

missionary work in Alaska by representing one or another of the environmental groups. I think we have some 62 in Anchorage now.

They need a cause. And one of their favorite topics, when things are slow, is to come out with a report that somehow the pipeline is in peril, somehow the pipeline is not being operated in the most efficient manner from the standpoint of the public interest.

First of all, Mr. President, those who own the pipeline, the major owners—ARCO, Exxon—produce petroleum. Their interest is moving oil, moving oil safely, moving oil economically. To do anything less than that would be detrimental to their own interest.

The State of Alaska maintains an oversight, the Federal Government maintains an oversight. But nevertheless, we continually see reports that purposely mislead the public about the Trans-Alaska pipeline.

Those of us in the Senate know that if you do not have your electric code book up to date—and there are 25,000 or 30,000 separate entries—you can be classified by an agency as having 25,000 or 30,000 violations. It does not mean that your code book has not been updated during the last year for any number of reasons.

So we have had critics of the pipeline from time to time issuing reports intended to portray some of these problems as standard operating procedure for pipeline management rather than an exception. Of course, it generates for those particular organizations contributions and in some cases generates membership. But these claims are in stark contrast to recent oversight reports by responsible State and Federal agencies tasked with the oversight responsibility.

In 1995, the U.S. Department of Transportation audited the Office of Pipeline Safety to determine its effectiveness in ensuring the Trans-Alaska pipeline operations minimize risk to life and property. The audit concluded the operation “is effectively monitoring and inspecting [the pipeline]. Also, when violations were identified, OPS took enforcement actions against Alyeska” and made corrections.

In August of 1995, at the request of Congress, the GAO completed an audit of the pipeline operators and their response to identified deficiencies. The report concluded that “Alyeska has taken substantive actions that, if carried through to completion, appear to be adequate to correct the problems.”

Last year, the Joint Pipeline Office concluded that Alyeska has implemented its revised quality control for the pipeline sufficiently to allow its full approval.

So, Mr. President, these are the responsible agencies and current reports we have on hand. We have no reason to doubt their accuracy.

Finally, Mr. President, Alaska truly is a great State, a great big piece of real estate. We have many great assets, including our people and the resources

that we have. On this date, I would like to especially recognize the role the Trans-Alaska pipeline has had in shaping our State and the benefits it has provided to this Nation's energy and natural security interests.

Finally, Mr. President, on July 18-20, I am going to be leading a number of our colleagues to Alaska to look at the issues related to resource development of Alaska's Arctic, specifically the Trans-Alaska pipeline and other areas where truly the wealth of North America is coming from the Arctic.

I remind the Presiding Officer that Alaska just happens to be the only State with any Arctic in it. So as part of that trip, we will take a close look at the marvels of the Trans-Alaska pipeline, what it has meant to this Nation. I look forward to leading this group, and I encourage my colleagues to join with me on this important trip.

Finally, in conclusion, on the 20th anniversary of the Trans-Alaska pipeline, I would like to congratulate those workers who operate and have operated this pipeline for the last 20 years against tremendous odds, extraordinary climactic conditions, and have done it in a manner of recognizing that American technology and ingenuity and can-do spirit can just about overcome any adversity and any particular challenge of the time.

The successful operation of the Trans-Alaska pipeline for the last 20 years, I think, has proven that indeed the men and women who are associated with the pipeline and the Alyeska crew are certainly up to the task.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

134TH BIRTHDAY OF THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, today is the 134th birthday of the State which I have been so pleased and so proud and so privileged and so honored to represent in Congress since January 1953. Born of the turmoil of the Civil War, West Virginia has never had an easy time of it. Although blessed with great beauty and rich in natural resources, my State's rugged terrain and isolated geography have worked to make her people a breed apart.

Their independent views—they are a mountain people; mountain people traditionally have independent views, whether they live in Switzerland or Afghanistan or in Scotland or in West Virginia—their independent views, their impoverishment, their fierce loyalty to their communities, to their State and to their country have made them fodder for bad jokes, degrading sitcoms and derogatory nicknames.

Well, I am here to tell those who would perpetuate such hackneyed stereotypes that it is they—it is they—who are backward, because in West Virginia's hollows and on her mountains live some of the finest people in all of God's great creation.

For the most part, West Virginians are religious. They don't have, as some

would like to portray, rattlesnakes in their church services. They are traditional in their outlook, they are reverent about their tried-and-true customs and patriotic about their Nation.

In World War II, West Virginia ranked fifth among the States in the percentage of its eligible male population participating; first among the States in eligible male population participating in the Korean war; second among the States in the percentage of its eligible male population participating in the Vietnam war. Also, West Virginia ranked first among the States in the percentage of deaths its eligible male population suffered during both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

West Virginians are generally quiet. They are not loud talkers. I don't like loud talkers. They are not loud talkers. You would not hear them from one end of the Capitol to the other talking with loud voices in the corridors. They don't do that. They are generally quiet, courteous, sincere, and accommodating.

There is a presence of basic values among her residents that is scarce in much of the Nation in many places. West Virginians value hard work. They are not afraid of it. They love their families. They have a respect for authority. We don't burn flags in Weirton, WV, where there are at least 30 ethnic groups from the old world. They have respect for their communities and a love for their country and reverence for a Creator.

They don't go around wearing their religion on their sleeves. They don't make a big whoop-de-doo of it, and, as far as I am concerned, most are not the religious right or the religious left. They are simply respectful of a Creator and quietly religious.

More and more people are discovering our State. The crime is low in West Virginia, life is slower there and stress seems to float away, to be replaced by the serenity of beauty, charm and uncomplicated courtesy. Our unique mountain crafts attract attention nationwide, as do our scenic parks and our recreational activities.

West Virginia really is a world apart. My State has come a long way from the days when she was plundered by industrial barons who lived outside her borders, plundered for her rich natural resources, and many of her citizens were used as little more than indentured servants in those days in the dangerous dirty work of mining coal, for example. Today, she is experiencing new economic growth and prosperity as a result of new roads.

When I was a member of the West Virginia House of Delegates, the lower house of the West Virginia Legislature in 1947, West Virginia had 4 miles—West Virginia had 4 miles—of divided four-lane highways—4 miles. That was when I was starting out in politics, now 51 years ago. Four miles, and then one need not wonder why West Virginians become indignant when a few dollars are appropriated by the Federal Government to build safe, modern four-

lane divided highways in West Virginia; a few dollars compared with the billions of dollars that go for airports, go for mass transit and other modes of transportation elsewhere.

So she is experiencing new economic growth. Travel our highways now, view the scenery now, experience the hospitality now, see the historic places, stand on the tops of those mountains and view the creative works of an omnipotent God. Look at her sunrises, pause at her tranquil sunsets and view the land where the early pioneers crossed the Alleghenies with a Bible in one hand and a rifle in the other, carrying a bag of seeds.

They used the forests, dredged the rivers, and built a great State—a great State—a State that was born during the struggle between the States, the war between the States, the war among the States.

So she is experiencing new economic growth and prosperity as a result of new roads, technology, and forward-looking leadership. In fact, West Virginia boasts four cities in the top 200 of Money magazine's 1997 list of the best places in America to live. And there are many more than four cities there and towns and rural communities that I would categorize as the best places in America to live.

So today I say to all of those who have never tasted our glorious country cooking or danced at our traditional mountain festivals to tunes that are played by mountain musicians, never skied our shimmering slopes or paddled our wild white water, never heard the rich notes of our mountain music or gazed at our phenomenal sunsets, come to West Virginia. We will show you the way.

Happy birthday. Happy birthday, West Virginia. May you grow, and may your people never, never change.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. I want to commend the able Senator from West Virginia on his devotion and dedication to his State. He has just paid a wonderful eulogy to that State and the people of that State. I am sure the people of the United States are very proud of West Virginia and the people of West Virginia and the able Senator who represents them here in the Senate.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I thank my friend, my senior colleague, for his gracious and kind remarks concerning my State and my people.

CHEMICAL WARFARE DEFENSE DOCTRINE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, one year ago tomorrow, on June 21, 1996, in a hastily called press conference, the Department of Defense revealed that United States troops may have been exposed to Iraqi chemical nerve and mustard agents as a result of the post-war demolition of an Iraqi ammunition

storage depot at Kamisiyah, Iraq. By September 1996, the DOD estimate of the number of soldiers who may have been exposed had climbed to just over 20,000, and the DOD announced that studies were still under way that could push that number even higher. This announcement raised new fears that Iraqi chemical warfare agents may have played a role in causing the illness among United States and coalition veterans of the Persian gulf war that has come to be called gulf war syndrome, and it exposed flaws in the manner in which the Department of Defense tracked the locations and medical histories of units and individual troops. The Department of Defense and the Presidential Advisory Committee on gulf war illnesses have subsequently attempted to address this and many other possible causes of gulf war syndrome, as have a number of congressional committees. There is still considerable uncertainty and controversy surrounding this issue.

As a result of that announcement, I offered an amendment to the Fiscal Year 1997 Department of Defense authorization bill to provide \$10 million for independent scientific research into the possible relationship between chemical agent exposure, particularly to low levels of chemical agent exposure, and gulf war syndrome. My amendment was adopted without debate by the Senate and supported through the conference with the House, and I thank my colleagues for sharing in my concern that our veterans be provided with the independent medical research on this subject that had not previously existed. I am eager, as I know our sick veterans and their families are also, to learn the results of these studies.

But, Mr. President, although efforts to improve medical records management techniques in order to better understand and treat future post-war illnesses among United States troops—efforts already undertaken by the Department of Defense—are a step in the right direction, I believe that the most effective course of action is to prevent the exposures from occurring. We must not settle for just closing the barn door after the horse has bolted. We must find out why the door failed to contain the horse, and fix it. In that regard, the effectiveness of current doctrine and technology is questionable. It is not certain that our chemical detectors will provide a sufficient warning for low levels of chemical agent, and it is not certain that our military doctrine and procedures are adequate to fully protect our troops in a scenario that is not immediately life-threatening. Nor is it certain that the military anticipates the synergistic effects of different factors, such as the administration of vaccines and anti-chemical warfare agent drugs, in combination with the use of pesticides or exposure to other battlefield effluents, including chemical and biological agents.

I am concerned that United States military doctrine has not changed to

reflect these lessons learned from the gulf war experience and its aftermath. My concern is, I know, shared by many of my colleagues, who over the years have pursued these issues in hearings. Indeed, even the Special Assistant for gulf war illnesses at the Department of Defense has admitted in testimony before Congress that "We [DOD] need to learn from our Gulf experience and make the necessary changes in policies, doctrine, and technology."

I am pleased, therefore, that two of my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, Senator LEVIN and Senator GLENN, have joined me in requesting that the General Accounting Office [GAO] initiate an evaluation of this very issue. Both of these very able Senators have, over the last several years, questioned the ability of our military to fight and win on a chemical battlefield. We have asked the GAO to address the adequacy of current policies, procedures, and technologies to first adequately defend United States military forces against single, repeated, or sustained exposure to low levels of chemical warfare agent, and to second identify, prepare for, and defend against the possible adverse effects of chemical warfare agent exposure in combination with other compounds commonly found in the battlefield, including pesticides, oil and diesel exhaust, biological warfare agents, low level radiation, medically administered vaccines, and other occupational hazards.

It is my hope that this study will lay the foundation upon which we might make effective and targeted adjustments in next year's Department of Defense authorization bill that will give our soldiers the ability and confidence to fight and win on a chemically contaminated battlefield.

IN MEMORY OF BILLY N. STEPHENS

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, on Sunday, May 18, a soldier was laid to rest in a small Kentucky community along the banks of the Ohio River. But this wasn't to be any small affair. Billy Stephens had served his country and community with distinction and he would be honored for those contributions by a 17-man team from Ft. Knox.

Once the rifles were fired, the bugle sounded taps, and the flag from the casket was presented to his widow, those present couldn't help but feel the enormity of his life. A son of Hawesville in Hancock County, if you met Billy Stephens on the street, you might not suspect him of greatness.

But it is because of him and others like him, that you and I enjoy freedom today.

In 1940, he joined the Army and served for the duration of the war. Before the war ended, he would participate in seven campaigns and earn seven battle stars. In addition to the EAME theater with seven Bronze Stars, his military decorations included the