

Bryan Taylor

Speech given by Senator Mike DeWine on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in December 2006.



Mr. President, Today I rise to pay tribute to a brave Marine from Milford, Ohio -- Lance Corporal Bryan Taylor, who was killed in Iraq on April 6, 2006, after he had been there for just five weeks. Bryan is survived by his parents, Rick and Sherri Taylor, and his younger brother, Matthew. He was just 20 years old.

Mr. President, a 2004 graduate of Milford High School, Bryan had a strong interest in computers and technology. He also attended Live Oaks Career Development Center, where he studied computer-assisted drafting during his last two years of high school. According to those close to him, Bryan “knew no strangers and had no enemies.” One of his favorite things to do was simply sit around and talk about good memories with his friends.

While reflecting on their memories of Bryan, his friends stressed his unceasing loyalty. Bryan’s friend John Legleu said that “people who didn’t even know Bryan that well are calling to tell me what he meant to them. He had a way of finding things in common, and he always found the good in people.”

Friend, Stacey Flick, added, “Bryan strived to make sure he was there for his friends no matter what.” In fact, friends say it was the camaraderie of the Marine Corps that led Bryan to enlist.

As his friend James Wallace said, “Bryan was pretty much everything you want in a friend.... He had such a big influence on the people he knew.”

Those who knew Bryan also remember his compassion and his willingness to listen. As his friend John said: “I would always seek advice from [Bryan]. Even though I was older, I would always get his opinion. He was mature beyond his years.”

Bruce Wallace, the father of Bryan’s best friend, James, shared the following story about Bryan. This is what he said:

“I’d come home from work and Bryan would be sitting in the living room, watching TV alone, waiting for Jamie. I’d ask him if he was hungry. He’d say, ‘No, I already ate,’ and I’d go into the kitchen and see an empty cereal bowl in the sink! He was the only person who could get away with this because he was truly my second son. He wasn’t like any of us. He was so exceptional.”

After enlisting in 2005, Bryan quickly made friends among his fellow Marines. Private Adam Michaels met Bryan during their training and shared this story about him:

“Bryan was a great guy, and we had a lot of good times. I hung out with him before he left [for Iraq], and he always had a great presence. I remember watching Bengals games with him even though I am a huge Packers fan! He was as great as they come.”

Bryan lived life fully and left a lasting impression on his friends, family, and community. After his death, Miami Township named the football field at Miami Meadows Park, where Bryan used to play Pee Wee football, in his honor.

Additionally, Clermont County held a “Celebration of Life” in tribute to Bryan. This celebration included a balloon launch of 60 red, white, and blue balloons, each filled with a note from Bryan’s family and friends. Bryan’s family also received an outpouring of support from many other families of fallen service members, which has meant so very much to them.

Mr. President, in talking about the loss of service members, General George S. Patton once said that we should not mourn those who die on the field of battle. “Rather,” he said, “we should thank God that such men lived.”

Indeed, Mr. President, while we mourn, we do thank God that Bryan Taylor lived. He was a good son, brother, friend, and Marine. Everyone who know him loved him.

In December 2005, Mr. President, Bryan visited his old high school dressed in his Marine uniform. He came to say goodbye to his former teachers before leaving to serve in Iraq.

According to those at the high school, he was very proud to be a Marine and visited frequently to keep in touch with his favorite teachers. Milford High School Assistant Principal Mark Lutz shared the following story about his final visit with Bryan:

“Bryan had a young person’s bravado.... Bryan was an excellent young man. He was always looking for a new challenge.... I think the Marines gave him a sense of direction.”

Assistant Principal Lutz also remembers the pride with which Bryan served. This is what he said:

“Bryan was very proud of his decision to serve in the Marines, which he credited with giving him direction and helping him become an adult. He was looking forward to returning to his unit to prepare for his tour of duty in Iraq.”

In describing his role in the military, Bryan, himself, wrote the following paragraph shortly before he died: “I am a Marine.... I am proud of what I do and to serve the country that I do. We are here for you and your families. We are the ones who are willing to give our lives to make your life easier and safer.... I have seen a lot of good men lose their lives because of what our beliefs are. I honor these men everyday.”

Indeed, Mr. President, we all must honor these brave souls -- and Marine Lance Corporal Bryan Taylor is one of them. He will be remembered as a wonderful young man, a loyal friend, and a proud Marine. My wife Fran and I continue to his family in our thoughts and prayers.