

# PICTURED: The final photos of Marine, 23, evacuating Afghans before she was killed in ISIS-K suicide blast: All 13 slain US troops are identified as one father says Biden's Kabul withdrawal is a 'turkey shoot'

- Killed were Navy corpsman Max Soviak, Army Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss, and Marines Hunter Lopez, Rylee McCollum, David Lee Espinoza, Kareem Nikoui, Jared Schmitz, Daegan Page, Taylor Hoover, Humberto Sanchez, Johanny Rosario, Dylan Merola and Nicole Gee
- Daye before her death, Gee was pictured escorting evacuees and holding an Afghan baby
- Father of another Marine killed in airport bombing speaks out in anger over perceived planning failures
- US Central Command retaliated on Friday with a drone strike against ISIS-K leader in Nangahar province

By [KEITH GRIFFITH](#) and [JOSH BOSWELL](#) and [JENNIFER SMITH FOR DAILYMAIL.COM](#)

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All 13 US troops slain by an ISIS-K suicide bomb attack in Kabul on Thursday have been identified, with the haunting final images of one female Marine showing her escorting evacuees days before her death.

Killed were Navy corpsman Max Soviak, Army Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss, and Marines Hunter Lopez, Rylee McCollum, David Lee Espinoza, Kareem Nikoui, Jared Schmitz, Daegan Page, Taylor Hoover, Humberto Sanchez, Johanny Rosario, Dylan Merola and Nicole Gee.

Just days before she was slain at an overcrowded airport checkpoint, Marine Sergeant Gee was photographed escorting a line of evacuees as they filed into the cargo hold of a C-17 Globemaster to escape Afghanistan. Other photos show Gee holding an Afghan baby.

As the families and friends of the troops slain in Thursday's bombing learn of their loved ones' fates, many are speaking out in frustration over the perceived planning and leadership failures leading up to their deaths.

McCollum's father told the [Daily Beast](#) that he does not blame any specific administration for the situation in Afghanistan, but does blame President Joe Biden for the botched handling of the withdrawal.

'I've lost my son, but there are still Marines over there,' he said. 'I am scared s\*\*tless to see what's going to happen next, and what's going to come our way.'

Nikoui's father Steve told [Fox News](#) on Friday night that he was angry at the conditions the Marines were working in, calling the situation at Hamid Karzai International Airport a 'turkey shoot'.

'I'm a carpenter; I've never served. But even I could see that that was a dangerous situation,' he said. 'From what I saw of the airport that they were in it looked like a turkey shoot.'

'It was just so chaotic and not planned out,' the grieving father said of the evacuation, which funneled thousands of Afghans seeking to leave the country to screening checkpoints manned by US troops.

Meanwhile, US Central Command confirmed late on Friday that a drone strike had eliminated the suspected architect of the airport attack, an ISIS-K member in Nangahar province.

The strike killed one individual, and spokesman Navy Capt. William Urban said they knew of no civilian casualties.



Marine Sgt. Nicole Gee, 23, is seen four days before she was killed, escorting Afghans on to a plane in Kabul

Gee, 23, (left and right) of Roseville, California was among those killed in the attack on Thursday in Kabul









**US Central Command confirmed late on Friday that a drone strike had eliminated the suspected architect of the airport attack, an ISIS-K member in Nangahar province**

McCullum's wrestling coach and a close family friend told DailyMail.com that 'heads should roll' over the debacle.

Ben Arlotta said he is furious at the Biden administration and blames the White House for putting soldiers in an unnecessarily dangerous position.

'It's a junk show, an absolute junk show. Not just for Rylee but for every serviceman and woman over there. They were put in a very terrible spot. In my opinion this entire circumstance has been mismanaged from every level,' he told DailyMail.com.

'The only thing I can hope for is that accountability isn't forgotten. Because for the 13 men who were killed yesterday, heads need to roll for the way things have gone.

Nikoui's father Steve told **The Daily Beast** on Friday: 'They sent my son over there as a paper pusher and then had the Taliban outside providing security. I blame my own military leaders... Biden turned his back on him. That's it.'

Schmitz's father, meanwhile, said: 'Be afraid of our leadership or lack thereof. Pray every day for the soldiers that



are putting their lives at risk, doing what they love which is protecting all of us.'

### **Sgt. Nicole Gee, 23**

Sgt. Nicole Gee was was a maintenance technician with 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit from Roseville, California.

Just days before she was killed in the suicide blast, Gee was photographed holding an Afghan baby, and escorting a line of evacuees waiting to board a plane at the Kabul airport.



Just days before she was killed in the suicide blast, St. Nicole Gee was photographed holding an Afghan baby



© Staff Sergeant Mark E Morrow Jr//U.S. Marine Corps

**Nicole Gee (left middle), a maintenance technician with 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), awaits the launch of an MV-22B Osprey during an exercise in April**

'She cared about people. She loved fiercely. She was a light in this dark world. She was my person,' said friend and fellow Marine Mallory Harrison in a Facebook post.

'I find peace knowing that she left this world doing what she loved. She was a Marine's Marine,' she said.

'She was doing God's work.....a warrior. Searching Afghan women and children trying to get out of country,' Captain Karen Holliday said in a Facebook tribute.

Holliday called Gee a 'Model Marine. A leader on the ground in a chaotic situation.'





Friends mourned Gee (right) whom they called a 'model Marine' and a 'Marine's Marine'



'She cared about people. She loved fiercely. She was a light in this dark world. She was my person,' said friend and fellow Marine Mallory Harrison in a Facebook post on Gee (center)

She said that a photo released of Gee a few days before her death, showing her escorting Afghans onto a waiting plane, had been bombarded with sexist online comments 'degrading her for being a female Marine.'

## Lance Corporal Dylan Merola, 20

Merola was a Marine from Rancho Cucamonga, California.

The 20-year-old was a graduate of Los Osos High School, according to [KABC-TV](#).

Students honored him at Friday night's football game by wearing red, white and blue.

'Dylan was a beloved son, brother, grandson, great grandson, nephew, a great friend, and a brave soldier,' said family friend Joseph Matsuoka on a [GoFundMe](#) page to raise money for his funeral.

Matsuoka said that Merola 'paid the ultimate sacrifice at the Abbey Gate at Hamid Karzai International Airport during the evacuation.'

## Sgt. Johanny Rosario, 25

Rosario was a Marine sergeant from Lawrence, Massachusetts with the Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.



She was a graduate of Lawrence High School and attended Bridgewater State University.

On social media, friends issued an outpouring of grief and devastation at Rosario's death.

Nastassia Hyatt, a former Marine, recalled Rosario helping her through difficult times in a Facebook post.

'You brought me back to life. Back to life... back to life....' Hyatt wrote. 'I wish I could bring you back to life for just one last hug, one last smile, one last nap, one last meal... one last anything.'

'She's the second half of my heart next to my son. Like she's everything to me. She is the greatest love I've ever known in a human besides my son. This one hit hard,' Hyatt said.

'We are heartbroken by the death of the service men and women due to the bombing in Kabul this week. I and the City of Lawrence are particularly saddened that one of those brave souls was a daughter of our City,' said Lawrence Mayor Kendrys Vasquez in a statement to [WCVB-TV](#).



Lance Corporal Dylan Merola, 20



Marine Sgt. Johanny Rosario, 25



© Naval Amphibious Force/Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade

**On social media, friends issued and outpouring of grief and devastation at Rosario's death**





**Rosario (center) was a Marine sergeant from Lawrence, Massachusetts with the Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade**

'I have been in touch with the family of the Lawrencian killed in action to extend mine and my family's most sincere condolences and offer all of the aid that my administration can provide as they grieve this great loss,' the mayor said.

'At this time, the family's most immediate wish is to be given privacy and that their loved one be recognized as the hero that she was.'

### **Navy Corpsman Maxton Soviak, 20**

Maxton William Soviak, a Navy corpsman from [Ohio](#), made a tragic Instagram post on June 10, sharing a photo

posing with other service members in what is believed to be Afghanistan.

'It's kill or be killed, definitely trynna be on the kill side,' he wrote in a comment on the post. Navy corpsmen often work alongside Marines, who do not have their own medics.

Soviak's sister Marilyn said in her own Instagram post that her brother was there to 'help people'.



max\_soviak • Follow

max\_soviak It's kill or be killed, definitely trynna be on the kill side  
#imnotsurprisedmotherf... #NDA  
11w

elizabeth.riley rest in peace angel, thank you for your service ❤️  
1m Reply

certificado\_momento\_del\_barrio Thank you Doc!  
58s Reply

3,012 likes  
JUNE 10

+53

**Maxton William Soviak (center), a medic in his early 20s, made this tragic post on June 10, writing 'It's kill or be killed, definitely trynna be on the kill side'**





Soviak, an Ohio native, joined the Navy after high school and became a hospital corpsman



nightt\_maree • Follow



nightt\_maree I've never been one for politics and i'm not going to start now. What I will say is that my beautiful, intelligent, beat-to-the-sound of his own drum, annoying, charming baby brother was killed yesterday helping to save lives. he was a fucking medic. there to help people. and now he is gone and my family will never be the same. there is a large Maxton sized hole that will never be filled. he was just a kid. we are sending kids over there to die. kids with families that now have holes just like ours. i'm not one for praying but damn could those kids over there use some right now. my heart is in pieces and I don't think they'll ever fit back right again.

6h



7,476 views

6 HOURS AGO



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### Soviak's sister Marilyn said an Instagram post that her brother was there to 'help people'

'My beautiful, intelligent, beat-to-the-sound of his own drum, annoying, charming baby brother was killed yesterday helping to save lives. He was a f\*\*\*ing medic. There to help people and now he is gone and my family will never be the same,' she wrote.

'He was just a kid. We are sending kids over there to die. Kids with families that now have holes just like ours,' she added. 'I'm not one for praying but d\*\*n could those kids over there use some right now. My heart is in pieces and I don't think they'll ever fit back right again.'

Soviak was named as a casualty of the attack by his high school in Milan, Ohio, where he graduated in 2017. His death was not immediately confirmed by the US Navy.

'It is with deepest sorrow that I am sharing this news,' Edison Local School District Superintendent Thomas Roth said in a statement.

'Max was a good student who was active in sports and other activities throughout his school career. He was well respected and liked by everyone who knew him. Max was full of life in everything he did.'





**Soviak took pride in his Navy service and worked alongside Marines in Afghanistan**

**In high school, Soviak was on the honor roll and played football. He was named as a casualty of the attack by his high school in Milan, Ohio**

Soviak's family confirmed his death to local media and have asked for privacy.

In high school, Soviak was on the honor roll and played football, according to the [Sandusky Register](#).

Soviak was among the nearly 6,000 US troops now working frantically to evacuate Americans and Afghan refugees from Kabul, with just days remaining before President Joe Biden's August 31 deadline to withdraw.

## **Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza, 20**

David Lee Espinoza, was a 20-year-old U.S. Marine from Rio Grande, Texas.

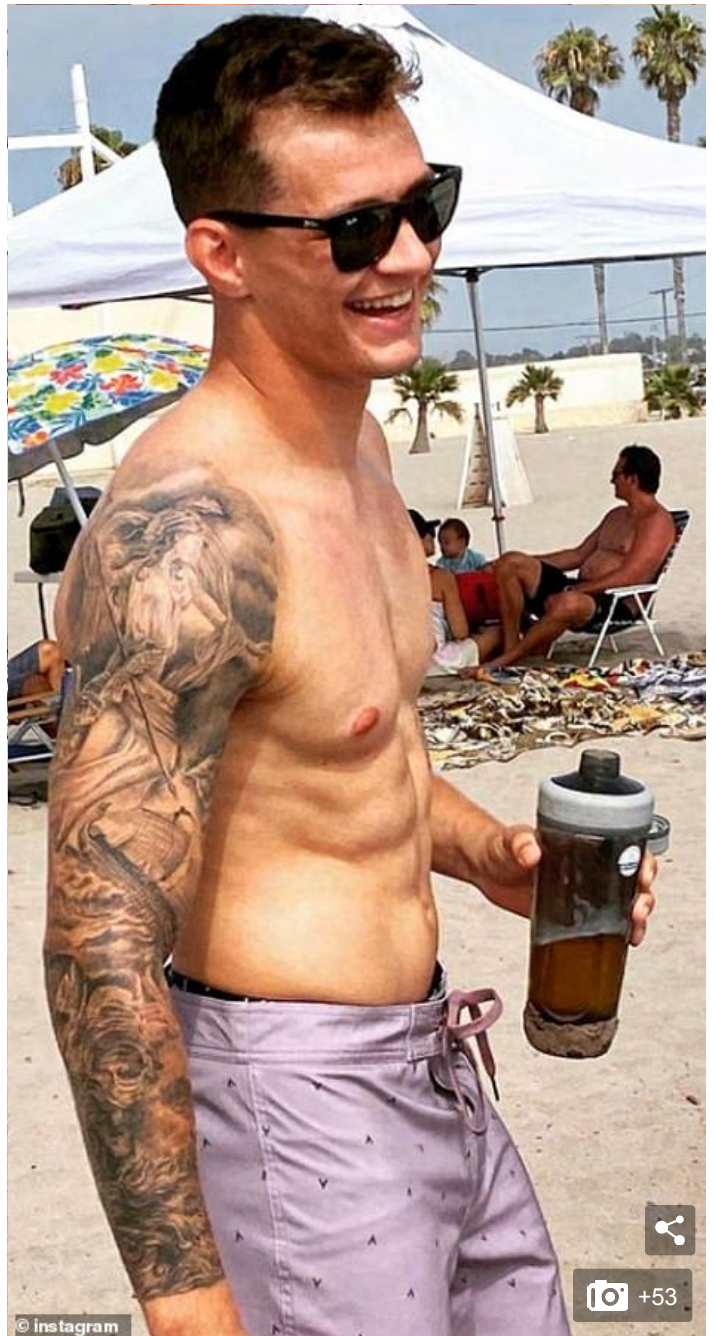
His mother, Elizabeth Holguin, said: 'He was a very good person. He served his country. He helped in any way he could. He was there (in Afghanistan), helping innocent people.'

This was his second deployment; he first made a trip to the Middle East and arrived in Afghanistan for about a week.

Holguin said she was uneasy about him being deployed there.

'I prayed every day,' she said.

He is one of four children; he is not married and has no children.



The mom last spoke with him Tuesday.

'I just told him to be careful, that I was worried about him and I couldn't wait for him to come back,' Holguin said. 'He told me he was fine and not to worry.... He was brave. If he was scared, he didn't show it.'

She said she holds no animosity toward the president, saying her son 'wanted to be there.'

Holguin learned her son was dead when she received a phone call Friday at 2.30am.

### **Lance Corporal Rylee McCollum, 20**

McCollum was named by his high school in Wyoming as a casualty in the attack.

He was expecting to become a father and was pictured with his pregnant wife shortly before deploying to Afghanistan in April.

Cheyenne McCollum, Rylee's sister, told DailyMail.com her brother had wanted to be a Marine since he was a



toddler – and that his own baby is due in just three weeks.

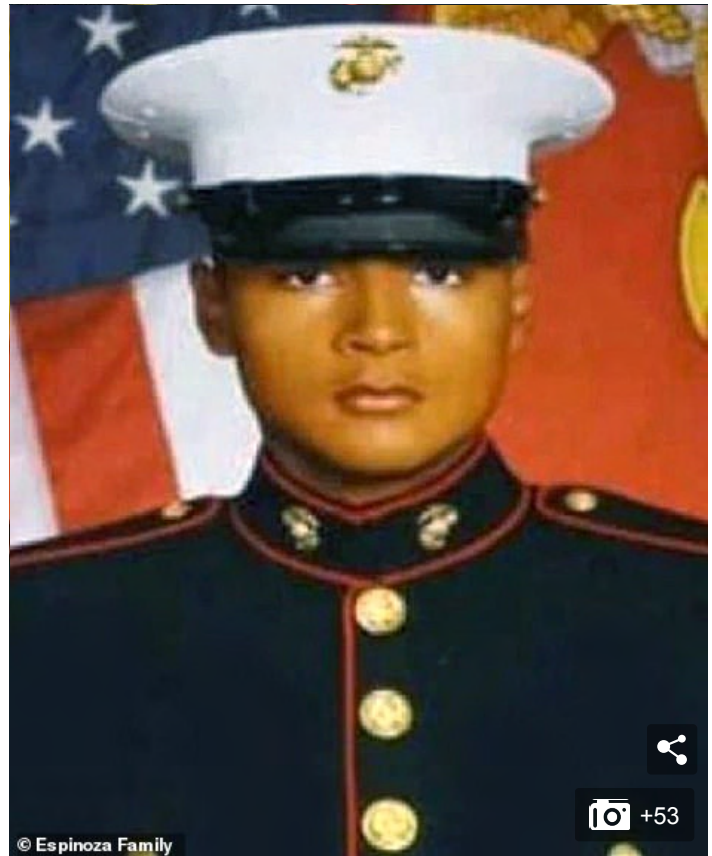
'Rylee was an amazing, man with a passion for the Marines. He was a son, a brother, a husband and a father with a baby due in just 3 weeks,' she said.

'He wanted to be a marine his whole life and carried around his rifle in his diapers and cowboy boots.

'He was determined to be in infantry and this was his first deployment. Rylee was sent to Afghanistan when the evac began. Rylee was manning the check point when he suicide bomb went off.

'Rylee wanted to be a history teacher and a wrestling coach when he finished serving his country. He's a tough, kind, loving kid who made an impact on everyone he met. His joke and wit brought so much joy.

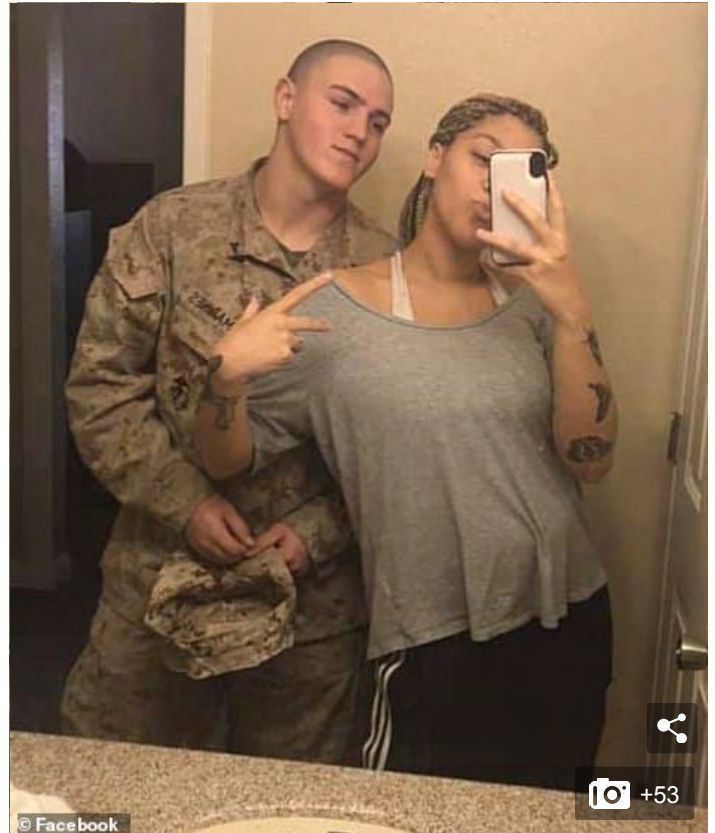
'To his friends and teammates and coaches, he was family. Rylee will always be a hero not just for the ultimate sacrifice he made for our country but for the way he impacted every life around him for the better. Making us stronger, kinder, teaching us to love deeper. We love you Rylee.'



**David Lee Espinoza, 20, was one of the Marines killed in Thursday's attack**



**Rylee McCollum was named by his high school in Wyoming as a casualty in the attack**



**Rylee McCollum was due to become a father. He is pictured with his pregnant wife, right, shortly before deploying to Afghanistan in April**

Rylee McCollum graduated from Summit Innovations School in Jackson in 2019.

Wyoming Schools Superintendent Jillian Balow said in a statement: 'Saying that I am grateful for Rylee's service to our country does not begin to encapsulate the grief and sadness I feel today as a mother and as an American.'

'My heart and prayers are with Rylee's family, friends, and the entire Jackson community,' she added.

The Wyoming-born Marine's wrestling coach and close family friend, Benjamin Arlotta said 'heads should roll' over the disastrous US exit and that the young soldier's family is 'absolutely broken'.

Arlotta told DailyMail.com that even in diapers McCollum would stand watch on his porch with a toy rifle, first said he wanted to be a Marine aged eight, and signed up on his 18th birthday.

In a glowing eulogy to the young expectant father, whose new baby is due in three weeks, Arlotta described McCollum as a 'personal hero' and a 'fantastic brother, fantastic uncle, and a wonderful friend'.

'I was his wrestling coach since he was six. He was one of the best. A great kid, a great young man and an American patriot. He loved being a Marine,' Arlotta said.

'He was just a good man all around. We're all hurting pretty bad.

'It's impossible. I'm sitting here with the family right now – with his dad and two sisters, his brother-in-law and niece. They're shattered, they're absolutely broken. The entire community is.'





Pictured, Rylee McCollum and his pregnant wife, Jiannah Crayton





**McCollum and Crayton's baby is due to be born in just three weeks**

Arlotta, 37, said he is furious at the Biden administration and blames the White House for putting soldiers in an unnecessarily dangerous position.

'It's a junk show, an absolute junk show. Not just for Rylee but for every serviceman and woman over there. They were put in a very terrible spot. In my opinion this entire circumstance has been mismanaged from every level,' he told DailyMail.com.

'The only thing I can hope for is that accountability isn't forgotten. Because for the 13 men who were killed yesterday, heads need to roll for the way things have gone.

'We're just seeing the beginning of it. It's not over, it's only going to get worse. Everybody in the country needs to



be praying for our servicemen and women right now. They have a scrap out in front of them.

'Sadly those 13 Marines aren't going to be the last ones to perish because of these terrible decisions that were made.'

Recalling fond memories of the young Jackson Hole native, the wrestling coach told a heartwarming story of McCollum's determination.

'When he was 13 he came into the competition season 32lbs heavier than where he wanted to be,' Arlotta said.

'He told me he would lose it. We made a bet. I was going to quit chewing tobacco if he could get down there. That was September, by the time the state championship rolled around in January he had made weight.

'He entered the wrestling tournament at that weight and I quit chewing that day.

'He was first and foremost a man of his word. If he said he would do something, by goodness gracious he stood right in front of you until he did it.'

McCollum moved to California for training. His pregnant wife Jiannah 'Gigi' Crayton lives in the San Diego area.

The 20-year-old lance corporal wanted to be a soldier since childhood, first telling his parents he would join the Marines age eight.

'We were driving back from his first state wrestling tournament, I was riding with his family,' said Arlotta. 'We asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he said he wanted to be in the Marines.

'He enlisted on his 18th birthday,' the coach added. 'When he actually enlisted his recruiter told him he could be anything, he could do any job. He swore up and down he wanted to be an infantryman.

'If you know Rylee, you know you can't talk him out of a damn thing, so that's what he did.'

U.S. Congresswoman Liz Cheney, a fellow Wyoming resident, issued a statement when she learned of Rylee's passing.

'I want to offer my deepest condolences to Rylee McCollum's family and loved ones. His bravery and patriotism will never be forgotten. His willingness to put himself in harm's way to keep our country safe and defend our freedom represents a level of selflessness and heroism that embodies the best of America.

'We know that the McCollum family is grieving this tragic loss. I ask that people in Wyoming and across the country please keep those close to Rylee in their prayers, and remember that we are only free because of the courage and valor of service members like him.'

## **Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz, 20**

Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz was a 20-year-old from Wentzville, Missouri.

His father Mark Schmitz told **KMOX** the Marines notified his family about 2.40am on Friday about his son's death.



**Benjamin Arlotta, and his wife, Talia, are long-time family friends of the McCollums. Benjamin said he is angry and devastated**

'This was something he always wanted to do and I never seen a young man train as hard as he did to be the best soldier he could be,' Mark Schmitz said.

The grieving father grew emotional as he spoke about his son, welling up with tears.

'His life meant so much more. I'm so incredibly devastated that I won't be able to see the man that he was very quickly growing into becoming.'

Mark Schmitz slammed Biden and blamed him for his son's death.

'Be afraid of our leadership or lack thereof. Pray every day for the soldiers that are putting their lives at risk, doing what they love which is protecting all of us,' Schmitz's father said.

He added that he was relieved when his son signed up as a Marine when Trump was in office because he 'really believed this guy didn't want to send people into harm's way.'

**Jared Schmitz was killed in the attack**

## **Lance Corporal Kareem Nikoui, 20**

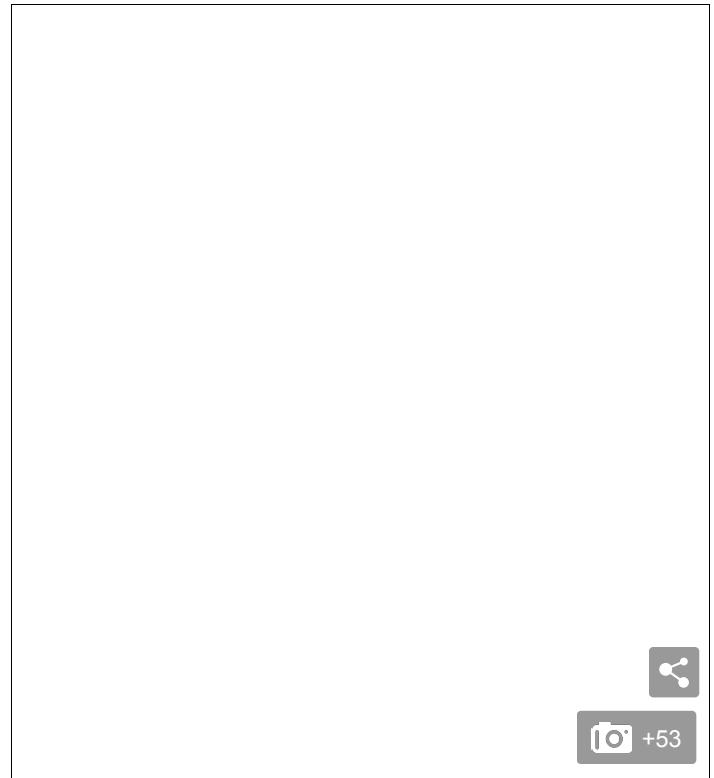
Marine Kareem Nikoui was a native of Norco, California.

Nikoui's father Steve, a carpenter, vented his frustrations at Biden in an interview with the [Daily Beast](#).

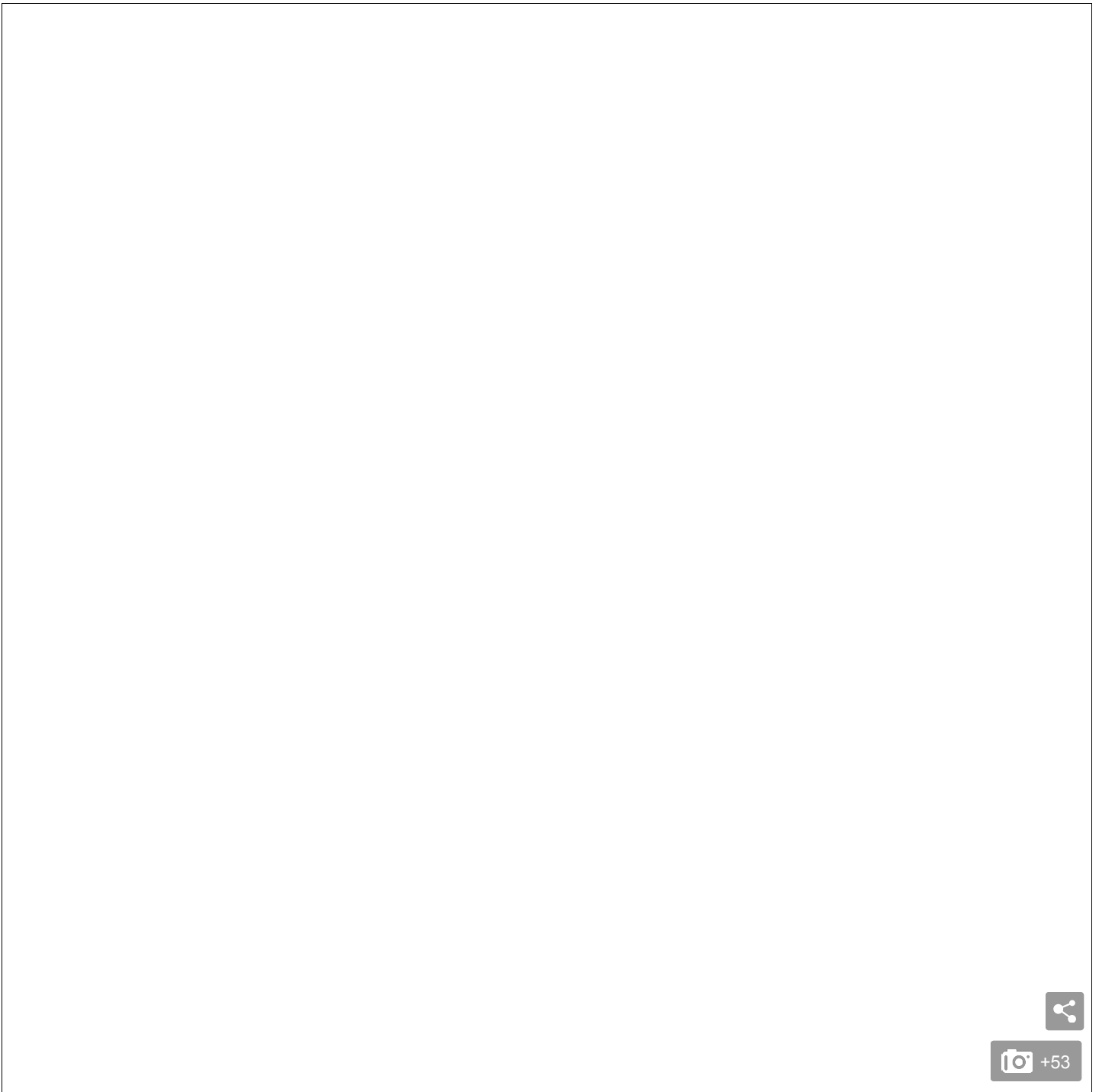
'They sent my son over there as a paper pusher and then had the Taliban outside providing security. I blame my own military leaders... Biden turned his back on him. That's it,' he said

Steve Nikoui said he knew his son was dead when he saw two Marines approaching his home on Thursday at 7.15pm PST.

He said he sat with the two emotional Marines, who cried more than he cried, and then had them leave.







**Marine Kareem Nikoui, pictured with his mother, was killed on Thursday. His father said he blames Biden for abandoning them in Kabul**

Steve also appeared on Fox with Tucker Carlson on Friday to further criticize Biden in an emotional interview where he said the attack could have been avoided.

'From what I saw of the airport that they're in, looked like a Turkey shoot. It's funneled in to a single file-type entry point at which if you have in sort of chaos of any sort, they would all like gather to that one funneled area, which they would all be accessed. That's what happened. It was just basically so chaotic and not really planned out,' Steve said.

As he teared up, he also said he was upset by how long it took to learn of his son's death.

'How long does it take for the military to, you know, inform the next of kin?'

'I was actually trying to console them. But at the same time, I just wanted them to get out as soon as possible so that no one from my family came back and saw them.

'I thought it appropriate that I be able to tell them,' he said.

He added that his son, who was based at Camp Pendleton in California, would often bring other Marines home on the holidays if they couldn't get back to their own families.

'My wife and I felt very honored that [since] these other boys weren't around their homes, that we were able to provide some sort of family life for them.

'He really loved that [Marine Corps] family. He was devoted—he was going to make a career out of this, and he wanted to go. No hesitation for him to be called to duty,' he said.

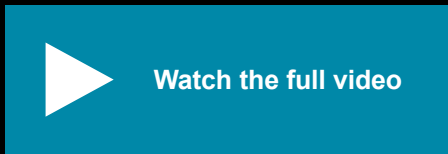


**Steve Nikoui, right, father the late Kareem Nikoui, spoke with Fox's Tucker Carlson on Friday to condemn the Biden administration's efforts in Afghanistan that he said led to his son's death**

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## Flags at half-mast in Washington following Kabul terror attack

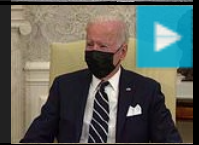


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## An American flag flew half-mast outside Norco Intermediate School in honor of Nikoui

Speaking outside Kareem's home on Friday, a relative told DailyMail.com that Kareem's family were inside signing the documents required to repatriate him.

He added: 'They're totally devastated and they need some time. All the family are here and we're supporting them.'

A steady stream of people have been seen coming and going from the home all day, among them some of Kareem's colleagues from the Camp Pendleton Marine base in San Diego.

Earlier today, Kareem's mother Shana Chappell posted angrily on social media, blaming Vice-President Kamala Harris for the loss of her son.

At the social media message of condolence from the Vice-President, she wrote: 'This c u next Tuesday is a joke! They are the reason my son is dead.'

Kareem's death is also being mourned by his home city of Norco - a small community of 26,000 people nicknamed 'Horsetown' that sits 50 miles east of Los Angeles.

Confirming his death, the city released a message of condolence that read: 'The City of Norco mourns the loss of Norco resident U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Kareem Mae'Lee Grant Nikoui who was killed in action while stationed at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan on Thursday, August 26, 2021.

'The U.S. Marine, who graduated from Norco High School in 2019 and served in JROTC, was committed to serving his country and is survived by his mother, father and siblings.'

The city of Norco plans to honor Nikoui by placing his name on the 'Lest We Forget Wall' at the George A. Ingalls Veterans Memorial Plaza.

## **Lance Corporal Hunter Lopez, 22**

Marine Hunter Lopez, a native of California's Coachella Valley and the son of two police officers, was also killed, Sheriff Chad Bianco confirmed.

'I am unbelievably saddened and heartbroken for the Lopez family as they grieve over the loss of their American Hero,' Bianco wrote.

'Hunter Lopez, son of our own Captain Herman Lopez and Deputy Alicia Lopez, tragically lost his life while serving our country in the United States Marine Corp. He was killed in Kabul, Afghanistan on Thursday, August 26th,' the sheriff added.

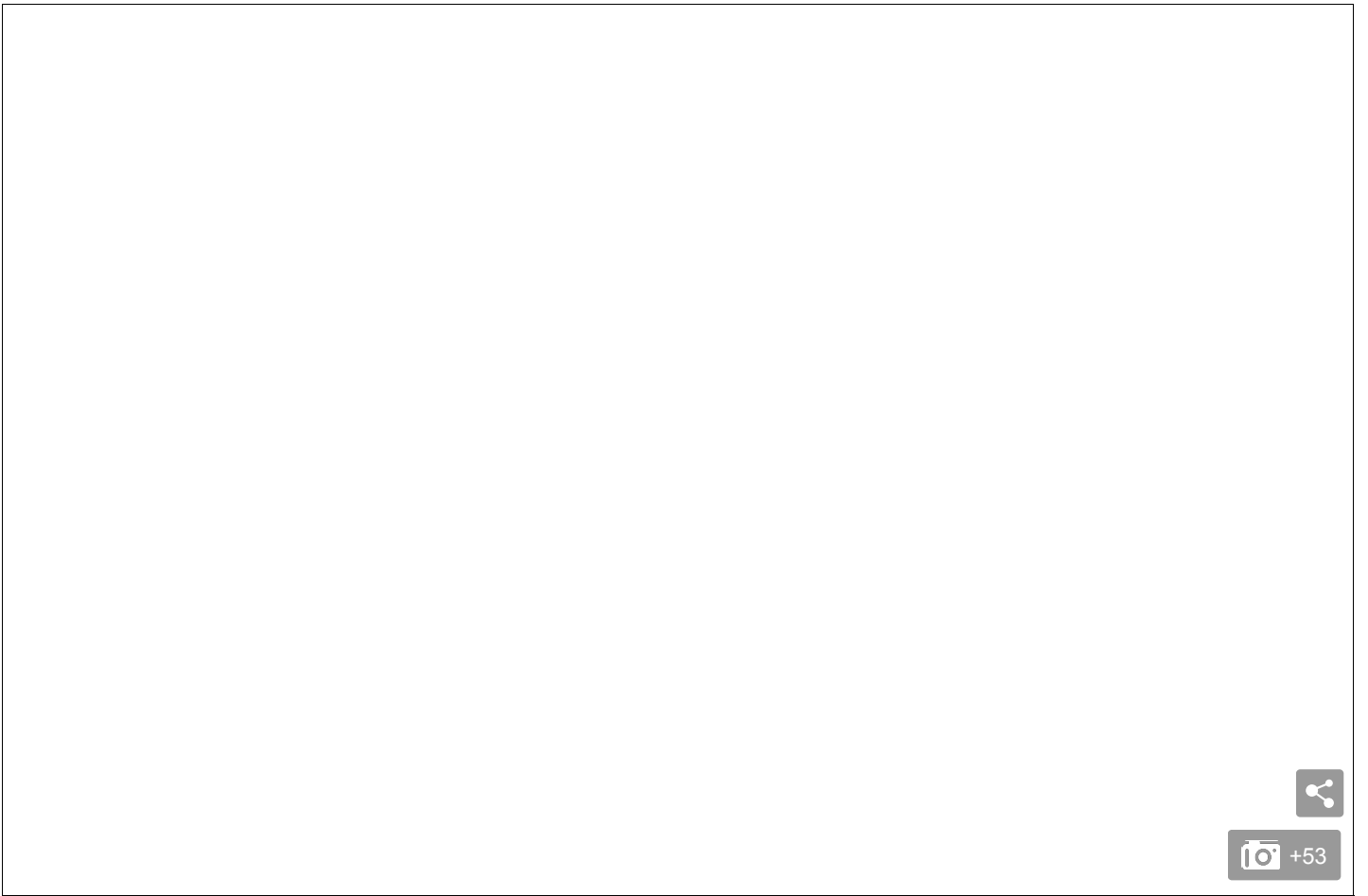
'Before joining the Marine Corp, Hunter proudly served in our Sheriff's Explorer Program. Our entire department is mourning this tragic loss. The Lopez family exemplifies the meaning of Service Above Self.'





**Marine Hunter Lopez, a native of California's Coachella Valley and the son of two police officers, was also killed, Sheriff Chad Bianco confirmed**

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**'The Lopez family exemplifies the meaning of Service Above Self,' said the local sheriff**

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**'I am unbelievably saddened and heartbroken for the Lopez family as they grieve over the loss of their American Hero,' Bianco wrote of Hunter Lopez (above)**

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City of La Quinta issued a statement: 'Our La Quinta Family is in mourning today with the tragic loss of Hunter Lopez, one of the fallen United States Service Members in the attack in Afghanistan,'

'Hunter is the son of Captain Herman and Alicia Lopez, both members of the Riverside Sheriff's Department. Captain Herman Lopez is our Police Chief and Captain over at the Thermal Station,' the statement added.

'We are all so humbled by the service and ultimate sacrifice that Hunter gave to protect our country. He was a brave and selfless soldier who answered the call to be a United States Marine. Like his parents, Hunter wanted to help serve others and protect his community.'

## **Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover, 31**

Marine Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover, of Utah, was another of the service members killed outside the Kabul airport, his family told [KSL-TV](#).

Friends and family mourned his loss, including fellow students who graduated in the Class of 2008 at Hillcrest High School with him in Midvale.

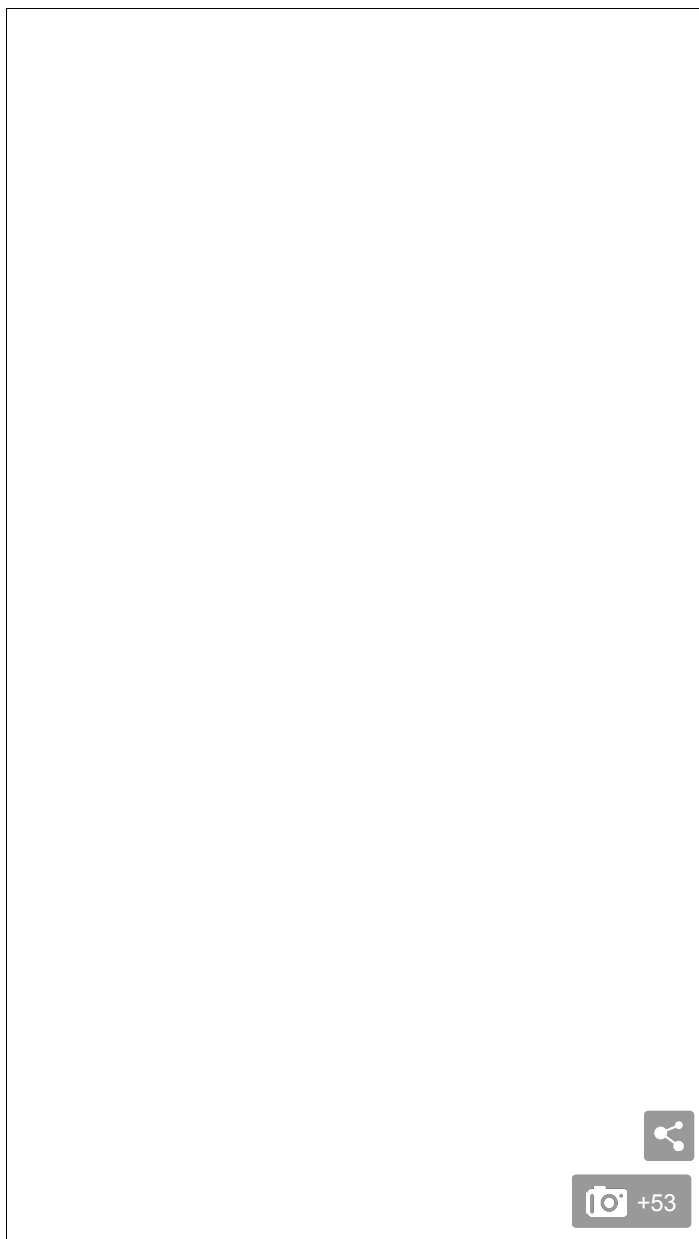
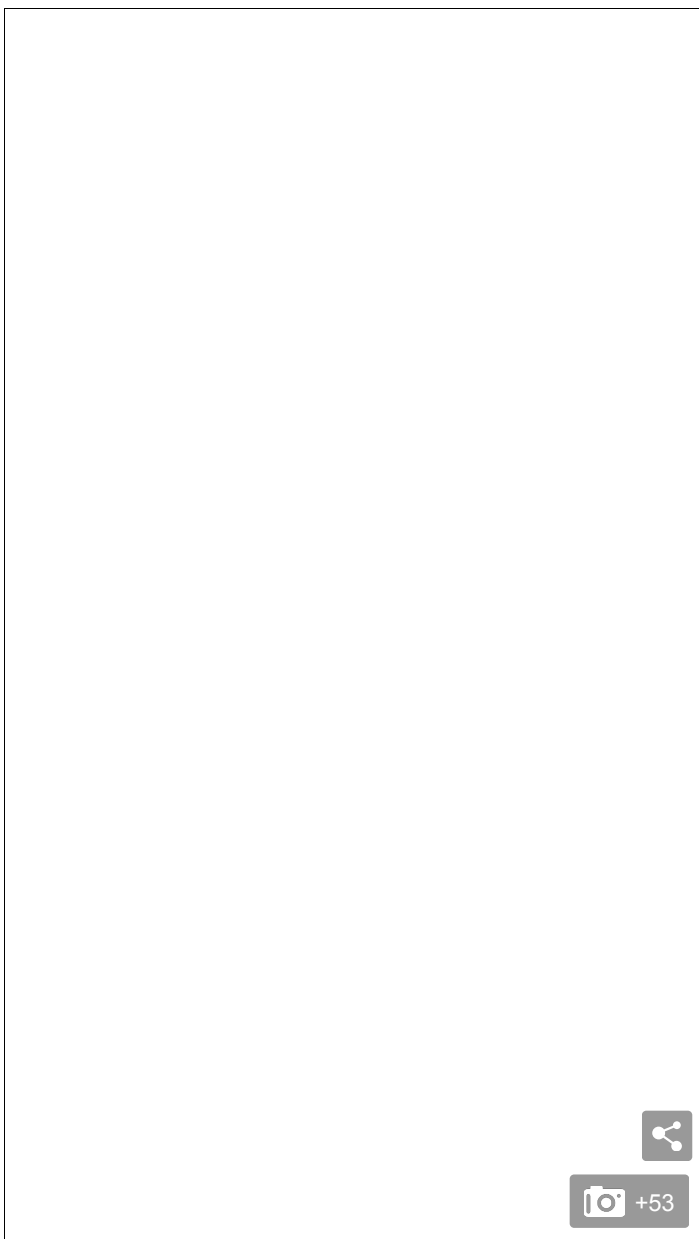
'Sooooooo glad I got to see him before he left. I love you son!!! You're my hero!! Please check in on us once in a while. I'll try to make you proud!!' Hoover's father, Darin Hoover, wrote on Facebook.





**Marine Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover, pictured holding a young family member, died in Kabul**

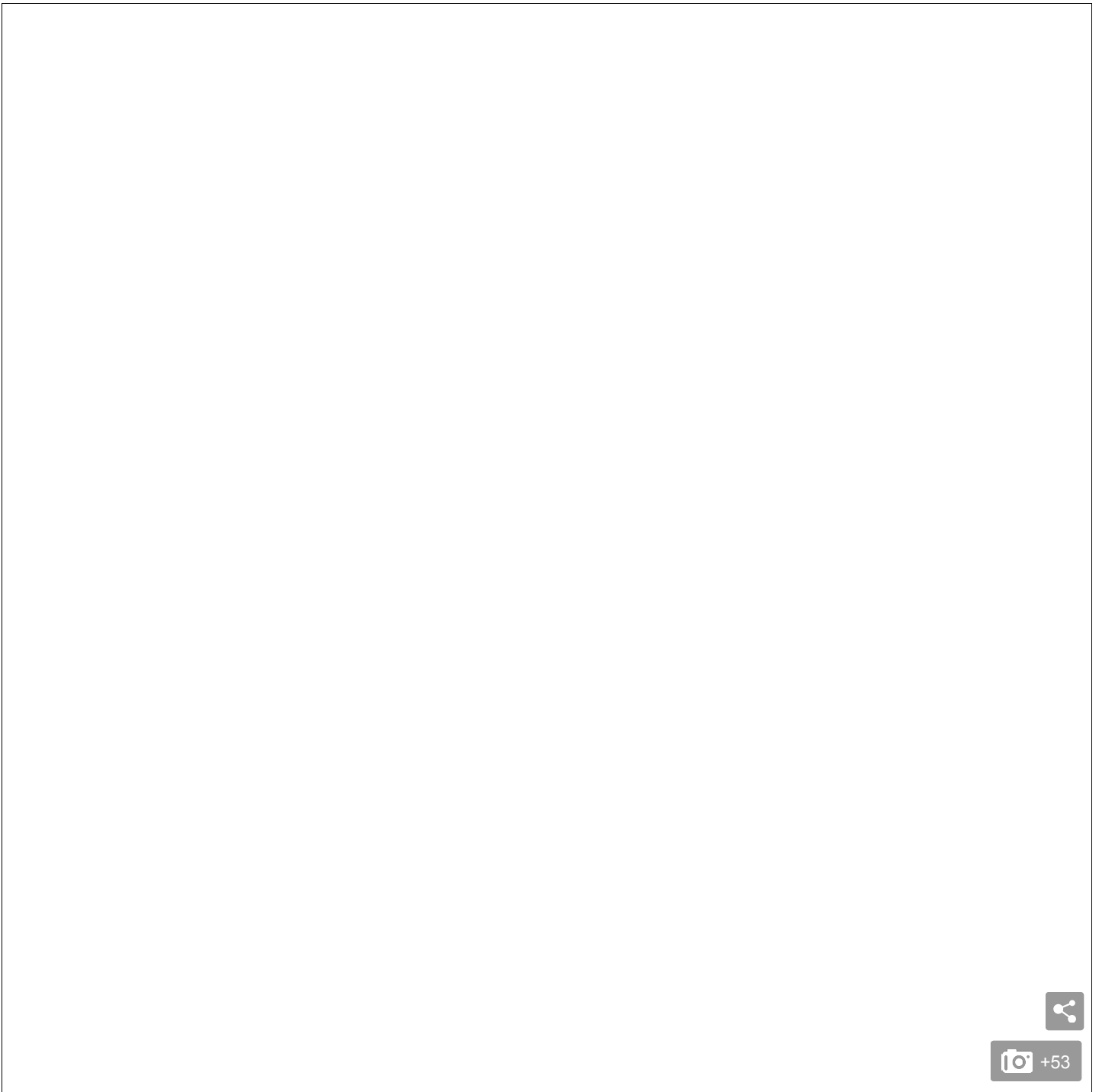
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**Taylor Hoover, a Utah native, was mourned by his mother Kelly Barnett, left, and girlfriend, Nicole Weiss, right, following news of his death**

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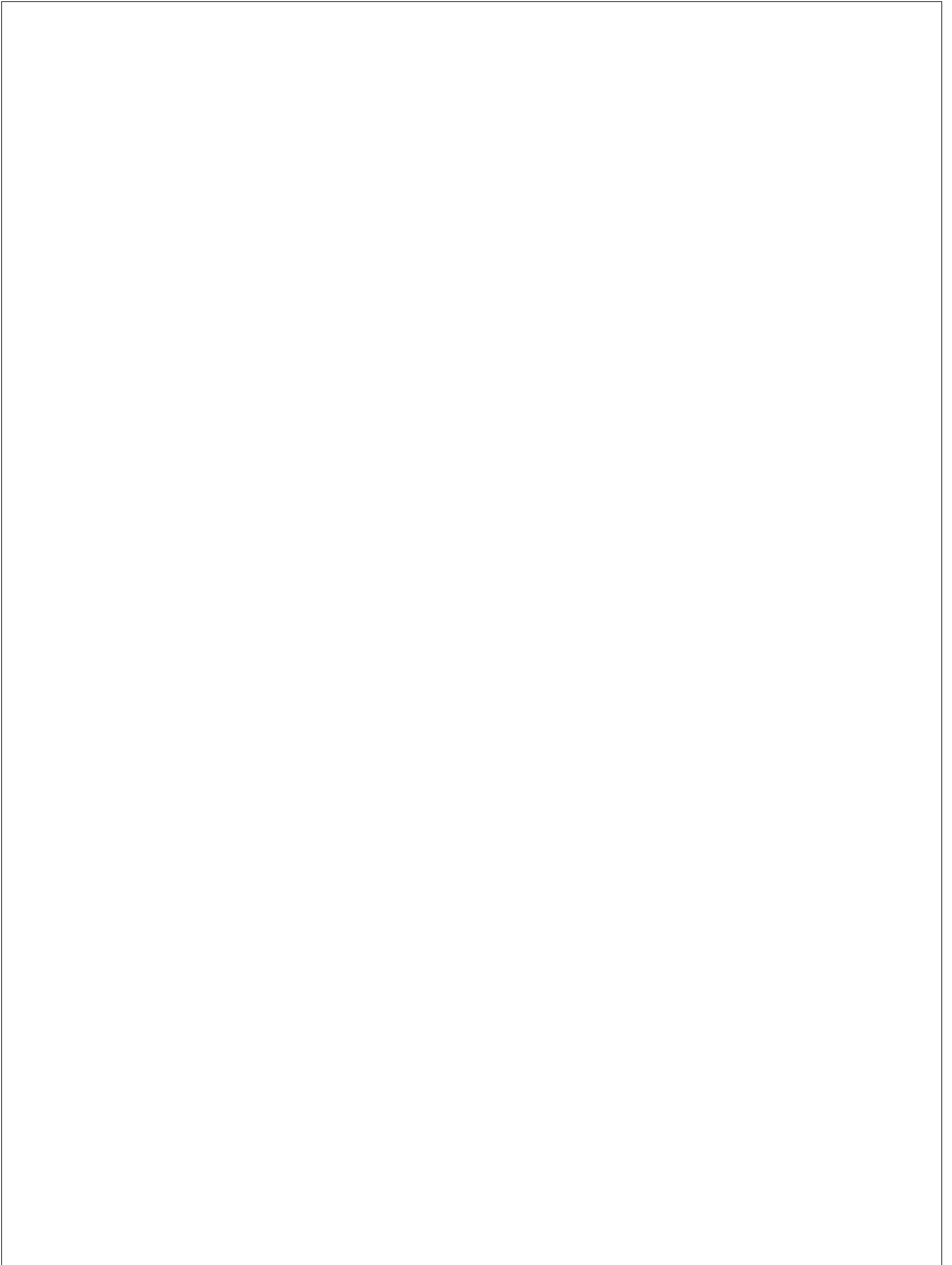


**Hoover, center, was among the Marine troops in Afghanistan to helping with the evacuation**

'My handsome nephew, Staff Sergeant Taylor Hoover. Taylor spent his entire adult life as a Marine, serving. Doing the hard things that most of us can't do. He is a hero,' Jeremy Soto, an uncle, wrote.

'We are wounded. We are bruised. We are angry. We are crushed... but we remain faithful. Thank you for your courage nephew. We love you always.'

'Always a smile. Always respectful. A joy to be around. He is adored beyond measure. The world has lost a true light. Our hearts are broken. Shock, disbelief, horror, sadness, sorrow, anger and grief,' Brittany Jones Barnett, an aunt, added.





**Hoover's uncle, Jeremy Soto, posted a tribute to the fallen Marine**

**Hoover pictured in his uniforms, 'died a hero doing what he always wanted to do and was proud to do,' a family member said**

'Thank you sweet boy for the ultimate sacrifice. For giving your life for us all. Fighting for freedom and giving absolutely everything you had. You will never ever be forgotten. We love you so much,' she added.



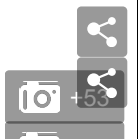
U.S. Representative Blake Moore, who represents Utah's 1st Congressional District, also mourned the loss of Hoover.



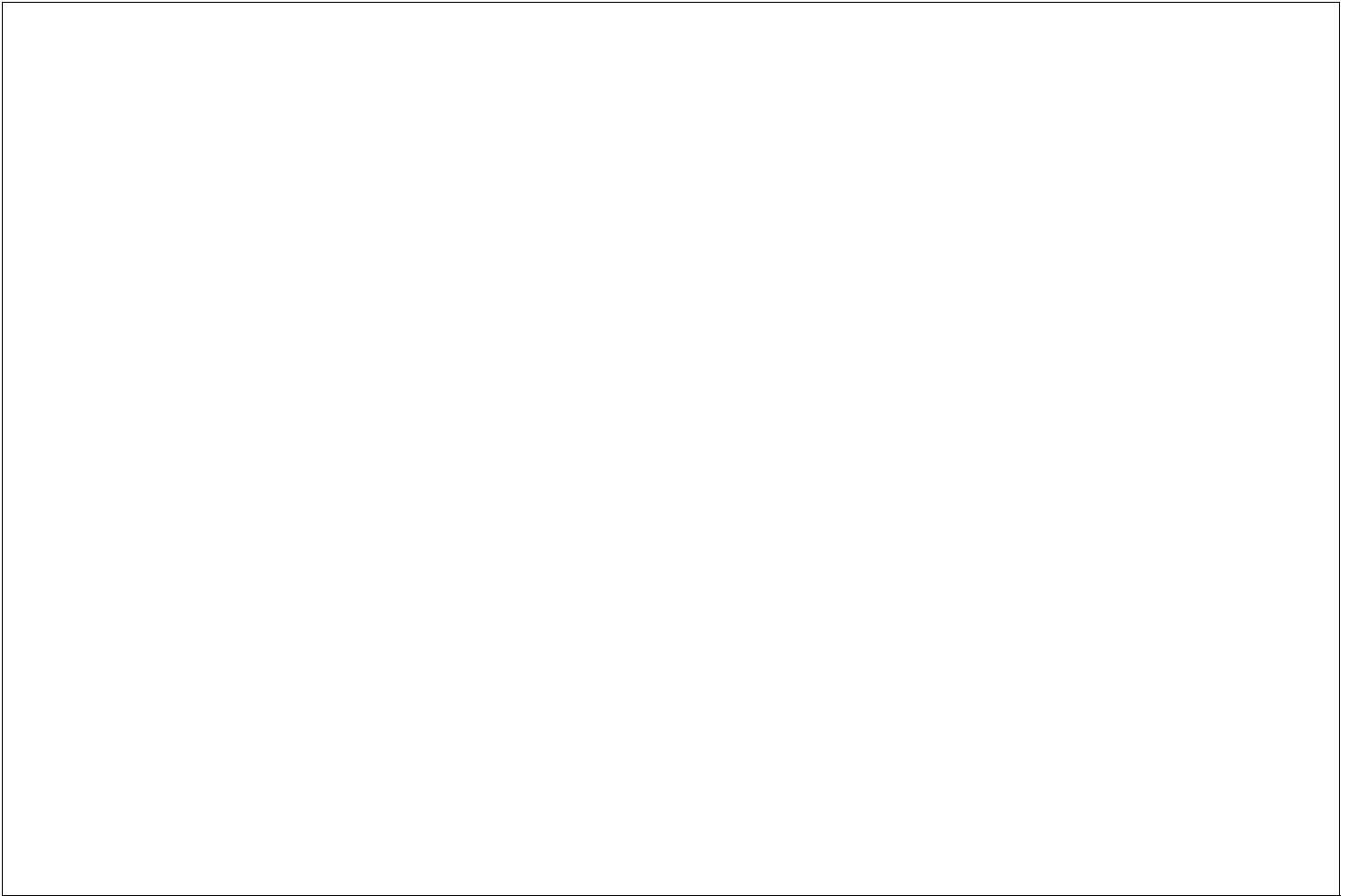
'We'll be forever grateful for his sacrifice & legacy. He spent his last moments serving our state & nation, and we'll never forget his unwavering devotion,' he wrote in a statement.

Utah Senator Mike Lee wrote in a statement, 'Burying a child is a grief no parent should bear. Sharon and I mourn with the Hoover family and with all who loved [Hoover]... who gave the last full measure of devotion in Afghanistan.'

'He died completing a mission to save his countrymen and civilians from evil and oppression. He lived the Marine Corps motto by living and dying always faithful.'

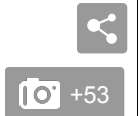






**Utah residents tied fellow ribbons to flags in front of Hoover's family home**

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### Neighbor Lena McIllece helped arranged the flags to honor Hoover and the other fallen troops

Utah Gov. Spencer Cox ordered that flags be flown at half-staff at all state facilities and public grounds effective immediately until sunset on August. 30 to honor Hoover and all those who died in the recent attack.

'We are devastated to hear of the passing of Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover. Staff Sgt. Hoover served valiantly as a Marine and died serving his fellow countrymen as well as America's allies in Afghanistan. We honor his tremendous bravery and commitment to his country, even as we condemn the senseless violence that resulted in his death. Abby and I pray for Staff Sgt. Hoover, his family and loved ones during this most difficult time,' Cox said in a statement.

A family member told **ABC 4** that Hoover, 'died a hero doing what he always wanted to do and was proud to do, serve his country.

### Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss, 23

Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss, 23, was a native of Knoxville, Tennessee. He was identified as one of the victims by his grandfather, Wayne Knauss.

'He grew up in a Christian home, attended Berean Christian school through 8th grade and spent, four years at Gibbs High [School],' said Wayne about his grandson. 'A motivated young man who loved his country. He was a believer so we will see him again in Gods heaven.'

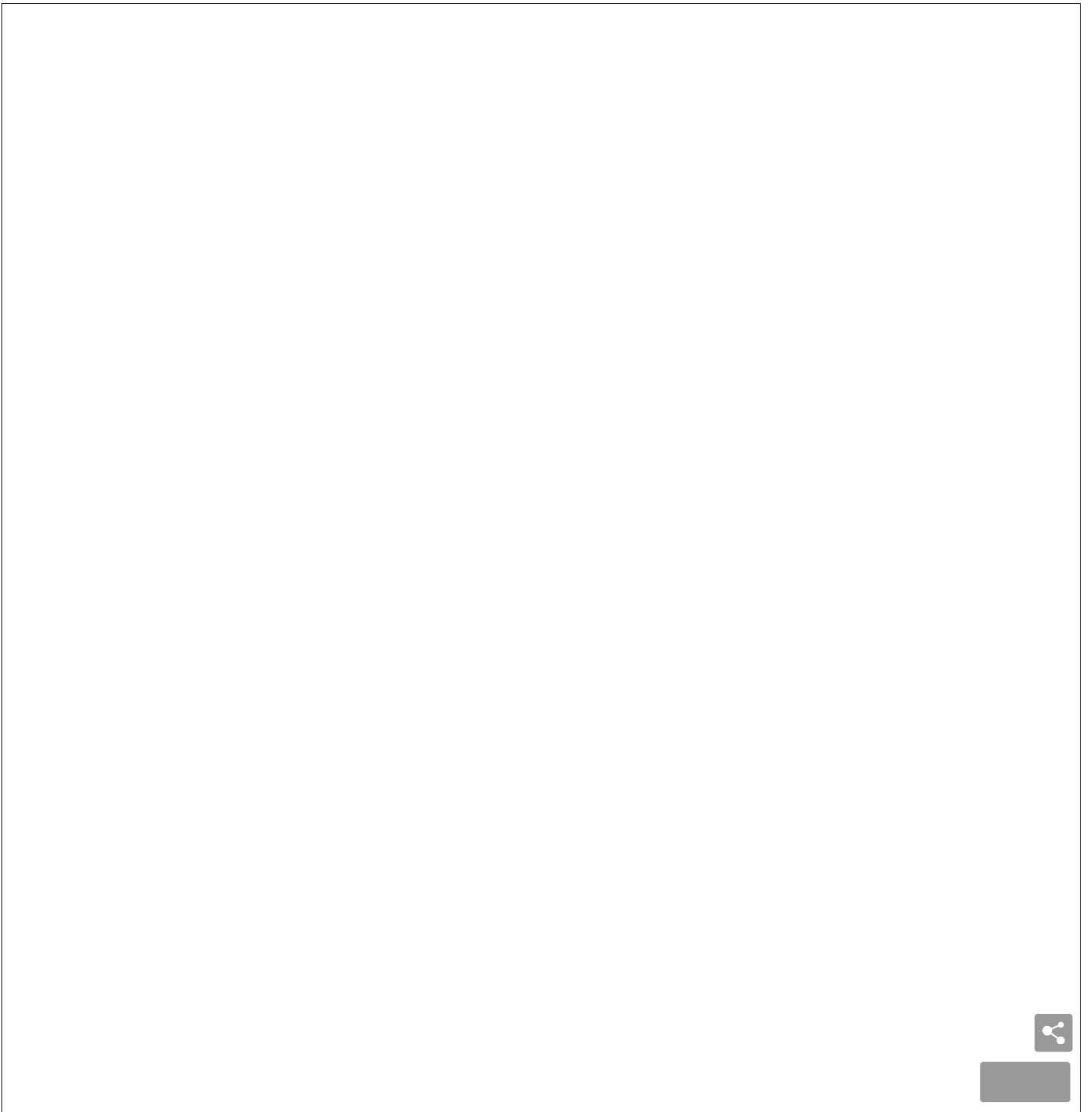
Wayne told **ABC 6** that Ryan had served right out of high school for five years with special training in Psychology Operations.



**Ryan Knauss, a Knoxville native, served as an Army Staff Sergeant**

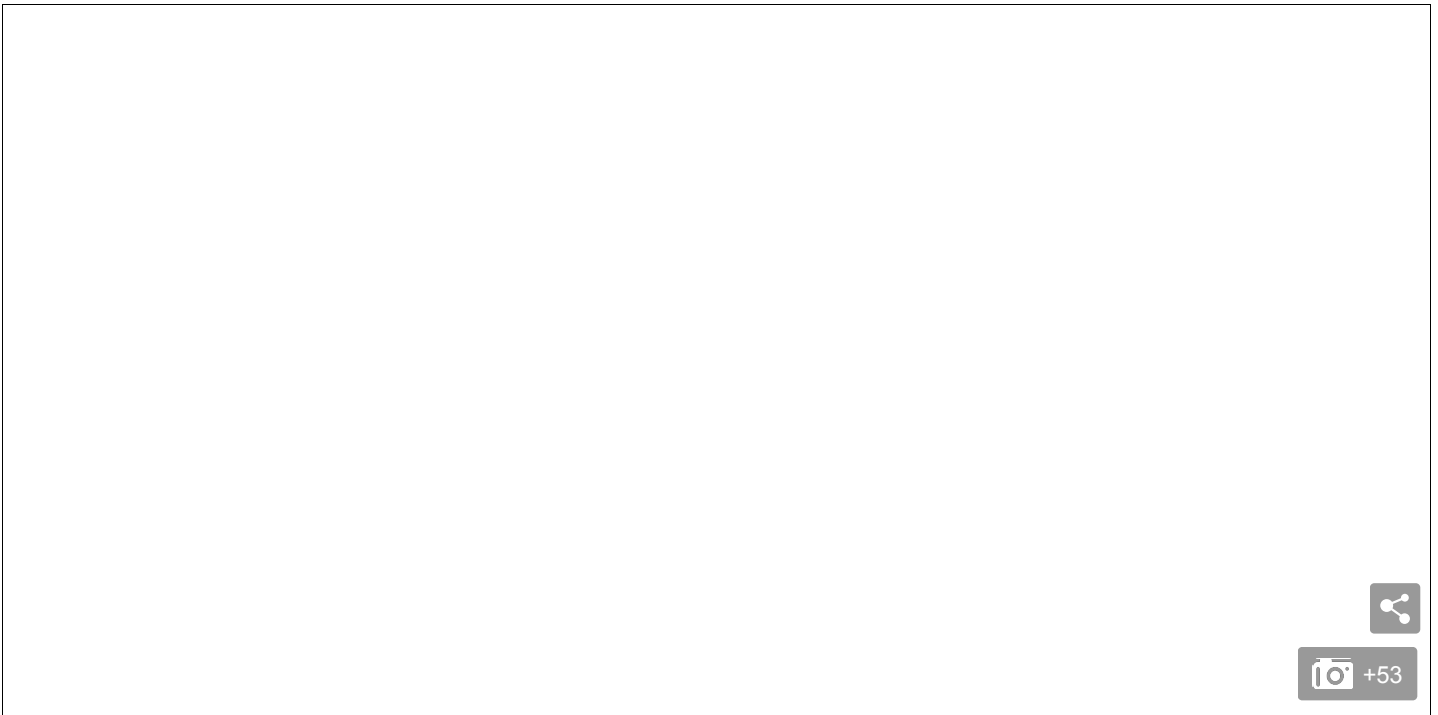
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**Knauss, 23, right, said he wanted to move to Washington D.C. when he returned**

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### Members of the Knauss family mourned Ryan's death on social media

Ryan's stepmother, Lianne Knauss, added that Ryan told them he was looking forward to returning to the U.S. and moving to Washington D.C.

'He was a super-smart hilarious young man,' she said.

U.S. Representative Tim Burchett, a fellow Knoxville resident, also tweeted a tribute to the fallen marine.

'Ryan gave his life outside that airport helping people he didn't know get to safety. This is what true heroism looks like and Ryan's sacrifice will never be forgotten. The Knauss family is my prayers.' Burchett wrote

Diane Trulson Amundson Knauss also urged people to support Wayne and the troops in Afghanistan.

'Please pray for our military in Afghanistan and all over the world,' she wrote. 'Our hearts ache for Wayne and Neena... and all families.'

### Corporal Daegan Page, 23

Marine Corp. Daegan William-Tyler Page, 23, was a native of Omaha, Nebraska.

In a statement, Page's family confirmed that he was one of the slain service members at Kabul airport.

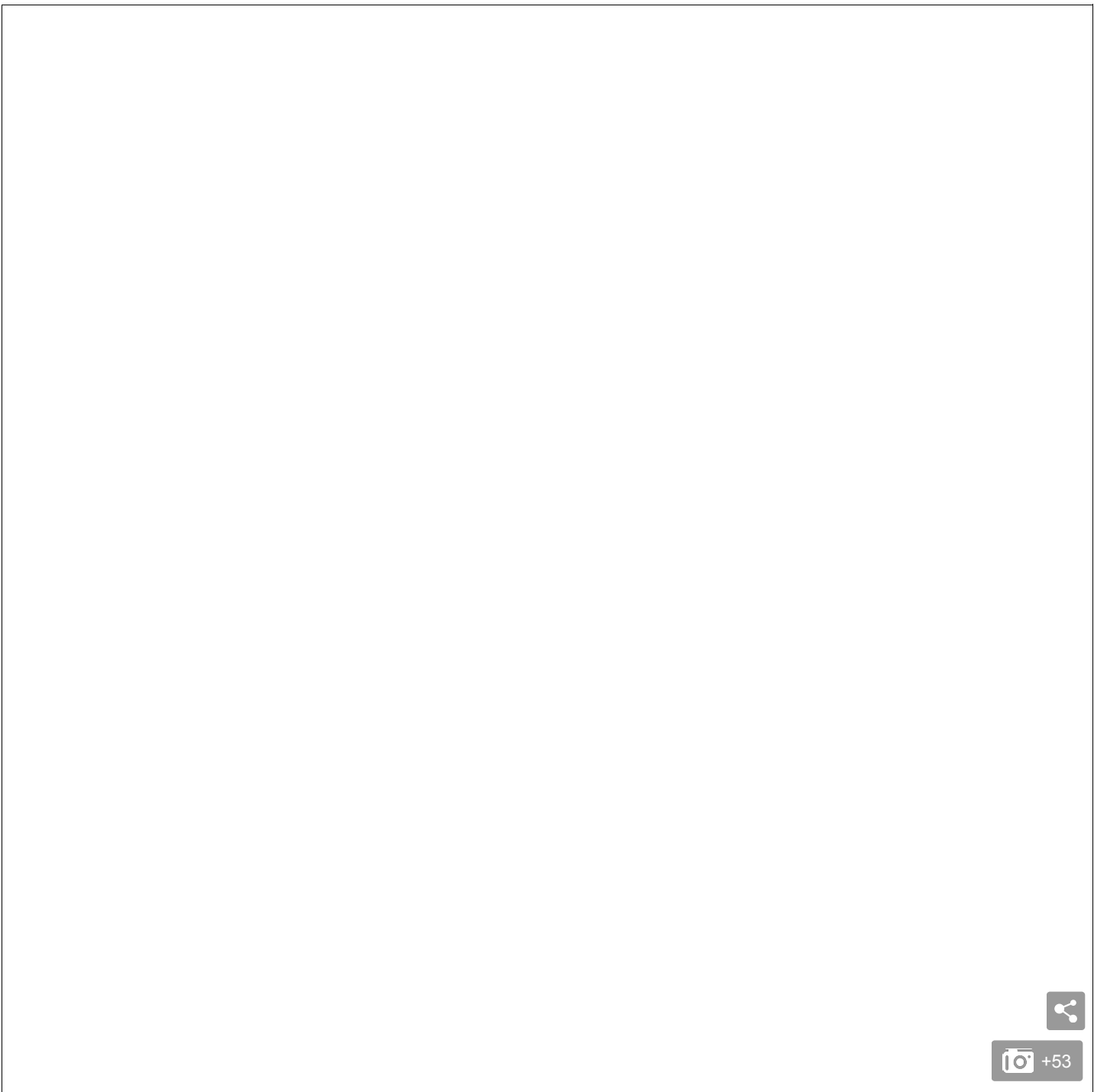
'Our hearts are broken, but we are thankful for the friends and family who are surrounding us during this time,' the family said.





**Corp. Daegan William-Tyeler Page died in the Kabul airport bombing attack**

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**Page, left, was a Marine and member of the 2nd Battalion Marine Regiment**

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### **The Omaha, Nebraska, native was looking forward to returning home, his family said**

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'Daegan's girlfriend Jessica, his mom, dad, step-mom, step-dad, 4 siblings, and grandparents are all mourning the loss of a great son, grandson, and brother.'

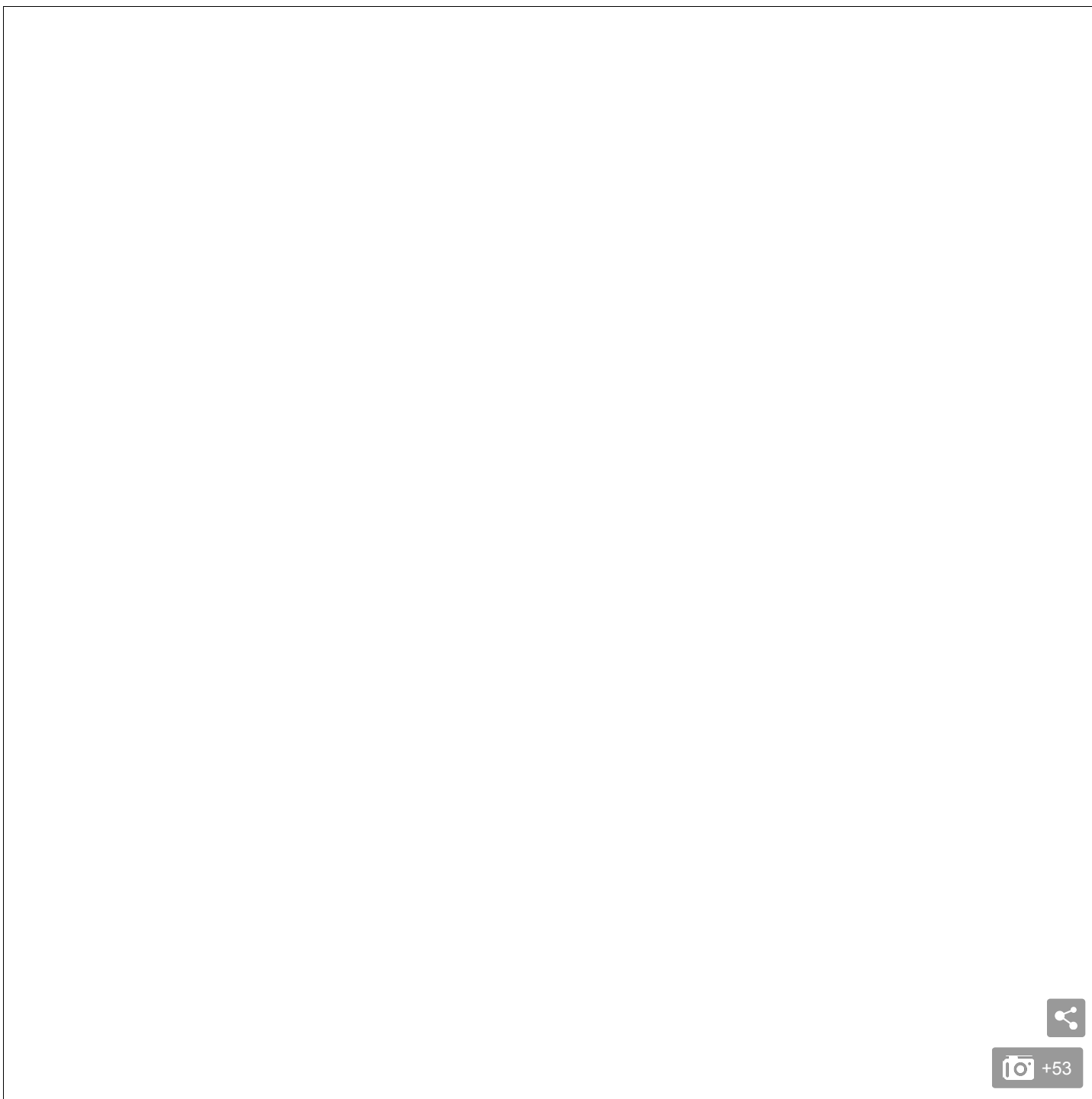
Page grew up in Omaha and Red Oak, Iowa. He enjoyed playing hockey for Omaha Westside in the local hockey club and was a diehard Chicago Blackhawks fan.

He also loved hunting and spending time outside with his father.

His family said he was a longtime Boy Scout who was eager to join the U.S. Marine Corps.

'Daegan joined the U.S. Marine Corps after graduating from Millard South High School. He loved the brotherhood of the Marines and was proud to serve as a member of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment at Marine Corps

Base Camp Pendleton, California.'



Page, center, hoped to reunite with friends back home and go to trade school

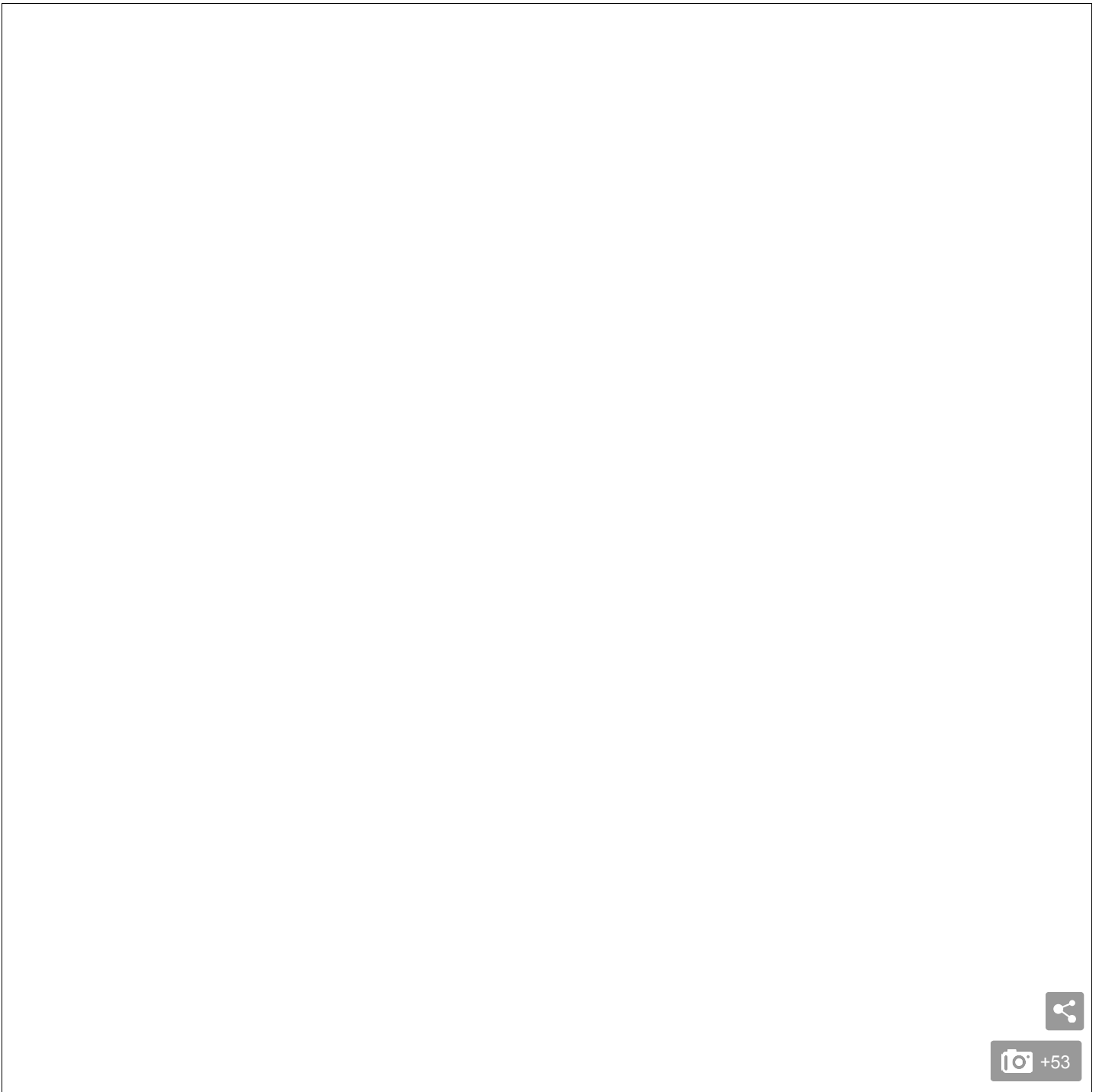
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**One of Page's friends voiced her frustration over his death on social media**

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**Page, third from the left, rear, was drawn to the sense of brotherhood within the Marine Corps**

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They added that Page was looking forward to coming home to see his family and friends. He also had plans to go to trade school, contemplating a career as a lineman.

'Daegan will always be remembered for his tough outer shell and giant heart. Our thoughts and prayers are also with the other Marine and Navy families whose loved ones died alongside Daegan,' the family said.

Shana Nicole, a friend of Page, added that 'the world lost an amazing hero.

'My heart hurts for everyone who knew Daegan. He was so so kind always,' she wrote on Facebook.

U.S. Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, who represents Page's home district, also issued a statement mourning the loss of the young marine.

'I was just notified about the death of Marine Corporal Page. My heart was already broken over our country's loss of 13 service members in Afghanistan. Now the loss is even harder,' Fortenberry said.

'God bless Corporal Page. He saved lives and served his country honorably. His life was cut short but had ultimate meaning. By his bravery and will, many others will have a chance. I send my heartfelt condolences to his family.'

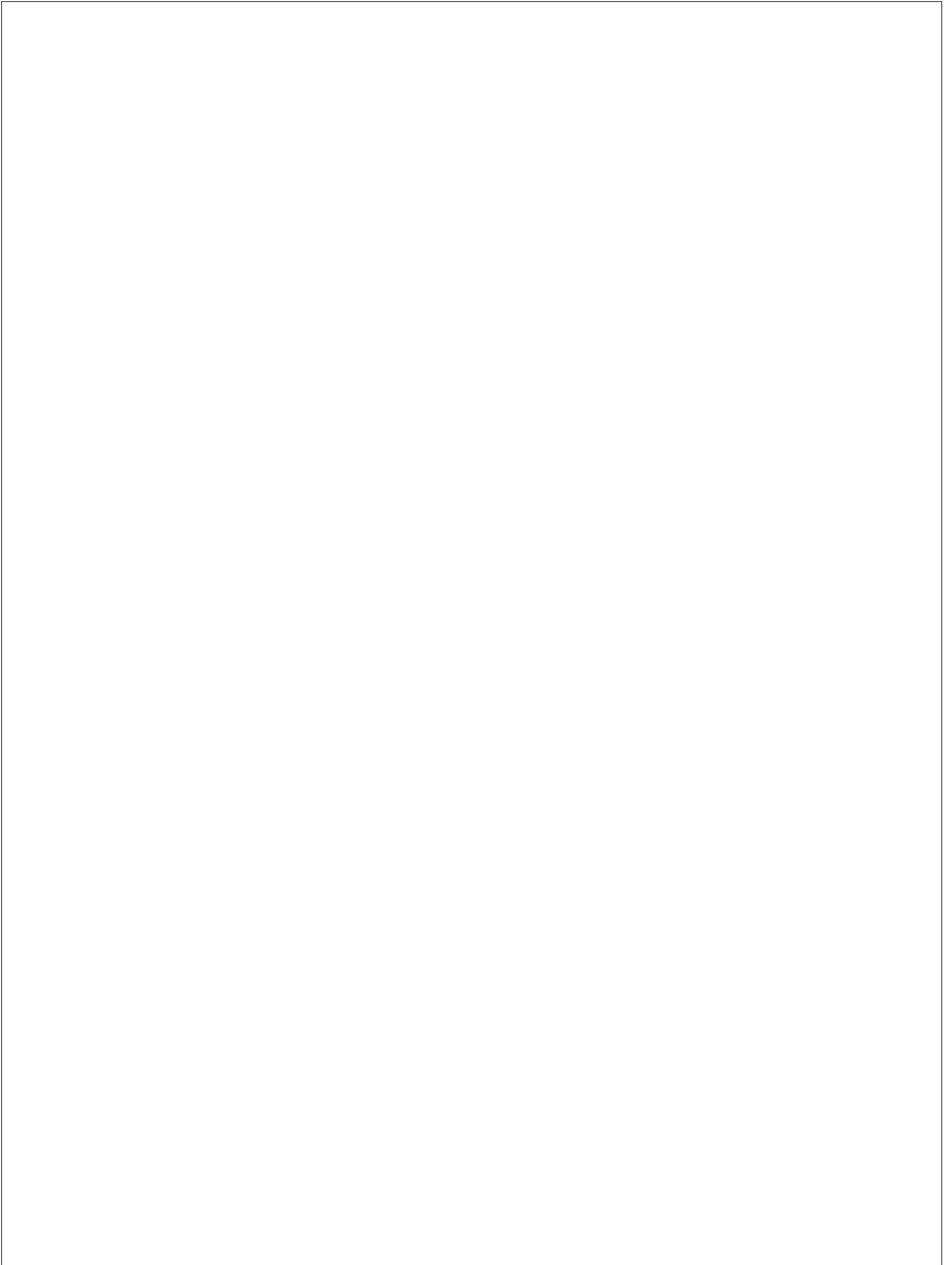
## **Corporal Humberto Sanchez, 22**

Officials in Indiana confirmed that Corp. Humberto Sanchez was also among the dead.

Sanchez graduated from Logansport High School in 2017. He also attended Columbia Elementary.

'Like many, I have been heartbroken over the recent loss of the 13 U.S. service members who were murdered in the terrorist attacks against our evacuation efforts in Kabul, Afghanistan,' Logansport Mayor Chris Martin said in a statement on Facebook.



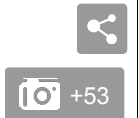


**Marine Corp. Humberto Sanchez, left, was among those killed in Kabul on Thursday**





**Sanchez pictured carrying friend Rhiannon Rickerd while attending Logansport High School**



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**A friend posted a tribute to Sanchez when he learned about his death**

'Even more heartbreaking is learning the news today that one of those killed was from right here at home in Logansport, Indiana.

'This young man had not yet even turned 30 and still had his entire life ahead of him. Any plans he may have had for his post-military life were given in sacrifice due to the heart he exhibited in putting himself into harm's way to safeguard the lives of others.'

Adrian Gazcon, a friend, also wrote a tribute on Twitter for Sanchez, saying that 'it hurts that he's gone.' 'Thank you for your service, you're a hero bro.'

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**Share or comment on this article: Father of fallen Marine says chaotic Kabul airport withdrawal was not planned out**





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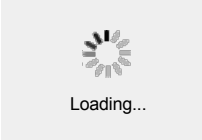


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