

tration to obtain the fullest possible accounting for their fate.

For all of you who have helped America live up to its promises, your Nation has a special obligation to keep its commitments to you. That means, in the beginning, making sure that our military remains the best equipped, the best trained, and the best prepared in the world. We are keeping that commitment.

I'd like to say two things about that this morning. The first is that the success of the operations in Haiti and in the Gulf are due in no small measure to the advances which have been made just in the last couple of years in preparation, in prepositioning, in mobility, in training—fresh evidence that we can never again afford to erode the confidence, the strength, and the ever-growing capacity of our military.

The second point that I'd like to make is that maintaining the best trained and prepared military in the world also has its very high human price. And every year, men and now women we may not know as battlefield heroes give their lives so that we can continue to do the kind of training that makes it less necessary for us to have to fight in battle. And I ask especially that we remember them, for their training and their sacrifice and their lives helped to make us so strong that we did not have to fight again in the Gulf and that we were able to enter Haiti without military incident. We thank them as well for their sacrifices, and their families.

I'd like to say a personal word of thanks to Secretary Brown, to Secretary Perry, to General Shalikashvili, and the other military leaders, without whom I could not carry out my duties and from whom I draw strength, wisdom, and advice to try to make the right decisions to keep our commitments to all of you.

Our obligation also includes, as Commander Sioss said and as Secretary Brown said, continuing the service this country owes our veterans after your service in uniform ends. That is why it has given me particular pleasure in recent weeks to address concerns that are important to thousands upon thousands of our veterans. I was pleased to sign into law a bill that authorizes compensation to Gulf war veterans suffering from

undiagnosed illnesses possibly incurred during their service there. Sometimes even the most sophisticated tools don't enable us to diagnose certain illnesses. The lack of a diagnosis must not stop us from responding both quickly and compassionately to veterans' needs. Now it will not.

At the same time, we've required the VA to evaluate the health of the families of Gulf war veterans. We know that the spouses and children of our troops may not wear the uniform, but they, too, bear the burden of defending our Nation. And today we say thank you to the children and the spouses and the families as well.

Finally, we extended the VA's authority to provide care to veterans of the Gulf war, Vietnam, and World War II for disabilities they may have incurred through exposure to toxic substances. We set aside nearly \$400 million for the VA to build, lease, and repair major medical facilities around this country.

I know these actions—indeed, no actions can ever fully repay the service and the sacrifice of those of you who are here and those who never returned whom you represent. There are no words equal to the task of expressing just what your devotion and your sacrifice have meant to our Nation. But let me say at least we have this beautiful day God has given us which belongs entirely to you, to your commitment to our freedom, our prosperity, and our security. A grateful nation thanks you with this day and with all our hearts for what you have done and what you continue to do.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Donald A. Sioss, national commander, Disabled American Veterans. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the Anchorage Museum of Art and History in Anchorage, Alaska

November 11, 1994

Well, let me just say, as I said out at the base, I've been trying for 2 years to get to Alaska, and I finally made it today. And I

thank the Governor, the Senator, and the mayor for coming out to meet Hillary and me. I also want to say that this is my first trip to Alaska, now I can say that in the last couple of years I've been to every State in America. And I hope I'll be coming back. But it's not Hillary's first trip to Alaska; she is coming back. She worked here 25 years ago when she was about 6 and violated the child labor law. *[Laughter]*

So I thought I would just ask her to come up here and say a word, because it's been—this has been a very meaningful trip to her. I was trying to get a little sleep, and when we started—we finally got into the airspace of Alaska, she was beating on me, saying, "Wake up, wake up, look at this, look at this." *[Laughter]* So I heard the story again for the 500th time. *[Laughter]* Which I love. Now, I can tell it as well.

So please come up and say a word.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks to the Military Community at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage

November 11, 1994

Thank you very much, General Boese, General Cox, General Case, General Needham. On this Veterans Day, I would be remiss if I did not say a special word of thanks to General Needham for his work in trying to recover the information we need about our POW's and MIA's in Vietnam. I thank you, sir, for your work there. Governor Hickel, Senator Stevens, Mayor Mystrom, former Governor Sheffield, ladies and gentlemen, I'm glad to be here in Alaska. I've been trying for 2 years to get here to Alaska. At times I find the President is Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces but not of his own schedule. *[Laughter]*

Twenty-five years ago, before I met her, my wife came to Alaska and worked for a summer. So you can say to me, welcome to Alaska, but for Hillary, it's welcome back to Alaska. I've heard so much about it I always felt that I had imagined it, seen it all in my

mind. Those of you who, like me, have been married for a while, we've told each other the same stories so many times I feel that I could tell you what it was like when I worked in Alaska 25 years ago. *[Laughter]* But I'm glad to be here to see the real thing.

I've also heard a lot about Alaska from another group, the veterans of the 208th Coastal Artillery, a National Guard unit from my home State of Arkansas that defended Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians during World War II. One of my best friends and one of my former chiefs of staff lost his brother in that brave struggle. And I just want you to know that I know you're a long way from the rest of our country territorially, but we're proud to be here in the United States and proud of the contribution that Alaska has made to the United States of America.

I am especially pleased to be here on Veterans Day because, as all of you know, Alaska is veteran country, the State with the highest concentration of both current armed forces personnel and former servicemen and women in the entire State of the Union.

I began this morning at Arlington National Cemetery, and that's what this little pin is. This is the pin the National Cemetery did for Veterans Day this year, honoring all those who served. It was a beautiful day there—a little warmer. *[Laughter]* The sun was shining, there were still a few autumn leaves on the trees, and the great amphitheater at Arlington is being closed for—it's being repaired. Many of you have seen that amphitheater there. So instead, we celebrated Veterans Day at the foot of the long steps up to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

And it was so incredibly moving, walking up those long flight of stairs to put the wreath down and then turning around and looking just as far as you could see down a sweeping, beautiful hillside with American veterans, their families, their supporters standing in the midst of the magnificent graves of Arlington Cemetery.

I'm on my way to Manila now to honor other soldiers—those who fought in the Pacific Theater during the Second World War—to recall those who left home and family for places they never heard of, places they could barely imagine, for dangers they certainly could not have imagined. To those of