

## Family of fallen marine pays tribute throughout Memorial Day weekend

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ROBERT C. REED/RECORD: Eunice Eckard proudly holds a portrait of her son Gunnery Sgt. Chris Eckard, while sitting in her quiet room which is a memorial to her fallen hero. Gunnery Sgt. Eckard was killed in action on Feb. 20, 2010, by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

ROBERT C. REED

HICKORY – Eunice Eckard and her family will not have a cookout on Memorial Day.

Six years after her son, Chris Eckard, was killed in an explosion in Afghanistan in February 2010, Eunice Eckard has difficulty celebrating Memorial Day in the way many Americans do.

“A family should celebrate Memorial Day. You know we just kind of find that still hard. It’s still kind of new to us,” Eunice Eckard said.

“We didn’t know what Memorial Day was until Chris, until it comes home. And a lot of people don’t until it’s your family,” Eunice Eckard said.

From a young age, Chris Eckard showed an interest in the military.

As a child, he would go around the house in a uniform.





Chad Eckard thinks of the good Chris Eckard did with his work in Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

“The thing I take away from it is, the job he did, disarming IEDS, saved a lot of lives, both military and civilian,” Chad Eckard said.

While honoring Chris Eckard is a major motivation for Eunice Eckard, she looks to honor all those who died in service.

“It’s for him. It’s not for us; it’s for him, and all of them. Not just him, it’s for all the fallen,” Eunice Eckard said.