

was reduced by 45 percent each, the Navy by approximately 40 percent, and the Marines by over 10 percent. President Reagan deployed U.S. forces 17 times during his eight year term. During his four-year term, President Bush deployed U.S. forces 14 times. During the six year tenure of President Clinton, however, the U.S. armed forces have been deployed over 46 times. Contingency operations during this Administration have exacted a heavy cost (in real terms): \$8.1 billion in Bosnia; \$1.1 billion in Haiti; \$6.1 billion in Iraq.

Diminished resources, inadequate benefits, and increased deployments are taking a serious toll on the health of our armed forces. Our Air Force pilots defeat Iraq's forces soundly on the battlefield, but Saddam is winning a war of attrition when it comes to pilot retention. The Air Force has experienced a 14 percent decline in readiness since 1996 and ended 1998 with a 700 pilot shortfall that could grow to 2,000 pilots by 2002. Air Force second-term reenlistment rates have dropped 13% in the last 5 years.

The Navy was 7,000 recruits short in 1998 and reports diminished deployed readiness due to personnel shortages, such as a 9% shortfall in junior Surface Warfare Officers. The non-deployed readiness of carrier air wings is at its lowest level in a decade.

Retention rates for critical personnel in all services is suffering. Declines in retention of critical personnel since 1995 are very troubling: Air Force enlisted aircrew with 7 years service declined from 83 to 55 percent; Air Force AWAC personnel with 5-8 years service declined from 56 to 35 percent; Army aircraft armament personnel with 8 years service declined from 72 to 47 percent; Army chemical operations specialists with 5-8 years service declined from 69 to 51 percent; Marine aircraft avionics technicians with 9-12 years service declined from 76 to 63 percent; and Navy electronic technicians with 9-12 years service declined from 77 to 63 percent.

The Soldiers', Sailors', Airmen's, and Marines' (SSAM) Bill of Rights Act of 1999 addresses these problems on several fronts. The legislation contains important provisions to address immediate needs and establishes longer-term mechanisms to improve retention of military personnel. The bill provides for an across the board pay increase of 4.8 percent. The pay table is reformed to benefit critical mid-career personnel the most. Retirement system reform gives military personnel with 15 years of service the option of remaining in the Redux retirement plan and taking a \$30,000 cash bonus or returning to a pre-Redux system with retirement at 50 percent of base pay and no COLA caps.

Retirement opportunities also are enhanced by allowing military personnel to contribute 5 percent of their base pay tax-free to a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). A special retention initiative is also provided where the Secretary of

Defense can choose to offer 5 percent matching TSP contributions to critical personnel for six years in return for a six year commitment. Finally, there is a special subsistence allowance to address the intolerable condition of 12,000 military personnel on food stamps. In the U.S. military, the finest fighting force in the world, there should never be families who are so poorly provided for as to need food stamps. The monthly subsistence allowance in this legislation, in addition to other pay reforms, will help end this disgraceful treatment of thousands of military personnel.

The need for this legislation cannot be more obvious. Our troops maintain a constant presence in the Persian Gulf, East Asia, and Europe. Now in Bosnia two years past the original deadline, American soldiers could face yet another prolonged nation-building exercise in Kosovo if this Administration has its way. These troops have been asked to achieve more missions with fewer resources and less manpower, and the signs of fraying readiness and declining morale are mounting.

In addressing current readiness and funding problems, Administration officials repeatedly have said personnel issues were their first priority. General Shelton testified last September: "... if I had to choose the area of greatest concern to me, I would say that we need to put additional dollars into taking care of our most important resource, the uniformed members of the armed forces."

General Shelton is right to place the highest priority on our military personnel. The defense of this country, in the final analysis, is essentially a personnel issue. Admiral Chester Nimitz stated in 1950: "Our armaments must be adequate to the needs, but our faith is not primarily in these machines of defense but in ourselves." General Shelton seems to concur with that statement when he says: "The best tanks, the best planes, the best ships in the world are not what makes our military the superb force that it is today ... Advanced technology and modern weapons are important ... But even the finest high-tech equipment will never be the determining factor on the battlefield. The most critical factor for both current and future readiness are our men and women ... in uniform today."

Our military personnel are our greatest resource, and our failure to take care of them our greatest oversight. No soldier should have to worry about feeding his family as he defends his country. No military family should be repeatedly divided by constant deployments.

We entrust our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines with the responsibility given to our nation as a whole: the defense of liberty. How we provide for those men and women in uniform reflects on how seriously we take that mission, on how seriously we safeguard the blessings of liberty. I urge passage

of this legislation to improve much-needed benefits for those who defend the United States and the cause of freedom abroad.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, every February, since Dr. Carter G. Woodson first initiated the idea in 1926, Americans have celebrated the contributions of African-Americans to our history, literature, arts, sciences, politics and every other facet of American life. What was in the beginning only a week-long event, has blossomed into a month-long celebration.

This year's theme, as selected by the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH), is "The Legacy of African-American Leadership for the Present and the Future." This theme captures one of the primary objectives of Dr. Woodson in creating this annual celebration. Dr. Woodson believed that you must look back in order to look forward. He dedicated his entire life to the research and documentation of African-American history, and his efforts were intended to educate and inspire contemporaneous and future generations of Americans.

In keeping with this theme and Dr. Woodson's vision, I rise today to share with my colleagues of the Senate and the American people a few of the legacies of outstanding African-Americans from Maryland. While this is not an exhaustive listing, it exemplifies the legacy of African-Americans in the areas of science, engineering, abolitionism, literature, religion, theater, education, civil rights, law, business, athletics, diplomacy and politics. I believe you will find—as I have found—their stories and accomplishments inspiring, and it is my fervent hope that today's African-American youth will find in these men and women role models to inspire their own efforts as we move into the 21st Century.

Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) of Ellicott's Mill, Maryland is credited with building the first clock in America in 1753. He was an inventor, scientist and surveyor who played an important role in the layout and design of our nation's capital city.

Harriet Tubman (1820-1913) of Dorchester County, Maryland escaped from slavery and was responsible for assisting more than 300 slaves reach freedom in the north through the underground railway.

Francis E.W. Harper (1825-1911) of Baltimore, Maryland was the first African-American writer to have a published short story. She also had her poetry and other verse published, including a novel in 1892.

Billie Holiday (1915-1959) of Baltimore, Maryland is to this day regarded as one the greatest jazz vocalists in history, and as one of America's premier artists of the 20th Century.

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) of Baltimore, Maryland was a distinguished author, folklorist and anthropologist.

Charles Randolph Uncles (1859-1933) of Baltimore, Maryland became the first African-American priest ordained in the United States on December 19, 1891, beginning a line of American ministers that has included Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Eubie Blake (1883-1983) of Baltimore, Maryland was a popular ragtime pianist and composer who first learned to play the piano at age six and went on to break color barriers on Broadway and theaters across the nation.

Mary Church Terrell (1864-1954) of Annapolis, Maryland was an outstanding educator and early civil rights leader.

Edward Franklin Frazier (1894-1962) of the Eastern Shore of Maryland was a teacher of mathematics, professor of sociology and author who created and furthered the academic knowledge and understanding of the African-American community.

Clifton Wharton (1899-1990) of Baltimore, Maryland became the first African-American foreign service officer named chief of an American mission overseas when he was appointed U.S. Minister to Romania in 1958.

Leon Day (1916-1995), a Hall of Fame baseball player from Baltimore, Maryland, was one of the most consistently outstanding pitchers in the Negro Leagues during the 1930's and 1940's. His consistency was interrupted only by two years of service in the Army during World War II where he distinguished himself on Utah Beach during the Allied invasion of France.

Reginald F. Lewis (1942-1993) of Baltimore, Maryland created first African-American law firm on Wall Street and led the first African-American owned company with annual revenue exceeding \$1 billion.

Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993) of Baltimore, Maryland served as chief counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund (NAACP-LDF) at a time when the NAACP brought, argued and won *Brown v. Board of Education*, the seminal 1954 civil rights Supreme Court case. He went on to serve his nation as a federal Appellate Court judge, Solicitor General, and the first African-American member of the United States Supreme Court.

I am also sorry to report that Maryland recently lost one of its legal and political leaders when Judge Harry A. Cole passed away earlier this month. Judge Harry A. Cole was both the first African-American to hold the office of an Assistant State Attorney General in Maryland, and the first African-American named to the Maryland Court of Appeals, which is my State's highest court. During his fourteen year tenure on the Court of Appeals, Judge Cole distinguished himself with his scholarly and independent opinions, and we will miss him dearly in Maryland.

Mr. President, as this short account makes evident, Maryland is and has

been proud to be the home of some of America's greatest African-Americans. These are people who did not let economic or racial barriers stop them from reaching their goals or achieving their dreams. These outstanding individuals, and many others from Maryland and across the United States, have opened doors and set high standards for later generations of African-Americans. Most importantly, however, these are people who continue to serve as role models for all Americans.

Indeed, the State of Maryland continues to be blessed and enriched with outstanding African-American leaders who have built on Maryland's rich African-American legacy. I speak here of such individuals as Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke and NAACP President and CEO Kweisi Mfume.

I would like to observe that the State of Maryland is currently benefiting from a continued growth in our African-American population. Between 1990 and 1997, when the last set of complete figures were available from the Census Bureau, the number of African-Americans calling Maryland "home" grew to 1.4 million—an increase of 200,609 people. This makes Maryland the state with the eighth largest African-American population in the United States. Nearby Prince George's County was second in the nation in terms of growth during this seven-year period with 68,325 new African-American residents.

Mr. President, in closing, Maryland is fortunate to have such a rich legacy of African-American leadership as well as a growing population of young African-American men and women to whom this legacy will provide inspiration and examples. As I noted at the outset, Dr. Woodson believed in looking back in order to look forward. As I look back at the deeds and accomplishments of the Marylanders listed above, and of the many outstanding African-Americans who have contributed to American science, engineering, abolitionism, literature, religion, theater, education, civil rights, law, business, athletics, diplomacy and politics, I see much to inspire our forward march into the next century, during which I hope we will eradicate forever the scourge of prejudice and racial bias from our society.

DEATH OF LAUREN ALBERT

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, on February 18, 1999, Pennsylvania lost one of its finest citizens, with the death of Lauren Albert.

I had the pleasure to know Mrs. Albert. She was the mother of three wonderful children, Stuart, Elliot, and Emily and the husband of one of Pennsylvania's finest orthopedic surgeons, Todd J. Albert, M.D. For seventeen years, Lauren had served at the side of Richard I. Rothman at the Rothman Institute and Reconstructive Orthopedic Associates. She was a leader in our community.

As fate would have it, Lauren and her husband Todd were traveling with

eight other Pennsylvanians, including my son Shanin and his wife Tracey. Also on the trip were Barbara and Richard Barnhart, Leslie and Al Boris and Jaimie and David Field.

Lauren was killed when the Land Rover in which she was a passenger was caused to tumble down a mountainside of the High Atlas Mountains. Her husband and the Barnharts were passengers in the same vehicle.

I was notified of the accident as soon as the party had access to a telephone. Contemporaneously, the Department of State, our Ambassador in Rabat, Edward Gabriel and our Consul general in Morocco, Evan G. Reade, Casablanca, were notified.

Consul Reade, accompanied by other Embassy officials, immediately flew to meet the Americans in nearby Ouerzazate.

Although Consul Reade had been in Morocco for only 8 months, he immediately assumed control of the situation and worked to solve complex and pressing problems.

First, there was a significant question of the medical stability of the three surviving passengers. Consul Reade and I worked in tandem with the Department of Defense, particularly Colonel Joe Reynes, Executive Secretary to the Secretary of Defense. Over the next several hours, well through the night, local time, Colonel Reynes worked diligently to place a military medical aircraft in Europe on alert to fly to Morocco. An enormous amount of work was undertaken with our military's European command, the State Department, Moroccan officials, Consul Reade in Ouerzazate and Ambassador Gabriel in Rabat.

In the final analysis, a medical evacuation was not needed. Nonetheless, it was most reassuring to know that our military could be counted upon to assist.

Second, Consul Reade, working in connection with others in the State Department, were instrumental in accomplishing the rapid evacuation of the three injured passengers as well as the remainder of the party from Morocco. This was accomplished through detailed coordination and airport assistance for four commercial flights enabling all to return home safely by 5:30 p.m. on the following day.

Third, Consul Reade arranged for the return of the body of Lauren Albert to Pennsylvania. For numerous reasons, this process is highly complicated. Consul Reade arranged, with the assistance of the Morocco officials, to have Mrs. Albert's body returned to Pennsylvania on Sunday, February 21, 1999. This permitted a timely funeral and burial, which was very important to the Albert family.

Finally, I wish to recognize the superb assistance of Lt. Colonel Driss Ferar, Commandant of the Morocco Police in the Ouerzazate region. Colonel Ferar was notified of the accident within minutes. He sped to the scene in the High Atlas Mountains, an hour and