

career. Private McDavid's service and bravery was recognized with the award of a European-African Theatre Ribbon with four Bronze Battle Stars, a Bronze Star Medal, and a Purple Heart.

Arles's father, Eugene Greene, began his career with the U.S. Army in July 1944. The oldest of 12 children, he enlisted at 18 years old with the Hancock County Draft Board. He served with the U.S. Army infantry, 2nd Division, 9th Regiment that assisted in the liberation of Nazi concentration camps in the spring of 1945. Greene and his unit liberated the death camps at Dachau. He remembers finding only 25 people alive at the sub-camp where he shot a lock off a prison gate setting them free. Those prisoners rushed to drink the milk of Holstein cattle pastured nearby.

Eugene met General Patton shortly before his death. He says of Patton, "He was over there to get a job done, and that's what he did." Eugene Greene returned with many memories of the war. Most of these he buried in the fields of his Tennessee farm, but some lived on—the faith he had in his fellow soldiers, in his family, and in God.

I have had a lot to say about the importance of teaching American history and civics to help our children grow up understanding what it means to be an American. The teacher in me thinks of this tribute as an assignment. I hope when we gather around our holiday tables this season we pause to take stock, like Arles did, to answer what our own families have contributed to America's history and to answering the question of what it means to be an American.

Thank you for allowing me to honor my friend Arles Greene and his family.

TRIBUTE TO MS. GLORIA MARTIN

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I honor Ms. Gloria Martin, a legal assistant to the Battalion Commander, 1st Battalion, 210th Aviation Regiment, Fort Rucker, AL. Ms. Martin was hired at Fort Rucker in January of 1980. She has 24 years of exemplary and dedicated service to the United States Army and Fort Rucker.

This morning, the Army will honor Ms. Martin with the Army Outstanding Employee of the Year with a Disability Award. Later today, Ms. Martin will be honored by the Department of Defense as the Army's recipient of the DoD Outstanding Disabled Employee of the Year Award. Ms. Martin will also be honored with the Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

Ms. Martin was born on August 13, 1955, to Paul and Mallie Martin in Opp, AL. Ms. Martin has five brothers and sisters, including her twin sister Gladys. While Gladys was born healthy, Gloria suffered from serious abnormalities that she has battled her entire life. The debilitating effects of scoliosis, neurofibromatosis and osteoporosis required a series of major back surgeries, the first when Gloria was 5 years old

making her childhood very difficult. Through all the surgeries and many months of recovery and therapy, Gloria showed great courage and strength by working extremely hard to complete her school work to remain with her peers. She completed elementary school on time, and she also completed high school on time. She went on to complete a business course as a member of the Dean's List at Douglas MacArthur Technical College and worked two jobs before being hired at Fort Rucker.

Gloria faced another major back surgery in 1992 and, despite complications that required a prolonged absence, she returned to her job at Fort Rucker with the same fierce determination and strength of will that had made her such a popular and respected colleague with so many of her fellow employees. A back injury in 2000 that left her with a compression fracture in her middle back did not deter Gloria from continuing to perform her duties from home as best she could. But Gloria returned to work at Fort Rucker with the help of a walker and cane even though she was in constant, often severe, pain.

Gloria Martin's tenacious and courageous service to the Army and Fort Rucker is being very rightly rewarded. She has a wonderfully supportive family, and she also loves her church, the First Assembly of God in Kinston, AL. She has held many leadership positions in her church and participates in community service activities. In a recent Army Flier article, Ms. Martin put her experience in perspective when she said, "I think it's made me a stronger person because I grew up going to the Hospital and to doctor appointments a lot. I feel like it has strengthened my faith because when you have a disability, you have to depend more on God. My faith gives me confidence in my abilities. It gives me the strength to get up in the morning. I know that my faith in God and His care has enabled me to keep working."

Gloria Martin is a very special lady, and I am very proud to join the Army and Department of Defense in honoring her tremendous accomplishments and extraordinary service to our military. She is a role model for us all. She is an example for so many others with disabilities and a true testament to what faith and personal courage can accomplish. She has touched many lives, and I thank her today for her service.

KEITH KIDD

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, over the Thanksgiving weekend, I received a letter from a State Department employee from Dallas, Keith Kidd, who left his previous job to serve in Afghanistan in 2003 and then in Iraq early this year. As a representative from the U.S. Embassy to Iraq, he worked with military and civilian leaders from the Western Al Anbar Province. I want to share his Thanksgiving

message to his friends and family because he represents the best of America and his letter reflects the positive spirit that is so representative of our country. He has volunteered for the mission to stabilize Iraq and help the Iraqi people have the freedom and democracy that every human being deserves. I hope this letter makes every American proud of the thousands of U.S. men and women, both military and civilian, serving bravely overseas during the holidays.

His letter reads as follows:

Greetings from Ramadi.

As Thanksgiving draws near, I found it fitting to tally my blessings. As it turns out, I have oodles of them.

I'm thankful that I'm alive. All of the attempts on my life have failed. I realize I'm wrecking some poor terrorist's batting average, but that's just tough. I'm thankful for the guys on my Personal Security Detail who help ensure those attempts keep failing. I'm thankful for my health. The dust storms are bad for my eyes, nose, throat and lungs so I cry, sneeze and cough but it could be much worse. Much worse.

I'm thankful for the Dining Facility. The grub is not all that good but it sure beats MREs. The food is usually warm. Sometimes it's even hot. We often go weeks without fresh vegetables, but we enjoy them when we have them. I'm thankful for Coke. I'm not a coffee consumer so that crimson-colored can of carbonated cola contains the caffeine I crave when I work to the wee hours all week.

I'm thankful for the military postal system. It eventually delivers the dusty, bashed, mangled boxes that contain the vital vittles, the essential sundries and the other simple pleasures of home that folks have sent my way.

I'm thankful for fall. It has been over a month since the mercury was measured in triple digits. I'm thankful for cool evenings. I'm thankful for full moons, bright stars and desert sunsets. I'm thankful that I get to see that big orange orb drop below the horizon every day. The only thing worse than having a bad day is not making it to the end.

I'm thankful for the shipping container that acts as my desert abode. It's modest but it's higher class than the plywood box I called home in Afghanistan. I'm thankful for showers. Standing under a gentle cascade of water with a bar of soap in hand is far superior to baby-wipe style bathing.

I'm thankful for electricity. It powers the window unit air conditioner that keeps me from melting and the computer that makes it possible for me to communicate with you. Sometimes we don't have any of these things but it's nice when we do.

I'm thankful for armored cars. They have saved my life more than once. I'm thankful for ballistic vests. They protect me from flying projectiles when I'm in town. I'm thankful for sandbags. They protect me from flying projectiles when I'm at home. I'm thankful for Mylar. It's a plastic coating on my windows that prevents the glass from shattering into thousands of pieces when flying projectiles break through it. I'm thankful for dumb luck. I suspect it has saved my life more times than I will ever know. I'm thankful I was not in my tin home when the rocket exploded over it and blew a 3" x 5" hole in the roof right over my desk and chair where I would ordinarily have been sitting. (No sandbags or Mylar on the roof—a deficiency we have oft noted.) I'm thankful for Mother Nature's sense of humor. I had not seen rain in six months but it rained that night.

I'm thankful for the soldiers and marines who fight our enemies on the ground and I'm