

reserve program. He said if he didn't have his son before he began active duty, he would have made a career out of the Marines.

"I decided one year's enough," Mays said. "I'm not missing any more of his life." Landon is now two years old.

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT CHARLES HAYES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of MSgt Charles Hayes of London, KY. Master Sergeant Hayes served in the U.S. Air Force from 1972 to 1996, and was involved in both the Vietnam and gulf wars. Hayes volunteered to join at age 21 and continued to be a volunteer for the duration of his two-decade stint in the military.

During Hayes's extended period of time in the Air Force, he had the opportunity to visit a variety of foreign countries, including Germany, Turkey, and Thailand, just to name a few. Hayes enjoyed every aspect that went along with being a part of the Armed Forces. He flourished as a member of the U.S. Air Force in more ways than one.

What Hayes enjoyed most about the service was experiencing history in the making. Hayes remembers participating in the evacuation of Saigon, South Vietnam, in April 1975. It was a mission in which Hayes and his team were given the objective of recovering an American merchant ship that had been pirated by the Khmer Rouge navy. The ship was successfully recovered on May 13, 1975, and Hayes was an instrumental part of the operation, one that many of us remember paying close attention to while back home in the States.

Hayes also enjoyed the Air Force because it inspired its members to show initiative. In 1987, Charles was assigned public affairs duties for his section. He remembers how difficult and "utterly impossible" the men told him it was to get an article published in the base newspaper. Hayes took on the challenge of getting a story published head on, and that year he had 37 articles and 17 pictures with captions published in the newspaper.

Lt. Col. Richard Vaught recalls that Hayes was one of the best sergeants he has ever commanded. It wasn't unusual for those who worked with Hayes to speak highly of him. While serving as the squadron safety noncommissioned officer from 1990 to 1996, Hayes's unit received numerous honors and awards, including Best Small Unit Safety Program Award and Best Additional Duty Safety NCO Award.

Many different attributes have been used to describe Charles Hayes over the years. Talented, ambitious, reliable, and persevering are just a few of the countless positive references of the master sergeant. Lieutenant Colonel Vaught is recorded as saying, "Charlie always knew how to get everything when nobody else could. If you go to war, he's the one you want to go with

you. He'll get you everything and then some."

Charles Hayes exemplifies every characteristic of a successful member of our Nation's Armed Forces. His dedication and service to our great country over 24 years will most certainly not go unnoticed and is the very cause of my standing here today. It is my wish that my colleagues in the Senate join me in commemorating MSgt Charles Hayes at this time.

There was an article published in Laurel County's local news magazine, the Sentinel-Echo: Silver Edition, in November of 2011. The article highlighted Charles Hayes and the outstanding dedication he has shown throughout the years in his involvement with the U.S. military. 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 Sentinel-Echo: Silver Edition,
Nov. 2011]

A PART OF HISTORY (By Carol Mills)

Master Sergeant Charles Hayes, a Vietnam and Gulf War veteran, volunteered to join the United States Air Force when he was 21, serving from 1972 to 1996. He worked for 12 years in security police and 12 years in computers.

What Hayes liked most about his 24 years of service was being a part of history.

"While my part was very small, the unit I was assigned to (56 SPS, Nakhon Phanom RTAF, Thailand) was responsible for assisting in the evacuation of Saigon, South Vietnam, and Phenom Phen, Cambodia, in April 1975," 60-year-old Hayes said. "We were part of the recovery of the American merchant ship, Mayaguez, which had been pirated by the Khmer Rouge Navy. I lost 18 buddies on May 13, 1975, during the operation."

During the 1991 Gulf War, his unit (608 APS, Ramstein AFB, Ramstein, Germany) was responsible for shipping all munitions to the air bases in the desert, as well as thousands of tons of other supplies.

"I remember looking at what seemed to be miles of pallets and wondering when we would get them all shipped down range."

After the Gulf War, Hayes's unit was kept busy supporting United Nations' humanitarian missions in Eastern Europe and Africa. In 1992, one of Russia's largest cargo planes arrived at Ramstein AFB to receive donations. He was in charge of ground safety while his unit loaded the plane.

"We weren't able to use forklifts because the plane wasn't configured for them. Because I was all over the operation, the plane's crew must have figured I was a big wheel of some kind and gave me three cases of Russian vodka."

Hayes also liked the Air Force because it allowed him to show initiative.

"While sometimes routine duties were a little mundane, additional duties allowed personnel an opportunity to show initiative. In 1987, I was assigned public affairs duties for my section. It was told that it was almost 'impossible' to get an article printed in the base newspaper and utterly 'impossible' to get an article published anywhere else."

That year, Hayes had 37 articles and 17 pictures with captions published in the base newspaper. Two articles were published in command-level publications and two in a local newspaper.

Lt. Col. Richard Vaught said Hayes was one of the best master sergeants he ever commanded.

"He's the type that if you needed anything done, he always found a way to get it done when everyone else couldn't," he said. "He was the ultimate scrounger. I would say he was a very talented individual. Charlie always knew how to get everything when nobody else could. If you go to war, he's the one you want to go with you. He'll get you everything you need and then some. He just knew how to use all the various avenues. I was quite happy to have him in my command."

From 1990 through 1996, he was assigned the additional duty of squadron safety non-commissioned officer. During his tenure as safety NCO, his unit received a Best Explosives Safety Program Award from both the command and USAF as well as a Best Small Unit (under 600 personnel) Safety Program Award. He also received a Best Additional Duty Safety NCO Award.

Hayes also liked associating with other patriots.

"When situations got tough, everyone got tougher," he said. "We all regarded a challenge as something to overcome, not something to shy away from. Esprit de corps was highest when things were toughest. I served with some of the best people in the world."

Hayes enjoyed the opportunities the Air Force had to offer. "I always held the attitude that I was stationed in the best section of the best squadron on the best Air Force base in the United States. I learned that education was the least expensive hobby a person could have and completed a master's in education before I retired."

During his service he traveled throughout the British Isles, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, Turkey, Thailand, and several other countries to a lesser degree, and has driven through every state except Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. He has also been to Alaska and Hawaii during his service.

Before Hayes had lived in London, Ky., for five months, he had spent more time in London, England, than in London, Ky.

2012 NATIONAL DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to pay my respects to the victims, survivors, and heroes of the Holocaust. April 19, 2012, marks Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is observed during a week-long memorial, the National Days of Remembrance, created by Congress in 1980 and led by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Through this year's theme, "Choosing to Act: Stories of Rescue," we remember the courageous men, women, and children who stood up and saved lives, at grave risk and sometimes deadly consequences to themselves. On the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising and the liberation of European concentration camps, we honor all who embraced their own humanity to save others, abandoning self-interest for selfless bravery.

This week of commemoration that spans Sunday, April 15 to Sunday, April 22, is deeply personal. My father came to this country in 1935 to escape persecution. Speaking barely any English, he set down my family's roots with very little but memories of loved ones who had perished in the Holocaust and faith in the American dream.

The Days of Remembrance is a living memorial, altered by every citizen who

dares to speak up and open their mind and heart. It is more than an oral history project. It ties the past with our present, inspiring proactive, positive transformation in our daily lives. We recall that the brave individuals whose stories we bring to light were acting out of loyalty to their neighbors. Small communities held each other tightly. Each year, we come together at a national ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, but this collective power is also felt through smaller groups, including State and local governments, civic organizations, places of worship, schools, offices, and military bases.

Organizations such as the Holocaust Child Survivors of Connecticut document the personal histories of living survivors—children of the Holocaust. Sadly, as time goes on, our future generations will not have the privilege of hearing from them. We must work to perpetuate their messages beyond words. We must teach our Nation's children the lessons we have learned—about human betrayal, war crimes, and genocide, about heroes, hope, and honor—through our own activism.

This Wednesday, the Holocaust Memorial Museum is awarding Aung San Suu Kyi the Elie Wiesel Award at their 2012 National Tribute Dinner for “her exceptional courage in resisting tyranny and advancing the dignity and freedom of the Burmese people.” By honoring a woman who is a living hero for victims of a present-day dictatorship, the Holocaust Memorial Museum seamlessly unites history with the persecutions of today to create a new space of memory and action for generations to come.

As we soberly recall those who were not rescued, we can remain hopeful through the memory of the rescuers—those who followed their heart, beliefs, or religion to help victims in desperate need. This compassion is inspirational for me, and I hope for all those who witness human suffering and confront feelings of helplessness. As we gather this week to remember, we are choosing to be actively compassionate. Memories of the Holocaust inspire us to live today and every day with kindness, generosity, and an undying commitment to strengthening our bonds as human beings.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BARBARA MIKULSKI

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I join my fellow Senators in paying tribute to my dear colleague and friend Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI for the tremendous landmark she has reached as of March 17, 2012. She is now the longest serving female Member of our Congress. But the number of years is inadequate as a measure or metric. More telling are her monumental accomplishments and record of successfully tackling tough problems and making a real difference in lives. Senator MIKULSKI is unquestionably one of the most dedicated, inspiring, and in-

fluential public servants in our Nation's history.

Her generous spirit, flair, and eloquence as a speaker make her both loved and powerful as an advocate. Her standard of intellect and integrity has motivated me and inspired countless others. Like Senator MIKULSKI, I am humbled and driven by the legacy of members of my family who emigrated from Europe, striving for the American dream with a strong work ethic and a firm belief in progress. I am especially drawn to Senator MIKULSKI's determination to fight for her constituents and her deep sense of caring. She is an excellent role model for women and girls around the globe—and for anyone, whether a freshman Senator such as myself or a veteran legislator—devoted to a life of public service.

I am proud to work with Senator MIKULSKI on the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, joining her, for example, as a cosponsor of her Paycheck Fairness Act to continue the civil rights debate that started decades ago and is unfortunately still unresolved. We must, once and for all, secure protections for women in the workforce, reaching pay equity and ending all instances of sex discrimination.

I respect Senator MIKULSKI's efforts to reduce costs while furthering innovation and am a strong supporter of her focus on research and drug development for chronic conditions, as laid out in her SPRINT Act. Her advocacy for America's seniors and success leading immigration reform are equally inspiring, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of her Visa Waiver Program Enhanced Security and Reform Act.

I especially enjoyed partnering with Senator MIKULSKI to advance the education we provide to our Nation's students. We offered an amendment together in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to increase funding and research to meet the unique needs of gifted and talented students.

Special recognition is past due for Senator MIKULSKI, who makes the time to recognize others, most recently sponsoring S. Res. 310, designating 2012 as “Year of the Girl” and congratulating the Girl Scouts for its centennial.

Senator MIKULSKI has been an extraordinary mentor and model for countless men and women who emulate her dedication and drive, her commitment and common sense. She leads by her example, particularly for women who endeavor to hold public office. When considering the opportunity to run, they can look to the legacy she has built and the path she has traveled from social worker to city council member to a national figure in the Halls of Congress.

I look forward with pleasure and pride to serving alongside Senator MIKULSKI for years to come. I congratulate her on making history and giving her colleagues, fellow public servants, constituents, and the American people

the opportunity to engage in history-making for the good of our Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BEA ABRAMS COHEN

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I salute the life and achievements of Bea Abrams Cohen, who at 102 years old is California's oldest living woman veteran. Still active in veterans and community affairs, Mrs. Cohen was recently the guest of honor at a California Department of Veterans Affairs, CalVet, reception honoring the achievements of women in the military during Women's Military History Week.

As CalVet noted, “Women have contributed to the rich military history of our country even before they were officially allowed to serve. The first known American woman soldier was Deborah Sampson of Massachusetts who, disguised as a man, served in the Revolutionary War. Throughout the history of our country, women have consistently shown themselves as dedicated patriots, willing to put their lives on the line in order to protect our nation and the freedoms of our people.”

The life of Bea Cohen is a living testament to the incredible contributions our service women make each and every day. Born in Romania in 1910, Bea Abrams came to America through Ellis Island in 1920 with her mother, brother, and sister. When the United States entered World War II, Bea vowed to do all she could to help her adopted country. She went to school to learn the machinist trade and then worked at Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica as a real-life Rosie the Riveter.

Though she loved this work, Bea wanted to do more. In 1942, at age 33, she joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, WAAC, turning down a salary increase at Douglas. After going through basic training in Iowa, she did administrative work for the WAAC in Utah and Colorado.

By 1943, Bea took a second oath to become part of the new Women's Army Corps, WAC, which unlike the WAAC was now a part of the Regular Army. She was soon shipped overseas. Crossing the Atlantic Ocean on a ship that zigzagged to avoid enemy submarines, Bea arrived in England just in time for D-day. There, she worked in Army headquarters producing documents and operating a low-cost printing machine called a mimeograph. After 2 years of service, Bea was honorably discharged and returned to Los Angeles.

In late 1945, Bea met Marine MSgt Ray Cohen through family friends. Ray Cohen had served in the Pacific and had been a prisoner of War on the Philippine island of Corregidor for 3½ years. Bea and Ray were married the following year and had two daughters, Janiece and Susan. Later, during the Korean war, Ray was deployed for over