

I've grown up on a farm with the closest neighbor one and a half miles down the road. I have attended a public school that has endured a startling decrease in the student body of 100 to 34 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. I ask myself if I have been sheltered and deprived—or fortunately been forced to dig into the soil where I've found what really matters?

Butte, North Dakota. It has a population of a dwindling number of 129 people, but it is a place of great happiness and memories for many. Art Meller, 93 years young has never lived anywhere else. He remembers when the old people used to call Butte, "the little world all by itself." Butte was founded as Dogden in 1906. Since then the cornerstone, and the town's greatest asset, has been the school.

I'll never forget that first day of kindergarten when I walked into school and met my nine classmates. Now, I will finish my senior high school with only one classmate. We are excited for the typical reasons just like any other senior, but there is something that is unique about our class. Not only are we the only two seniors, but also we will be the last graduating class of Butte Public School. The cornerstone of Butte will be closing its doors. "It's sad to see Butte School end because when the school closes, the town closes," said Matthew, one of seven juniors. It is sad, and everyday as I drive down Main Street, the only paved street in town, I gaze at the sights—the Café, the grocery store, the Farmer's Union, and the small town bar—that have given me hope.

On a normal day I hear the sounds of wind blowing, children playing outside, and the murmur of people talking. It's not the sounds of loud sirens, or construction machinery, or traffic jams. It is simply, for the most part, a safe and comforting environment—"the little world all by itself." People living only an hour away haven't heard, or even know that a town named Butte, North Dakota exists.

Every morning I drive down the four blocks of Main Street to school, and every morning I slow down as two elderly women cross the street. They are on their daily walk to the Butte Post Office and then to the Café for a cup of coffee. Oh, and don't forget the small town gossip. It's the chatter of figuring out all 129 people's lives in Butte. When the town is so small, shouldn't everybody know everything? It's a different life, "the little world all by itself."

As I walk in the school doors there are no metal detectors, no locks on lockers, just the smiles and solemn faces of the small student body ready to put in another day at Butte school, knowing that there won't be many more at Butte. We aren't about violence or competition. Students have developed cherished friendships. We are proof that school isn't all crime and violence. It isn't a scary place. The wonder of "will a bomb blow up today?" isn't a thought. It's a place where every student shares the common bond of simple pleasures: seeing deer running in the open country, or not having to worry about locking the doors or turning on the alarm system. Everybody has gone outside at night and been able to enjoy the bright, shining stars.

The little town of Butte, North Dakota is the positive evidence that the small, trustworthy, and simple lifestyle has been dug up and still exists. Don't lose heart. Pick up your shovel and start digging deep.●

SHITAMA MANZO SENSEI AND TAKAKI MASANORI SENSEI

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Shitama

Manzo Sensei and Takaki Masanori Sensei of the Seikiryukan Dojo upon the occasion of their visit to the United States. As the 16th headmaster of Sосуishi-ryu Jujutsu and kancho of the Seikiryukan, Shitama Manzo Sensei with the aid of Takaki Masanori Sensei, chief instructor of the Seikiryukan, have provided exemplary leadership and dedication in their oversight of the instruction of Jujutsu and Judo for many years.

The Seikiryukan Dojo has a history dating back centuries as the bombu of Sосуishi-ryu Jujutsu. It is dedicated to the ethical and physical principles that compose the martial arts of Jujutsu and Judo and was one of the first martial arts schools in Japan to teach the United States Military Jujutsu and Judo.

Shitama Manzo Sensei and Takaki Masanori have given much of their time and energy working for the betterment of others. I am appreciative of the opportunity to recognize men of such charter and conviction who work at teaching other their honorable ways.●

THE FALL OF SAIGON

● Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, on Sunday, the anniversary of the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam conflict, the Washington Post carried on its Op-Ed page a thoughtful, healing reflection on those events by Senator KERREY entitled, "Was It Worth It?" A hero—and casualty—of that conflict, the only Member of Congress ever to have received the Congressional Medal of Honor, he might understandably have turned his attention to those who did not think so and did not serve. Instead he allowed that for a period he had shared the same doubts, but had overcome them. As he contemplates the human destruction done by the dictatorship that followed, he concludes: "I believe the cause was just and the sacrifice not in vain." He is now, as he was then, a person of limitless courage.

I ask that his article be included in the RECORD.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 30, 2000]

WAS IT WORTH IT?

(By Bob Kerrey)

The most difficult war of the last century was not Vietnam; it was World War I. In 1943, the year I was born, veterans of the Great War Were remembering the 25th anniversary of their armistice while their sons were fighting in Italy and the Pacific against enemies whose military strength was ignored on account of the bitter memories of the failures of the First World War.

So, as I remember April 30, 1975, I will also remember Nov. 11, 1918, and what happened when America isolated itself from the world. But I will also remember the pride I felt when I sat in joint sessions of Congress listening to Vaclav Havel, Kim Dae Jung, Lech Walesa and Nelson Mandela thank Americans for the sacrifices they made on behalf of their freedom.

The famous photo of South Vietnamese ascending a stairway to a helicopter on the roof of our Saigon embassy represents both our shame and our honor. The shame is that

we, in the end, turned our back on Vietnam and on the sacrifice of more than 58,000 Americans. We succumbed to fatigue and self-doubt, we went back on the promise we had made to support the South Vietnamese, and the Communists were able to defeat our allies. The honor is that during the fall of Saigon, we rescued tens of thousands of our South Vietnamese friends, and in the years that followed we welcomed more than a million additional Vietnamese to our shores.

For a young, college-educated son of the optimistic American heartland, the war taught some valuable lessons. My trip to Vietnam gave me a sense of the immense size and variety of our world. I was also awed by something that still moves me: that Americans would risk their lives for the freedom of another people. At the Philadelphia Naval Hospital I learned that everyone needs America's generosity—even me.

During the war, I knew the fight for freedom was the core reason for our being in Vietnam. But after the war, as I learned more about our government's decision-making in the war years, I became angry. I was angry at the failure of our leaders to tell the truth about what was happening in Vietnam. I was angry at their ignorance about the motives of our North Vietnamese adversaries and the history of Vietnam.

Our leaders didn't seem to understand the depth of commitment of our adversaries to creating their version of an independent Vietnam. I particularly detested President Nixon for his duplicity in campaigning on a promise to end the war and then, once in office, broadening the war to Cambodia. But time has taught me the sterility of anger. So, as I recently told former secretary of defense Robert S. McNamara, I forgive our leaders of the Vietnam period.

I am able to forgive, not out of any great generosity of mine but because the passage of time and the actions of the Communist government of Vietnam proven to me we were fighting on the right side. In their harsh treatment of the Vietnamese people, in denying them medicine and essential consumer goods, and in persecuting religious practice, the Vietnamese Communists in the postwar years proved themselves to be—Communists.

The most eloquent comment on life under Ho Chi Minh's heirs was the flight of millions of Vietnamese who risked death on the high seas rather than live under that regime. If there was to be a trial to determine whether the Vietnam War was worth fighting, I would call the Boat People as my only witness.

Was the war worth the effort and sacrifice, or was it a mistake? Everyone touched by it must answer that question for himself. When I came home in 1969 and for many years afterward, I did not believe it was worth it. Today, with the passage of time and the experience of seeing both the benefits of freedom won by our sacrifice and the human destruction done by dictatorships, I believe the cause was just and the sacrifice not in vain.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

(The nomination received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 3767. An act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make improvements to, and permanently authorize, the visa waiver pilot program under section 217 of such Act.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-8706. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition and Technology, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the DoD missions and functions review report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-8707. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the current Future Years Defense Program funding of the support costs associated with the F/A-18E/F multiyear procurement program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-8708. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition and Technology, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the percentage of funds that are projected to be expended during each of the next five fiscal years for performance of depot-level maintenance and repair workloads by the public and private sectors; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-8709. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, Policy, transmitting, pursuant to the 1999 Defense Authorization Act, a report that includes a descriptive summary of appropriations requested for each project category under each Cooperative Threat Reduction program element; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-8710. A communication from the President of the United States of America, transmitting, pursuant to the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act and the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1999, the report on progress made toward achieving benchmarks in Bosnia, as adopted by the Peace Implementation Council and the North Atlantic Council for evaluating implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, for a sustainable peace progress; to the Committee on Armed Services.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-468. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to obtaining an apology from the government of Japan for crimes against prisoners of war during World War II; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 4

Whereas, 33,587 men and women in the United States military and 13,966 United

States civilians were captured by the forces of the Empire of Japan in the Pacific Theater during World War II, confined in brutal prison camps, and subjected to severe shortages of food, medicine, and other basic necessities; and

Whereas, many of the United States military and civilian prisoners of the Imperial Japanese Government during World War II were forced to work in coal, copper, lead, and zinc mines, steel plants, shipbuilding yards, and other private Imperial Japanese industries; and

Whereas, many of the United States military and civilian prisoners of the Imperial Japanese Government were starved and beaten to death or executed by beheading, firing squads, or immolation, while working for Japanese business entities that have become some of the largest multinational companies in the world today; and

Whereas, the Federal Republic of Germany has formally apologized to the victims of the Holocaust and provided financial compensation to its victims; and

Whereas, the United States government, in 1988, acknowledged the unfairness of its policy of detaining and interring Japanese-Americans during World War II; and

Whereas, while Japanese government officials have expressed personal apologies and supported the payment of privately funded reparations to some victims, the Japanese government has refused to fully acknowledge the crimes of Imperial Japan committed during World War II and to provide reparations to its victims: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana requests that the President of the United States and the United States Congress take all appropriate action to further bring about a formal apology and reparations by the Japanese government for the war crimes committed by the Imperial Japanese military during World War II. Be it further

Resolved, That suitable copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of Louisiana's congressional delegation.

POM-469. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to Social Security; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 13

Whereas, in November 1999, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) published a position-neutral report titled "Federal Reductions to Social Security Benefits of State and Local Employees: The Windfall Elimination Reduction and the Government Pension Offset"; and

Whereas, the NCSL report stated that two federal Social Security provisions known as the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) result in a reduction of Social Security benefits received by beneficiaries who also receive "uncovered" government retirement benefits earned through work for a state or local government employer where the Social Security payroll tax was not paid; and

Whereas, the NCSL report stated that congress, in crafting the GPO and WEP benefit reductions, intended to alleviate concerns that public employees who had worked primarily in uncovered, non-Social Security employment receive the same benefit as workers who had worked in covered employment throughout their career; and

Whereas, the NCSL report stated that the GPO reduces the Social Security spouse's (widow's) benefit by two-thirds of the

amount of the public retirement benefit received by the spousal beneficiary and, in some case, the offset will eliminate a Social Security benefit; and

Whereas, the WEP applies to some government employees who worked primarily in uncovered employment and who have earned an uncovered government pension and also worked enough quarters in covered employment to qualify for an earned Social Security benefit which is subject to a reduction of up to one-half of the amount of the uncovered public retirement benefit earned; and

Whereas, based on the facts as presented in the NCSL report, it can be argued that both the GPO and the WEP reductions are unfair to lower-wage public employees who receive lower uncovered public pension benefits, because the greatest reductions are suffered by the lowest Social Security earners, and both reduction provisions assume that public employees in uncovered employment, are career employees and make no adjustments for employees who may move in and out of public sector employment or who may qualify for only a minimal uncovered government pension: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize congress to repeal the two federal Social Security provisions known as the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, and thereby prevent the reduction of Social Security benefits received by beneficiaries who also receive "uncovered" government retirement benefits earned through work for a state or local government employer. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-470. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to tax treatment of independently contracted school bus operators; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 14

Whereas, many Louisiana school systems retain school bus operators who own their own school buses and who act as independent contractors for the purpose of transporting students to and from school and school-related events, and each such operator incurs expenses in the performance of his duties, including the cost of new tires, tune-ups, routine maintenance, engine and body repair, interest on financing of the bus, and depreciation thereof; and

Whereas, in each year prior to 1989, such operators were paid a base salary that was reported to the Internal Revenue Service on form W-2 which applies to statutory employees and, in addition thereto, were paid a separate operation expense reimbursement allowance that was reported on form 1099-Miscellaneous which applies to independent contractors; and

Whereas, in each tax year prior to 1989, each such operator was required to pay income tax on his base salary, but it appears that the Internal Revenue Service apparently either condoned or was unaware of the prevailing tax practice of the operators who were foregoing the reporting of their form 1099-Miscellaneous allowance as taxable income thereby allowing, in effect, a tax exemption relative thereto; and

Whereas, the former practice of many operators was to carry forward the unused, untaxed portion of their expense allowance to be applied in any future year if the expense allowance paid in that year did not cover the expenses actually incurred; and