

[From the Salyersville Independent, July 3, 2014]

JOINS GUARD FOR WORK, SENT TO
AFGHANISTAN
(By Heather Oney)

Gregory Scott Salyer joined the Army National Guard in Prestonsburg in 2006, serving until 2011.

The former Magoffin County High School student said he was having a hard time finding a job, so at the age of 24 he decided to enlist, following in his dad's, uncles' and grandfathers' footsteps.

Salyer served one tour in Afghanistan, working in route clearance. His crew, which included five other men from Magoffin, tracked, dug up and disposed of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). While he said he was hit once, he came home without any injuries.

"I would rather go back than sit here," Salyer said. "Everything was simple. You trained for a job, then you went out and did your job. You would get up the next day and do it all, again."

Salyer said growing up around guns helped him get ready for his time overseas.

"I had been around guns my whole life and been shot at while coming," Salyer laughed. "You could tell these boys from California with stricter gun laws were not used to it, but us country people were used to doing hard work every now and then."

Salyer received the National Defense Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, ARCOM Medal of Valor, and Whitelist recognition.

He has one son, Hunter Salyer.

TRIBUTE TO BARRY E. OWENS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to one of Kentucky's proud military veterans—Barry E. Owens. Owens hails from Magoffin County, and served his country with honor in the Vietnam war.

Although millions of young Americans were drafted into service during this time, Barry decided to leave nothing to chance and volunteer. He served in the U.S. Army from 1968 until 1970, achieving the rank of specialist 4.

In 1969, he was deployed to Vietnam with the 2nd and 35th Regiments of the 4th Infantry Division. In a time when the war became increasingly unpopular, Owens always retained his sense of duty. "I served my country with pride and honor," he said.

Owens is a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Salyersville chapter of the Disabled American Veterans. His commitment to this country is worthy of praise from this body. Therefore, I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in honoring Barry Owens.

The Salyersville Independent recently published an article detailing Specialist Owens's service in Vietnam. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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

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OWENS VOLUNTEERS FOR DRAFT, GOES TO
VIETNAM
(By Heather Oney)

Barry E. Owens, born and raised in Roy-alton, Magoffin County, volunteered for the

draft during the Vietnam War in 1968 with the U.S. Army, climbing to the rank of Specialist 4 by the time he was discharged in 1970.

He attended basic training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, then advanced training for supply specialist and armory school at Fort Lee, Virginia.

From 1969 until discharged, Owens served in Vietnam with the 2nd and 35th Regiment 4th Infantry Division.

After a few days upon reporting, Owens's company commander decided that for the next year he would be a better fit as an 11 Bravo Infantry soldier, working "out in the boonies," as opposed to sitting around an office in a base camp.

Owens said he can remember the soldiers lining up in a field to get their hair cut by Vietnamese civilians. Since there was no electricity, they had to use the hand clippers where you have to squeeze them to make them work. His sergeant was in line and getting impatient.

"I told him I was a barber before going into the military," Owens laughed. "So I started at the back of his head and came out with a half moon, and that's where I stopped. I threw the clippers and ran. The next time I saw him his head was shaven. I think that's when they started shaving heads."

Owens was stationed in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, including areas around Pleiku, Kon Tum City, Buon Me Thuot, and many firebases in this region, including VC Valley and areas on the border of Cambodia and Laos.

"The Vietnam veterans returning home from this country were not greeted and welcomed home with parades or such fanfare," Owens remembers. "Many of us were met at airports with degrading slurs, cursed and spat upon."

It would be another 20 years before the Veterans Administration would acknowledge Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other disabilities and afford medical care to this era of veterans. Many Vietnam veterans fell into drug and alcohol abuse, often even resulting in homelessness, with many committing suicide and dying at an early age.

"I served my country with pride and honor," Owens said.

He is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 15 Salyersville. He has been married to his wife, Shirley, for over 20 years and has three daughters, Melissa, Misty, and Jennifer.

CONGRATULATING REVEREND SAMUEL C. TOLBERT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Rev. Samuel Tolbert, pastor of the Greater St. Mary's Missionary Baptist Church in Lake Charles, LA, on his recent election as the 15th president of the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.

Rev. Samuel C. Tolbert, Jr. was born August 1, 1958 in Lake Charles, LA and graduated from Washington High school in 1976. A graduate of Bishop College in Dallas, he earned his bachelors of arts in religion and philosophy with a minor in speech education. He has also received an honorary doctorate of divinity from Union Baptist College and Theological Seminary and a masters from Payne Theological Seminary. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in ministry at Stephen

Olford Center at Union University in Memphis, TN.

Reverend Tolbert is a recognized civic leader. He served as a commissioner for the Lake Charles Housing Authority, a representative of District "A" on Lake Charles City Council, and as a member of the board of the Louisiana Economic Development Corporation. Currently, Reverend Tolbert serves on the board of supervisors for the Southern University System.

A devout man of faith, Reverend Tolbert has dedicated himself to a life of religious servitude. He has presided over Greater Saint Mary Missionary Baptist Church since 1984. Reverend Tolbert has held a number of positions in the faith community including serving as first vice president of the Southwest Missionary Baptist Association, president of the Louisiana Home & Foreign Missions Baptist State Convention, and general secretary National Baptist Convention of America Inc. Reverend Tolbert currently serves as president of Greater St. Mary Community Development Foundation, the president & CEO Strategic Faith Leadership Ministries, and as the coordinator of disaster relief North America for Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention.

Reverend Tolbert's accomplishments reflect his dedication to his faith, education and service. On June 25, 2014, he was elected the president of the National Baptist Convention of America. With over 3.5 million members worldwide, the National Baptist Convention of America is an organization that seeks to "positively impact and influence the spiritual, educational, social, and economic conditions of all humankind".

It is with the greatest sincerity that I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Rev. Samuel Tolbert Jr. for his accomplishments as an incredible reverend, father, and mentor. His wife Matilda, and their two daughters Candace and Kayla must be extremely proud and I know that he will serve the National Baptist Convention well.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE JOHN P. DION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute Army PVT John P. Dion. Private Dion and two other soldiers died January 3, 2010 when insurgents attacked their unit with improvised explosive devices and small arms fire in Ashoq, Afghanistan.

John was born February 4, 1990 in Tarzana, CA and moved to Oklahoma during his sophomore year in high school. He joined the Army in June 2009 after graduating from high school in Shattuck, OK where he was on the baseball and football teams.

Upon graduating from basic training at Fort Benning, GA, John was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO. He was deployed to Afghanistan in November 2009.

He is survived by his parents Mark and Patricia Elsner, of Reynolds, GA, two sisters: Kelsey Dion, Reynolds, GA, and Jackie Boals of Cedar Grove, TN, two brothers: Justin Werve of Shattuck, OK, and Mark Elsner of Paris, TN, grandmothers: Jane Elsner of Reynolds, GA and Carol Willoughby of Las Vegas, NV.

Dion's half-brother, Justin Werve, who was deployed to Iraq twice with the Air Force, said he tried talking Dion out of joining the Army, but he couldn't be dissuaded. "He wanted to serve his country," Werve said. "He did it for the same reason I did it: to make sure his family stayed safe."

The family held a funeral service for Private Dion on January 16, 2010 and he was laid to rest with full military honors in Andersonville National Cemetery, Andersonville, GA.

Today we remember Army PVT John P. Dion, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

STAFF SERGEANT JACK M. MARTIN III

Mr. President, I also would like to honor Army SSG Jack M. Martin III. Sergeant Martin and another soldier died September 29, 2009 when a bomb buried beneath a road detonated while they were helping to resupply a school construction project in the Jolo Islands, Philippines.

Jack, the youngest of five children, was born April 5, 1983 in Maquoketa, IA and later moved to Oklahoma where he played football and was an honors student at Bethany High School, graduating in 2001.

He started out in the Army Reserve where he volunteered to go to Iraq, but when that deployment was canceled he met with a recruiter looking for special forces volunteers. After enlisting and completing the special forces qualification course in 2004, Jack earned his Green Beret and was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, Fort Lewis, WA.

"Both of his grandfathers served in the Army during World War II. My father was a medic in World War II. I think that influenced him. Jack wanted to serve his country," his father said.

He is survived by his wife Ashley, his parents Jack and Cheryl Martin, his brother Abe, and three sisters: Mandi, Amber and Abi.

Today we remember Army SSG Jack M. Martin III, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

FIRST LIEUTENANT DAVID T. WRIGHT II

Mr. President, I would also like to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Army 1LT David T. Wright II. First Lieutenant Wright and another soldier died September 14, 2009 of wounds sustained after enemy forces attacked their vehicle with improvised explosive devices in southern Afghanistan.

Born July 7, 1983 in Norman, OK, David did not let his football and track talent go to waste after graduating from Moore High School in 2002. He

went to the University of Oklahoma on a track scholarship and earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 2006.

After completing basic training and officer training, he was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, WA. On July 21, 2009 he was deployed to Afghanistan as part of II Platoon Bravo Company, 5th Brigade, II Infantry Division; Striker Brigade/Combat Team.

While deployed he wrote home about the honor he felt for his country and his fellow soldiers as they protected a village. He said he had no hard feelings toward the villagers, although some were angry with the soldiers.

"These people deserve a better existence," he wrote, "and hopefully my efforts will help, in a small way, provide that to them."

That letter was waiting for his parents Tim and Michele, when they returned to Oklahoma after receiving his body.

The family held a funeral service on September 22, 2009, in Norman, OK. He was laid to rest with full military honors in I.O.O.F. Cemetery.

"It was 9/11 that did it for David," the Rev. Randy Nail said at his memorial. "He wanted to do something about it, and he did."

David is survived by his parents Michele and Tim, of Moore, OK, his uncle Mitchell Scott, and his wife Angie, of Farmington, MN, and cousins, Hunter and Hailey Scott. He is preceded in death by his grandparents Betty and Junior Scott, and his uncle Michael Scott.

Today we remember Army 1LT David T. Wright II, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL T. FLYNN

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to an exceptional officer in the U.S. Army. LTG Michael T. Flynn will retire in August after more than 33 years of distinguished service to the Army and the Nation.

Throughout his career, General Flynn has personified the Army values of duty, integrity, and selfless service across the many missions to which he has contributed.

A native Rhode Islander, General Flynn graduated from the University of Rhode Island and was commissioned as a second lieutenant through the university's ROTC program. He was assigned to the "All-American" 82nd Airborne Division, and since then, has served in a variety of command and staff assignments, leading men and women during times of peace and war. Over the course of almost four decades of service, he has commanded at the platoon, company, battalion, and brigade levels.

As an intelligence officer, General Flynn was often deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, serving as the director of

intelligence for Joint Special Operations Command, U.S. Central Command, the Joint Staff, and the International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

For the past 2 years, General Flynn has served as the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, DIA, focusing on strengthening integration and collaboration with the Combatant Commands and making the agency more flexible and responsive to intelligence requirements. He has overseen DIA's rapid tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence support to U.S. warfighters as they confront a variety of threats—from militancy in North Africa and the crisis in Ukraine, to tracking terrorists and weapons proliferation.

In all of his assignments, General Flynn has provided outstanding leadership with integrity and has offered sound advice on numerous issues of importance to the Army and our Nation.

I know that he is looking forward to spending more time with his family in Rhode Island, and I wish Mike and his wife Lori the very best. On behalf of the citizens of Rhode Island and a grateful Nation, I thank General Flynn and his family for their many years of commitment, sacrifices, and service to our Nation.

BAY NOMINATION

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I wish to voice my concern over the nomination of Mr. Norman Bay to be a Commissioner on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—and eventually Chairman of the entire FERC.

I have serious concerns with Mr. Bay's qualifications to serve as a Commissioner, let alone lead the entire agency, particularly at such a critical time for the Commission and the many issues it must address such as energy grid infrastructure, safety and reliability.

Mr. Bay has at best limited experience in the energy sector and, unlike many of the recent FERC Chairmen, has never served on the Commission. Mr. Bay's inexperience is only further illuminated when compared to the lengthy and significant energy sector experience of current FERC Acting Chairman, Ms. Cheryl LaFleur.

While I may not agree with Ms. LaFleur's various policy positions, there is no denying the fact that she has spent nearly her entire career learning the intricacies of a very complicated electricity grid.

We must have the very best people on FERC, and the Chair must be the best qualified for leading the agency. Mismanagement in this critical agency could have serious consequences for American families, small businesses, national security and energy infrastructure reliability. I do not believe in on-the-job training for such an important position. It appears there has been an undefined deal—some would say a