance of trust with the veteran's community.

When I travel in the bush, most contacts are developed by these kinds of relationships," he said. "Once you establish a relationship with an individual as a friend, you end up being steadfast friends. Individual homes are open to one another. Most of the people in this state will stop and give a hand if you need it. We want to reach the unreached who are out of sight and out of mind. These individuals are extremely independent. They like to do things for themselves whether they can or not."

Bailey says the four members of Veterans Aviation Outreach have no grand illusions. They try to do "small stuff." They sign people for VA benefits; they recruit new VVA members. Believing there is strength in numbers, they do what they can to build the veterans community.

They built a wheelchair ramp for a veteran to get in and out of his house. He's 50, Bailey

said, and he'd "given up on life." So they do small things that will enhance that life.

They put in a claim for a veteran suffering from diabetes. It took eight months to settle, but the veteran received \$4,000 in back pay and now gets \$200 a month for the rest of his life.

"He's real happy because now he can buy fuel oil," Bailey said.

Bailey is direct when dealing with veterans, "I try to explain to them, 'Look guys, you're old and you're sick now,'" he said.

Tom Baird said decisions between quantity and quality is always difficult.

"We've run into difficulty making decisions about reaching as many people as we can or making sure those we have contacted are taken care of before we move on," he said. "Because of the difficulties of processing and getting things done, it's looking like we're going to go for quality first. These guys already had been promised the world and gotten nothing, so it makes no sense to go out there if we're not going to be able to do it right."

Maurice Bailey counts his blessings and speaks of a duty to share them.

"Life has been pretty good to me," he said. "I live pretty good. But we're here for more than to just live pretty good. We're here to help people when they need it."

[From the Anchorage Daily News, Nov. 18, 2008]

PILOTS BRING HOPE, HELP TO VETERANS IN ALASKA—VAO: OUTREACH BY 7 VETS INCLUDES FOOD, CLAIMS HELP AND FLIGHTS TO THE DOCTOR

(By Zaz Hollander)

WASILLA—A national veteran's group report released last month highlighted health-care struggles facing Alaska Army National Guard members returning from deployments to rural villages. But news of under-served Bush veterans came as no surprise to Maurice "Mo" Bailey, a Wasilla flight instructor who served as a helicopter flight engineer with the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War.

Several years ago, Bailey and six other veterans—also pilots—took to the skies in their own planes to help veterans living in Western Alaska. All had flown the area for fun, and saw veterans in need of help. In 2003, Bailey created a nonprofit, Veteran's Aviation Outreach, which serves "isolated veterans" in rural or remote parts of western Alaska and elsewhere.

The men mostly help people file for Veterans Administration benefits. But they've also flown out veterans in need of medical care, made sure deceased veterans got flags for their graves, and shared literally tons of moose meat scored from helpful guides.

In 2005, they filed benefit claims on behalf of six Naknek veterans. The next year, they flew a rural resident to Anchorage for emergency medical care, a visit that also resulted in diagnoses—and later treatment—of diabetes and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Now 69, Bailey last year received the Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award for his "outstanding volunteer service."

He talked about the flying outreach group during a recent conversation.

Q. Why did you start?

A. Seeing the conditions that many veterans are in. Me and the rest of the pilots used to fly to western Alaska. We saw that people would have medical problems and some people in some cases died, leaving huge debts. Had they known they had benefits, the VA would have taken care of that. It's mostly information: these people are clueless. Once you're released from the military, you are not tracked, updated.

Q. Why western Alaska?

A. We were retired, just kind of goofing around (and flying the area). They're all

combat pilots—the rest of the guys are. I'm not. We were all in Vietnam together. All of us are retired from the military, looking at our brothers and sisters and saying, "Well, what can we do?" We didn't set out to do this, trust me. We were enjoying our retirement, our grandchildren.

Q. Can you give me some specifics of the kind of outreach you do?

A. We've been to all villages up and down the Kvichak River and Lake Iliamna. We found out veterans had been buried without flags. We decided that was totally unacceptable.

Q. Where was that?

A. It was in Newhalen on Lake Iliamna. We came back and went around to organizations such as the VFW. We got flags at the Wasilla Vet Center. We took flags out to make sure that people who had died recently, they received flags they hadn't gotten before and we left flags there so they could have them to take to six surrounding villages. That was last year.

Q. What about more recently?

A. We help veterans, no matter where. Last month, a guy was on dialysis. He had to come into Wasilla three times a week. He lived in Sutton. His house was not sanitized, broken pipes. We took a couple ladies out, cleaned the house, took a plumber out to fix pipes for water, built a handicapped ramp. Now he's able to do his dialysis at home.

Q. Where does the money come from?

A. Most of it comes out of our pockets. Sometimes people give fundraisers, spaghetti dinners, garage sales, cookie bakes or whatever. We do lots of stuff. I tell you what, I'm not just bragging, I'm really proud. We've had a heckuva impact doing things for people, little things that (otherwise) people, they got to paperwork it to death.

We just gave away 2,100 pounds of moose meat. We do it every year, have a deal with guides in Healy. They bring Lower 48's on hunts. They want horns. We want meat. We caravan a couple of trucks, pick up the meat and have it processed. The neediest people get it first. Valley veterans. Actually, we sent meat to the Bush—400 pounds last year to Naknek. Last week we also bought two freezers for needy veterans and filled both up with meat.

Q. How many veterans do you serve?

A. I just started tracking that. We see and help maybe two veterans a week. On a large scale, like the meat giveaway, it's to 50 to 60 people. Out in the Bush, we file claims for people with disabilities, illnesses. We do a little bit of everything.

Q. Where's the next trip?

A. Dillingham. Hopefully (early November). We'd like to have a gathering there. We had 600 people last spring at a Wasilla Airport gathering, with a barbecue and a band . . . We had World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan vets.

What made it so amazing was that these young guys that just returned from Iraq and Afghanistan were able to communicate and talk to guys that was in World War II. A lot of those guys won't be around here next year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.