Eric Yates Mom

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A WKU Army ROTC graduate - killed last year in Afghanistan - will be honored tomorrow as part of WKU’s observance of Veteran’s Day.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham talks with Eric Yates mother about what the military and Western Kentucky University meant to her son.

Kathy Yates says the hole in her heart feels like it’s been there forever, but at the same time, she can’t believe it’s been over a year since her son was killed while defending our country’s freedom in Afghanistan.

“Eric was very deep. On the outside he was calm but still waters run deep and that’s just the way he was.”

Kathy Yates is talking about her son Eric who was killed in action September 18th 2010 after an IED exploded while he was on foot patrol in Afghanistan.

It was a call she never expected to receive.

“I never worried about it at all, he was like Mom, 99.7 percent of people come back so chances of anything happening to me is nothing.”

She says Eric was well aware of the risk but he wasn’t afraid.

“He knew what he was getting into, he knew he was going to a hot spot, he just knew the dangers he was going into, he wasn’t scared.”

Eric was a sophomore in high school on September eleventh 2001. After that, she says her son knew what he had to do.

“9/11 just opened up everything for him. Once 9/11 happened he could not get enough.” “He just felt like it was everybody’s duty to do their part for their country.”

Eric was a 2008 graduate of WKU and was commissioned through the ROTC program. Kathy says the university meant everything to him.

“He left home a teen and came home a man. He said more than once to me, I met the best people at ROTC and at Western.”

Those friends had to say goodbye to Eric much too soon but Kathy says she’s grateful for every moment they had together.

“I’m proud that I got to know the man he became. A lot of people don’t get that. That’s one of the things I’m most grateful to God for.”

Lieutenant Yates will be inducted into the WKU ROTC Hall of Fame tomorrow along with Lt. Colonel Thomas Kenneth Hightower.

A new granite panel with Yates’ likeness will also be unveiled at the Guthrie Tower at a ceremony beginning at 11 am. For more on tomorrow’s activities, log onto wku.edu.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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