

Stokes had never traveled much before the service, but he soon found himself stationed all around the country at Air Force bases in Missouri, Arkansas, and Puerto Rico, to name a few. Stokes eventually landed a spot on the presidential squadron put in charge of the famous presidential aircraft, Air Force One. He was part of that outfit throughout the administrations of Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford.

Stokes's career in the Air Force continued to prove fortuitous. He saw the world through the window of Air Force One, visiting places that he had dreamed of seeing his entire life. He witnessed monumental historic events, like Nixon's resignation, from an arm's length away. He executed his job superbly, ensuring the President would always arrive safely on the ground. And finally, Bob received the greatest benefit he would ever come across while running the presidential squadron, meeting his wife Varlene. She too was serving on Andrews AFB at the time.

Bob and Varlene retired to East Bernstadt in 1976, where they reside to this day. The two have three children—Robert Jr., Tricia, and Ward, all of whom appreciate the dedication their mother and father have shown to our great Nation throughout the years.

Mr. President, in November 2011 there was an article published in Laurel County, Kentucky's local periodical magazine, the *Sentinel Echo*: Silver Edition. The article noted the accomplishments of Mr. Stokes throughout his many years of service in the United States Air Force.

At this time, Mr. President, it is my wish that my colleagues in the United States Senate join me in honoring Master Sergeant Charles Robert Stokes for his dedication to our great country; and I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to appear in the RECORD as follows:

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

HISTORY IN THE MAKING (By Carrie Dillard)

When retired Master Sergeant Charles Robert "Bob" Stokes was in basic training at Sampson Air Force Base, N.Y., waiting to speak to a counselor about which career field he would be best suited for, he prayed.

Having enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, Stokes knew he couldn't be a cook—he can't cook, he said, but he likes to eat. He didn't want to be an air policeman either. But he had a mechanical background, came by it honest from his father. "It was in my blood," he said.

So when only two men in his class were assigned to be in aircraft mechanics, Stokes called it divine intervention—a guiding hand that led him into the company of presidents, and ultimately to meet his wife.

Stokes graduated from London High School on May 28, 1955. He went into the service on June 6.

"I didn't have a summer vacation that year," he said. But he would get to see and experience many places in the United States

and around the world that he had never dreamed of visiting.

For a small town boy from Laurel County, New York was quite a culture shock.

"How green I was," he said. "I'd never even seen a pizza in my life, never tasted one until I went to New York. It looked terrible."

But Stokes changed his mind about the pizza, and adapted to his new surroundings, albeit with a lot of homesickness. He completed aircraft and engine school in Amarillo, Texas, and was then stationed at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

"I was a homesick boy," Stokes said. "I don't think I'd been any place other than Ohio and Tennessee before that, besides Kentucky."

At 18 years old, he was the youngest crew chief, or "glorified mechanic," at Whiteman AFB, maintaining B-47s. He'd later be stationed in Arkansas, Puerto Rico, and back to Missouri again, where he received orders to deploy to Guam.

Stokes was aboard B-52s, flying combat missions over Vietnam. As a crew chief, Stokes would fly beside the pilot.

"I supposed it made the pilot feel better knowing there was someone beside him who knew how to fix the plane," he said.

As the person who made sure the craft was "airworthy" by keeping it properly maintained and fueled up, it was rare for Stokes not to feel confident in an airplane. He said there was only one time when he felt like he might perish in one. It was during his time at Andrews Air Force Base.

Stokes was stationed at Andrews AFB during the administrations of Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford. He saw the world through the window of Air Force One, as a crew chief on the presidential squadron.

The presidential outfit was made up of 30 to 40 planes to be used by anyone from the president or vice president to cabinet officials. There were smaller jets used to shuttle dignitaries between Andrews AFB and Camp David, and Marine helicopters to fly the president back and forth between the White House and Andrews. Stokes was assigned to a VC-135, a plush plane strictly for VIP travel.

As a man who loves to study history, the 74-year-old realizes now, more than ever, that he had a "window" into American and world history.

"I saw history," he said. "The poor people's march on Washington, riots of the 1960s, Watergate."

He remembers the day Nixon returned from a diplomatic trip to China. It was the first time a U.S. president had visited the People's Republic of China, strongly considered an adversary at the time.

"It [the trip] was very hush-hush," said Stokes. "But when he came back, they let all the Air Force personnel and their families know about it. We gathered around the hangar as he taxied into the hangar."

He also remembers the day Nixon resigned. Actually, he saw him leave.

"When Nixon left, he got on a plane to California," Stokes said. "We liked Nixon. But he got involved in that Watergate."

On the flight where he thought he might perish, the presidential squadron had flown a delegation to a state funeral in Brazil. While it was standard to fly with enough fuel to make a landing at nearby alternate locations, the plane was nearly to their destination when they discovered the airport had closed. Low visibility and haze kept the plane from landing in Brazil, and they burned up most of the fuel circling the runway.

"I was sweating bullets. It was the closest I've ever come to losing my life in an aircraft."

Truth be told, Stokes didn't want to go to Andrews AFB in 1967 when he was selected.

"I tried to get out of it, Stokes said. "I was on B-52s, in combat, making combat pay, I was staff sergeant. I was living pretty good."

Andrews AFB had the safest flight record and highest standard of excellence in maintenance. "If you were selected, you were the cream of the crop. You had to be good or you wouldn't last," Stokes said.

But at the time, he didn't know what Andrews was all about; he didn't even know what he'd been selected for.

Upon arrival at Andrews AFB, SSG Stokes was escorted into the hangar bay by a master sergeant. Another master sergeant, at the time, was taking out the trash.

"I thought it was unusual to see a master sergeant doing this type of work, and what are they going to be having me, the staff sergeant, doing, scrubbing toilets," he said.

"But that's just the way it was. The master sergeant (escorting me) told me 'every man on crew takes a turn at hangar detail.'" And they did.

"We'd sweep and mop that hangar floor. You could eat off it. I'd wax and polish the airplanes. Nobody was scared to work."

Besides, it had to be perfect. It was the home of the Air Force One, and Stokes had just made presidential squadron.

"When we were overseas, nobody would touch that airplane but me," Stokes said. "I'd check the oil, pre-flight and post-flight and put it to bed."

Upon landing anywhere in the world, Stokes would service the plane, fuel it up and make sure it was ready to go for the return trip. He was the last person to see and touch the plane before guards were stationed around the plane—inside the hangar and outside the hangar. No other soul was getting near it.

It's why one night when Stokes got a call that he needed to check the plane due to a bomb threat, he said "no way." He was confident how he'd left the plane.

"I said no way," he said. "But we had to inspect it. I went over it from top to bottom, couldn't find anything."

But tensions were high then. Not long after the alleged bomb threat, they heard word there'd been an attack on the Vice President's (Spiro Agnew) motorcade in Dallas, Texas. However, it wasn't a sniper, but heat, that had made the back window shatter on the car.

Stokes met his wife, Varlene, while serving at Andrews AFB. She was working for the Department of Agriculture at the time. The two met at a cookout hosted by a mutual friend.

Although Stokes claimed he was a "confirmed bachelor" at the age of 31, he said Varlene "changed his mind." They were married in October 1968.

"The best thing that ever happened to me was meeting her," he said.

The couple raised three children—Robert Jr., Tricia, and Ward. After every trip, Stokes would bring home a boon for his young family. A spoon for Bobby, a doll for Tricia, and foreign coins for his wife, Varlene, although he wasn't actually supposed to keep the coins. "We were supposed to turn them in before we left the country," he said. The Stokes's third child, Ward, wouldn't come along until after he left Andrews AFB, missing out on the collections.

The couple retired to East Bernstadt in 1976, where they still live today.

"The more you look back on it, I'm just blessed," Stokes said.

TRIBUTE TO MR. MARTIN YOUNG

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of a devoted and loyal serviceman from the United

State Navy: Mr. Martin Young of London, KY. Martin enlisted in the Navy on September 22, 1942, when he was 19 years old. His brother was in the Army, so Martin decided to go a different route. He knew that he would have to leave home, but what he didn't know is that he was going to explore a variety of foreign locales and cross the Atlantic Ocean 14 times.

Up until his enlistment in the Navy, Martin had lived in Perry County, KY, his entire life. He was first sent to basic training at Great Lakes Training Center in Illinois. After basic training, Mr. Young decided he would attend gunnery school in San Francisco Bay, CA.

After his 6-week stint in gunnery school, Martin was finally prepared to take to the high seas. He was assigned to the Joseph Gale, a supply ship that carried ammunition and supplies as well as airplanes. During his first deployment on a ship, Mr. Young remembers that he didn't see land for 32 long days.

While aboard the Joseph Gale, Mr. Young traveled through New Guinea and the Loyalty Islands in the South Pacific; Tocopilla, Chili in South America; the West Indies; and Cuba, all before an emergency port in St. Albans, NY. The ship's bow was badly damaged by a torpedo from a German submarine and the crew had no choice but to stop for repairs on dry land.

Once in New York, Mr. Young returned to work on the tanker SS Manassas, a ship that hauled fuel to England. He would go on to make the journey 14 times while serving on that ship. Looking back, Mr. Young remembers the tension amidst the crew on the Manassas during the French Invasion. Although not involved in the attack, the ship was in the English Channel, and all members had to constantly be on alert, ready at a moment's notice to enter the fight.

Once Mr. Young returned to the States, he was given a 32-day furlough in which he and some Navy buddies hitchhiked from San Francisco to St. Louis before finally taking a bus to his eastern Kentucky home. During his leave the war ended, and Mr. Young returned to the Navy without the threat of combat looming over him.

Although the war was over, Mr. Young still had time in the Navy to complete, so when he heard about an opening in the Naval Barber Shop, he applied. He got the job, and cut hair during the days while attending barber school in the evenings. He enjoyed it so much that when he returned to Perry County on August 8, 1946, he continued to wield the scissors in the Commonwealth.

The Navy offered Martin Young the journey of a lifetime. He traveled around the world more than once and had the opportunity to port in breathtaking and beautiful locations on several continents.

Now retired, Martin Young enjoys the finer things in life, such as spend-

ing time with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Although he has retired from cutting hair, he still uses his hands to make woodcrafts and play several different musical instruments. While Martin would probably say the Navy has given him so much, today I wish to recognize him and say that it is he who has given us so much. Martin Young's service to his country during World War II is something that each and every American to this day should be truly grateful for.

An article was recently published in London, KY's local newspaper magazine, the Sentinel-Echo: Silver Edition. The article highlighted the many achievements made by Martin Young throughout his eventful lifetime.

At this time, I wish to invite my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to join me in commemorating Mr. Martin Young and his dedication to our great Nation, and I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to appear in the RECORD as follows:

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

BACK ON HIS HOME LAND (By Sue Minton)

Martin Young, 89, a member of what has become known as "America's Greatest Generation," enlisted in the Navy on Sept. 22, 1942. In the Spring of '42, Young graduated from high school, and that fall the 19-year-old ventured forth on a journey that would take him across the Atlantic 14 times.

He traveled from his home in Perry County to Louisville to be processed, examined and sworn in. "My brother was in the Army, so I decided on the Navy," Young said.

Following basic training at Great Lakes Training Center in Illinois, Young chose gunnery school over submarine duty and was transferred to Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay, Calif. "We trained on three guns, the 20-millimeter, 5-inch 38, and 3-inch 50." After completing six weeks of gunnery school, Young was assigned to U.S. Navy Gunner Armed Guard Unit.

After the gun crew assignment, Young and his comrades departed for Portland, Ore., to begin their first sea duty. They boarded the Joseph Gale, a supply ship that carried a cargo of ammunition and supplies as well as airplanes. This voyage also included a training trip along the west coast, down to San Francisco and then across the Pacific Ocean. "For 32 days I did not see land," Young recalls.

I wanted to be out there," Young said. "But I got seasick on the first ship." He remembers a gunner mate telling him he had a sure cure for seasickness. "They called us all Mack," he said. "He said to me, 'Mack, go lay down under a big shade tree,' but where would you find a shade tree out in the ocean?"

The Joseph Gale and crew members sailed to the South Pacific and dropped off supplies at various ports New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, Solomon Island, and New Guinea.

After crossing the Pacific, Young and his shipmates returned to South America Antofagasta and Tocopilla, Chili," he said.

From South America, the crew sailed back to the States, docking in Charleston, S.C. There they boarded a destroyer escort also used to transport supplies.

For a short time the crew sailed the waves of the Caribbean Sea. "The Caribbean Sea

was a hot spot, a lot of ships were sunk there," Young recalled.

While in the Caribbean, the bow of Young's ship was severely damaged by a torpedo from a German submarine. The sailors abandoned the ship and the wounded were sent to Cuba, Young among them. After arriving in Cuba, the wounded boarded the SS Shiloh en route to the U.S. Navy Hospital in St. Albans, N.Y. Seaman Young remained at the hospital for two months recovering from his injuries and surgery.

Young returned to duty on the tanker SS Manassas hauling fuel to England. This ship made seven trips from New York to England (14 trips across the Atlantic). "We also hauled gasoline from Port Arthur, Texas," Young said. "We would sail up the coast and join a convoy, maybe 60 ships. Several ships were sunk by German submarines during the seven crossings."

The Manassas was rammed by an Allied vessel in the English Channel and was docked at Belfast, Ireland, a short time for repairs. "While the ship was docked for repairs, we still carried on with our duties," Young said. "This was just before the invasion of France, and the crew had to be alert at all times."

Young recalls being in the English Channel after the invasion of France and once again was transferred to a supply ship, the SS Willard Gibbs. "This time we took supplies and ammo to Omaha Beach," he said.

The Willard Gibbs could not get near the beach, so supplies were loaded onto barges and transported to the beach. "During the unloading of the ship, the crew members went ashore and walked on Omaha Beach," Young said. "This was about a month after the invasion."

Once more Young's ship returned to New York, reloaded with supplies, and returned through the Panama Canal across the Pacific Ocean to the Philippine Islands Leyte, Luzon and Samar as well as the Mariana Islands, Caroline Island, and several others.

This passage was to be Young's last ocean voyage. When he arrived back in Los Angeles aboard the SS Willard Gibbs, he received 32 days travel time to return to New York.

Instead of taking a bus to the east coast, Young and three crew members hitchhiked. "We were on Old Highway 66, and we got a ride with one fellow all the way to St. Louis," he said. "It took us three days and nights, and at St. Louis we split up, got bus tickets and headed home."

After a short furlough at his home in Perry County, Young went back to New York. But during his 32 days travel time, the war ended.

After his furlough was over, Young reported to Lido Beach, Long Island, New York, where he was told there was a possibility he would not have to go back out to sea but would have shore duty. The New York base was turned into a USN Personnel Separation Center, and Young remained on land.

While Young was finishing his tour of duty in New York, he attended barber school. "An announcement came over the loudspeakers that barbers were needed for 12 chairs at the Navy barber shop, and I applied," Young stated. "On the ships, we didn't have any barbers so we cut each other's hair. I enjoyed it." While working mornings in the barber shop, Young attended barber school in the afternoons and evenings.

On Aug. 8, 1946, just a few weeks short of four years since his enlistment, Young was discharged from the U.S. Navy. He returned to his native eastern Kentucky home, went to Frankfort, took and successfully passed the State Barber Board examination, and received his barber's license.

While serving in the U.S. Navy, Young received several medals the Good Conduct

Medal, the American Theater Medal, the European Theater Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Medal, the Philippine Liberation Medal, and the Victory Medal.

Three years after being discharged, he married Lela Baker of Hazard, and for 20 years he lived and cut hair in his hometown.

In 1965, Young, his wife, Lela, and two children, David and Judy, moved to the Sublimity area of Laurel County. In 1995, his wife passed away, and today Young's family includes son David and wife, Lillie; daughter, Judy Smith and husband, G.J.; three grandchildren, David Ryan Young, Cameron Justin Smith, and Trey Jordan Smith; and one great-grandson, David Rylan Young.

Young retired from the swivel chair and scissors several years ago, but his hands do not remain idle he makes wood-crafted items and plays several musical instruments. This talent got him an appearance in 1947 on the first official broadcast of the Hazard radio station.

Today, not in good health, like most World War II veterans, Young spends his days reminiscing and visiting with family and friends who stop by Laurel Heights Home for the Elderly.

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT MICAH B. MASON AND PRIVATE FIRST CLASS MICAH J. MASON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a father and son who are bravely serving in our Armed Forces simultaneously: MSG Micah B. Mason and his son, PFC Micah J. Mason, both of London, KY. Master Sergeant Mason has served in the National Guard for 28 years. He now has had the opportunity to see his son, Private First Class Mason, learn, work, and grow in the same organization that the elder Mason began his career in almost three decades ago.

Not only are the Mason men both involved in the same service branch, they also served on the same mission, in the same truck. Master Sergeant Mason was excited to be given the opportunity to work alongside his son in "real world" missions. He feels that he is lucky to be able to experience a work environment firsthand with his son in a way very few parents get the chance to do.

Private First Class Mason is excited to be able to go on missions with his father. The 22-year-old didn't know that his father was going to be on the same truck as him until the day they deployed. He is overjoyed to show his father the proficiency at which he does his job on a day-to-day basis.

There is obviously a certain level of concern when deploying on a mission solo, and that level increases when there are not one but two members of the same family on a single mission. Nonetheless, the two have expressed that at the end of the day, they are glad they have each other for support.

The resiliency and strength shown by these two individuals in such a tolling work environment is truly remarkable. With men like the Masons serving in our Armed Forces, we have little reason to doubt our military's abilities. These men are true American heroes who have given much so that we may

sleep soundly at night and know that our freedoms and liberties will always be protected.

Master Sergeant Mason and his son Private First Class Mason deserve a great deal of recognition, just as all those in military service do, for what they have done to protect the citizens of their community, the great State of Kentucky, and our great country of the United States of America.

Mr. President, I would like to ask my colleagues in the Senate to join me in recognizing the hard work, dedication, and sacrifice of MSG Micah B. Mason and his son, PFC Micah J. Mason.

There was recently an article printed in Whitley County, Kentucky's local newspaper, The Times-Tribune, which highlighted the outstanding service of this father and son duo who have so graciously contributed to our Nation's defense throughout the years. 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 Times-Tribune, Oct. 12, 2011]
FATHER AND SON TEAM UP TO GO OUTSIDE
THE WIRE

(By Corbin, special to the Times-Tribune)

As soldiers complete their pre-mission checks and get everything loaded for transport, it would seem the job of escorting supply trucks from Joint Base Balad to Contingency Operating Site Mosul is just another mission for the soldiers of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, 77th Sustainment Brigade, 310th Expeditionary Sustainment Command.

However, a rare occasion has been marked, not only in the 149th Infantry Regiment, but in the military as a whole. A father and son are going out together on not only the same mission, but in the same truck.

"It's a unique experience for sure to actually be doing real-world missions with your son as a gunner and seeing him in that atmosphere," said Master Sgt. Micah B. Mason, an assistant operations noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 149 Inf. Regt., a native of London. "It's something very few parents get to do. I'm excited to actually go on a mission and experience it first-hand with my son."

Master Sgt. Mason, 46, who served in the Guard for over 28 years, usually watches convoy escort missions unfold as a shift battle NCO in charge of the 149th Inf. Regt.'s tactical operations center. However, the unit sent him on this mission as part of their ongoing efforts to ensure everyone in the tactical operations center is able to see what goes on first-hand during the missions they monitor on a daily basis.

"I have a lot of concerns . . . if something does happen (on the mission)," said Master Sgt. Mason. "I'm glad I'm there with him, though."

Master Sgt. Mason said he's only told two people back home about him and his son doing this mission together and that "they're just in awe."

"I didn't know he was going, 'til I saw him sitting out by the trucks," said 22-year-old Pfc. Micah J. Mason, a gunner with Delta Company, 1/149th Inf. Regt., also a native of London. "It just makes me happy to actually do something with him, to let him see what I do on a day-to-day basis."

Pfc. Mason said he had been waiting to be able to go on a mission with his father, as not many people can say that they have done that. After the mission, Master Sgt. Mason had only good things to say.

"Things went very smooth," he said. "The convoy escort team knew their jobs very well and were professional every step of the way. Being out with my son was the chance of a lifetime. It was very strange to see him doing his job, being in control. But in the same sense, I was very proud."

TRIBUTE TO FIRST CLASS SEAMAN JAMES FRANCIS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to an exceptional veteran of the United States Navy who wore the uniform during World War II, First Class Seaman James Francis of Laurel County, KY.

James was born in Monroe County, KY, in 1924. His family lived on a farm where they raised just about everything they ate. The family moved to Indiana in 1937 when James' father got a job working for the railroad. James was drafted into the Navy in 1941, on his 19th birthday.

Although James never entered combat, he was an intricate part of the war effort in the South Pacific. He was stationed on a Merchant Marine ship that delivered ammunition to the soldiers who were on the front lines. After his time aboard ship, James spent 18 months in Hong Kong cutting hair at a G.I. barber shop. He was discharged in May 1946.

Mr. James Francis is most assuredly deserving of commemoration for the sacrifices he made for each one of us and for our great Nation, as well as his years of service to the betterment of his community and to the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

There was recently a feature article published in the Sentinel Echo: Silver Edition magazine in November 2011, highlighting the upstanding legacy of Mr. James Francis and his commendable dedication to our Nation's Armed Forces.

Mr. President, it is my wish that my colleagues in the United States Senate join me in honoring the loyalty and bravery shown by Kentucky's own James Francis. And I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to appear in the RECORD as follows:

[From the Sentinel Echo, Nov. 2011]
NAVY SUPPLIER
(By Carol Mills)

First Class Seaman James Francis was a Merchant Marine during World War II.

In time of war, the Merchant Marine is an auxiliary to the Navy and delivers troops and supplies for the military.

Francis went to Great Lakes Boot Camp in Illinois, near North Chicago, and gunnery school in Gulf Port, Miss., and then went to California and caught a ship.

"We were shipped out," Francis said. "I went to the Philippines the first trip, came back to the States, and then went to Australia and the South Pacific for six months