

In November, Specialist Rymer was granted a 2-week leave and returned home. It gave him a chance to visit with family and friends, spend time with LaTisha and Sean, but also to see his beautiful baby daughter, Jasmine, for the very first time. He would cherish this all too short time with his loved ones and, upon his return to Iraq, made sure to tell his fellow soldiers just how proud he was of the family that was awaiting his return.

The 239th, in which Specialist Rymer served as a heavy equipment operator, would play a vital role in American efforts to bring security and stability throughout Baghdad, completing more than 1,800 missions in the area. In spite of the dangerous environment and stressful conditions he and his comrades often worked under, Specialist Rymer always found a way to brighten a mood and bring smiles to their faces. He grew to love the soldiers he served with, and they loved him in return. As often happens in times of war, many of these soldiers, serving thousands of miles from home, began to consider themselves much more than fellow soldiers; they were a family and they would do absolutely anything for each other.

Tragically, on January 28, a few short weeks before Specialist Rymer was to return home, he was killed in action. The 239th was securing an area near a Central Baghdad marketplace in preparation for the upcoming Iraqi National elections. Specialist Rymer was guarding the members of his unit as they were helping place concrete traffic barriers. He was struck and killed by a single bullet from a nearby sniper.

The loss of this special young man, the first fatality for the 239th, was felt deeply by the troops who served with him. To honor Specialist Rymer, over 150 of them attended a memorial service at their brigade's chapel on base, just north of Baghdad. At the service, they all raised their right hands in salute to their fallen comrade, whom they loved and respected, and who gave his life in the protection of theirs. The company commander, CPT Jason Meharg, echoed the unspoken sentiment of his troops, "We'll refocus and continue . . . But we won't forget."

Even more deeply, the loss of Specialist Rymer will be felt by the family and the many friends he leaves behind. On February 7 at the Fort Smith National Cemetery, over 100 people showed up to his gravesite service to pay respects and to honor this fallen hero.

To many of us, the awards Specialist Rymer earned for his service will serve as a reminder of the courageous and selfless way in which he lived his life. To LaTisha, memories of the time shared with her husband and the pride felt in the family they built together will remind her of so much more. Although Sean and Jasmine may not be

able to fully comprehend the meaning of their father's sacrifice or realize the impact he had on so many others, they will one day be old enough to understand, from the words of their mother and those who knew Lyle Rymer best, just how very much he loved them.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Rymer family and with all those whose lives were touched by this special young man. We will be forever grateful for his service and for the sacrifice he made on behalf of us all.●

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN HOPPER

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today, I rise with a heavy heart to honor the life of a courageous young man from the State of Arkansas, and to pay tribute to the sacrifice he made on behalf of our way of life. Brian Hopper lived his life with an energy, sense of adventure, and courage that we can all admire. These were the qualities he displayed throughout his childhood, playing and hunting in the woods around his home in northeast Arkansas. They were also the qualities that ultimately drew him to military service, bravely defending freedom in a land he had never known.

Lance Corporal Hopper grew up just outside of the small Arkansas town of Wynne. Like other boys his age, he enjoyed growing up in the countryside; spending his time in the woods and trails near his home. Much of this time was spent with his hunting buddy, his father Rob, who taught him how to shoot when he was six. Together, they could often be found fishing or looking for deer, squirrels, and rabbits.

At Wynne High School, Lance Corporal Hopper was a member of the drama club and the school's broadcast journalism class, where he helped with the daily news program. He graduated in the Spring of 2002, and it was clear to friends and family that his next step would be enlistment in the U.S. Marine Corps. Although he was turned down by Marine Corps recruiters in Arkansas because of recent reconstructive knee surgery, this resilient young man would not be deterred. Instead, he made the trip to neighboring Mississippi and met with a new set of recruiters. He never mentioned his knee surgery and was allowed to enlist in September of 2002. He would go on to attend the School of Infantry in January of 2003, where he trained to become a rifleman.

Lance Corporal Hopper made a brief trip home during Christmas of 2003, following the completion of boot camp. It was quickly apparent to his family that he not only matured physically, but he also spoke and acted differently. The young man they had watched grow up over the years was now truly a marine, and his father couldn't have been more proud.

As a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Lance Corporal Hooper was deployed to

the war-torn nation last summer and quickly earned the reputation of a tough, loyal soldier who repeatedly rose above the call of duty. During military operations in Fallujah, he earned his first Purple Heart after taking on incoming fire. The flak jacket he was wearing saved him from serious injury, and possibly death. Soon after, he earned yet another Purple Heart from much more severe wounds. After raiding an Iraqi home and shooting an armed insurgent, he was struck by an explosion from a fallen grenade that left shrapnel in his knee, leg, arm, and face. Although his wounds were severe enough to have him airlifted to Germany, he chose to stay in Iraq with his unit. His personal safety was an afterthought to the loyalty he had for his comrades and the mission before them. Although he still carried pieces of shrapnel in him, he would carry on the fight. It was a testament to the courage and the heart of this brave marine.

On January 26, he boarded a CH-53E helicopter on a routine mission to help guard the Syrian border for the Iraqi elections. Tragically, the helicopter crashed amid severe weather conditions in western Iraq. All 31 soldiers aboard were killed, and it was destined to become the deadliest day of the war thus far for American forces.

Lance Corporal Hopper's brother, Patrick, who was also serving in Iraq as a marine lance corporal, would accompany his brother's body on that final flight home from Dover Air Force Base to Memphis. Emergency vehicles would shut down every intersection between Memphis and Wynne and allow the two brothers to return home to their family.

On the day of Lance Corporal Hopper's funeral, the State flag was flown at half-mast over the State Capitol in Little Rock. Along the 12-mile procession from the memorial service to Harris Chapel Cemetery, friends, neighbors and mourners lined the streets to show their respect and to honor this fallen Arkansas hero. Many held American flags high, many saluted, and others held their right hands over their heart.

At his final resting place, Lance Corporal Hopper was buried with full military honors. It was just a short walk from the home and the woods where he had spent his childhood, and it served as a reminder of how very far he had come in his life. The courageous and honorable way in which he lived his 21 years is a testament to the kind of person he was. When we think of Brian Hopper, we will think of this legacy, and will be reminded of how we are forever grateful to this brave young man for the sacrifice he made on behalf of freedom, and on behalf of us all. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family, friends, and to all those who knew and loved him.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 310. An act to increase the penalties for violations by television and radio broadcasters of the prohibitions against transmission of obscene, indecent, and profane material, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1024. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Quarterly listing; Safety Zone, Security Zones, Special Local Regulations, and Regulated Navigation Areas [Including 122 Regulations]" (RIN1625-AA00, AA87, AA11, AA08) received on February 11, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1025. A communication from the Secretary, Office of General Counsel, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalty Amounts, 16 CFR 1.98", received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1026. A communication from the Secretary of the Commission, Bureau of Economics, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Annual Adjustment of Ceiling on Allowable Charge for Certain Disclosures Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act Section 612(f)", received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1027. A communication from the Secretary of the Commission, Bureau of Economics, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Commission Reporting Requirements Under Section 8 of The Clayton Act 15 U.S.C. Sec. 19(a)(5)", received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1028. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Use of Non-Coast Guard Personnel", received on

February 15, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1029. A communication from the Chairman, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak, transmitting, pursuant to law, Amtrak's annual report for Fiscal Year 2004 and budget performance in Fiscal Year 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1030. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (78) Admt. 3112 [1-5/2-17]" (RIN2120-AA65 (2005-0005)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1031. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (59) Admt. No. 3114 [1-28/2-17]" (RIN2120-AA65 (2005-0006)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1032. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (35) Admt. No. 3115 [2-7/2-17]" (RIN2120-AA65 (2005-0007)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1033. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "IFR Altitudes; Miscellaneous Amendments 6 Admt. No. 453 [2-7/2-17]" (RIN2120-AA63 (2005-0002)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1034. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (19) Admt. No. 3113 [1-6/2-17-05]" (RIN2120-AA65 (2005-0004)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1035. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Airbus Model A318, A319, A320, and A321 Airplanes Equipped with Air Cruisers/Aerazur Forward and AFT Passenger Door Emergency Escape Slides" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0101)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1036. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Boeing Model 747-100, 200B, 200F, 200C, 100B, 300, 100B SUD, 400, 400D, 400F, and 747SR" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0097)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1037. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a

rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Rolls-Royce plc. RB211-524 Turbofan Engines" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0098)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1038. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Boeing Model 747-100 and 200 Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0099)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1039. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: McDonnell Douglas Model MD90-30 Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0093)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1040. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0094)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1041. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Rolls Royce plc. RB211 Trent 700 Series Turbofan Engines" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0095)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1042. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Airbus Model A310 Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64 (2005-0096)) received on February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1043. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, Office of Pipeline Safety, Department of Transportation, transmitted, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pipeline Safety: Periodic Updates to Pipeline Safety Regulations" (RIN2137-AD35) received February 17, 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1044. A communication from the Division for Strategic Human Resources Policy, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Part 576, Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations" (RIN3206-AJ76) received on February 8, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1045. A communication from the Director, Division for Strategic Human Resources Policy, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Compensatory Time Off for Travel" (RIN3206-AK74) received on February 8, 2004; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1046. A communication from the Secretary, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on Council Resolution 15-763, "Transfer of Jurisdiction of a Portion of Square 1171 Approval Resolution of 2004" received on February 18, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1047. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia,