

and conflict into a robust 138-year-old, the birthday girl is entering the new century with confidence and strength.

The birthday party in question is, of course, for the wild and wonderful, great and beautiful State of West Virginia, celebrated this Thursday, June 20. In 1863, West Virginia was born by proclamation—the only state so created. Like Caesar Augustus, West Virginia was wrested from her mother, Virginia, at the point of a sword. Also like Caesar, I foresee greatness ahead for West Virginia.

West Virginia is not a large State, ranking 41st at 24,231 square miles. But the stars shone on her birth, blessing her with natural riches, water, and a central location as the northernmost southern State and the southernmost northern State. I might wish for her more flat land, but, on the other hand, I would not trade a level plain for even a single glorious hillside blanketed by lush tangles of wild rhododendron bisected by a clear, cold stream tumbling over rocky drops amid dense stands of oak and maple. Her mountains are her crowning glory, molding her history and her character. They will continue to shape her future. The steep slopes that so complicate development preserve forests and wildlife. Nearly 75 percent of West Virginia is covered with forest. The slopes capture snow for great skiing. They shelter coursing whitewater rivers that attract kayakers, rafters, and fishermen from around the world. In a nation increasingly concerned with urban sprawl, West Virginia remains an oasis of serenity amid the surging tide of advancing humanity, an island of tranquil forest where eagles still soar and the crime rate is the lowest in the Nation.

The mountains have also shaped the character of her people, reinforcing and sustaining the independence of character and the strong work ethic that are necessary in isolated and challenging environments. West Virginians are friendly, caring neighbors, meeting bad weather and hard times with a community spirit that is itself a force to be reckoned with. West Virginians are patriotic as well. The youngest soldier of World War I, Chester Merriman of Romney, enlisted at the tender age of 14. And West Virginians are close to the Creator, reminded daily of His presence by the natural cathedral of sky, wind, water, wood, and stone that is their environment. With a mean altitude of 1,500 feet, the highest average altitude east of the Mississippi, West Virginians are literally nearer to God, as well.

Over the course of the last 138 years, West Virginia has had her share of firsts. In 1756, the first spa open to the public was established at Bath, VA, now Berkeley Springs. The Golden Delicious apple was first grown in Clay County. The Grimes Golden apple was first grown in Brooke County. In 1787, the first steam-powered motor boat was launched in the Potomac River by James Rumsey at New Mecklenburg,

now known as Shepherdstown. One of the first papers in the nation devoted mainly to the interests of women was published in Harper's Ferry on February 14, 1824. One of the first suspension bridges in the world was completed in Wheeling in November 1849.

The Civil War brought a number of "firsts" to West Virginia history books. The first major land battle fought between Union and Confederate forces in that conflict was the Battle of Philippi, on June 3, 1861. The first Union soldier had been killed a few days earlier, at Fetterman, Taylor County.

West Virginia has had other notable "firsts" since achieving statehood. West Virginia was also the site of the first rural free mail delivery in the nation. It began in Charles Town on October 6, 1896, before spreading throughout the rest of the United States. About 1908, outdoor advertising had its start when the Block Brothers Tobacco Company painted bridges and barns around Wheeling with the words "Treat Yourself To the Best, Chew Mail Pouch." Some people now spend their vacations hunting down and photographing those old barns.

On the political front, in 1928, Mrs. Minnie Buckingham Harper became a member of the House of Delegates by appointment and was, according to the West Virginia Archives, the first black woman to become a member of a legislative body in America. A less popular political first for West Virginia is its place as the first state to enact a state sales tax, which took effect on July 1, 1921. As a final "first," I would be remiss not to note here that Mother's Day was first observed at Andrews Church in Grafton, WV, on May 10, 1908. So West Virginia can claim motherhood and apple pie to offset that more sinister pair—death and taxes. We really do have it all.

West Virginia has experienced great change over the last 138 years. She remains a great resource for the country. Her coal and natural gas will continue to fuel the nation, just as her forests will provide homes and paper that the electronic age still has not supplanted. She has greatness still in store, nurtured in the bright minds of her young people, encouraged by the wisdom and foresight of her elders, carried on the strong shoulders of her workers and innovators, who love the state and want not to leave it for greener economic shores but to carry that tide into the mountains.

It has given me great pleasure over the years to help West Virginia grow. I may not have been born a West Virginian, but this transplant has taken well to the soil there. I have grafted. I hope that my efforts on her behalf have borne fruit that will help sustain her through the next 138 years. That is the best birthday gift that I can think to give her.

West Virginia, how I love you!
Every streamlet, shrub and stone,
Even the clouds that flit above you

Always seem to be my own.

Your steep hillsides clad in grandeur,
Always rugged, bold and free,
Sing with ever swelling chorus:
Montani, Semper, Liberi!

Always free! The little streamlets,
As they glide and race along,
Join their music to the anthem
And the zephyrs swell the song.

Always free! The mountain torrent
In its haste to reach the sea,
Shouts its challenge to the hillsides
And the echo answers "FREE!"

Always free! Repeats the river
In a deeper, fuller tone
And the West wind in the treetops
Adds a chorus all its own.

Always Free! The crashing thunder,
Madly flung from hill to hill,
In a wild reverberation
Makes our hearts with rapture fill.

Always free! The Bob White whistles
And the whippoorwill replies,
Always free! The robin twitters
As the sunset gilds the skies.

Perched upon the tallest timber,
Far above the sheltered lea,
There the eagle screams defiance
To a hostile world: "I'm free!"

And two million happy people,
Hearts attuned in holy glee,
Add the hallelujah chorus:
"Mountaineers are always free!"

SPECIAL AGENT TIMOTHY F. DEERR, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AIR FORCE OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a dedicated and innovative public servant, Timothy F. Deerr, the former Executive Director of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, who recently retired after more than 26 years of loyal and selfless service.

As any citizen of the United States should know, two major powers emerged from the ashes and ruins of World War II—the United States of America and the now defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The ideologies and interests of these two nations were diametrically opposed and the aspirations of Soviet communists for global control made it imperative that America's foot soldiers and leaders in national security affairs exercise vigilance and sacrifice in defense of freedom. For almost fifty years, these two superpowers engaged in a "cold war," where conflict was waged through proxies, brinkmanship, espionage, and counterespionage. It was in this environment in 1975 that Timothy Deerr joined the battle as a civilian Special Agent of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

By the time he completed his career earlier this year, Timothy Deerr had spent most of his professional life as a cold warrior and spy catcher. But, before he entered what has alternately been called the "world's second oldest profession" and the "wilderness of mirrors," he started out as a criminal investigator in Dayton, Ohio. It was here, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, that Special Agent Deerr learned and

honed his skills as an investigator, gaining invaluable experience in how to read people, analyze facts, and test hypotheses.

After 6 years of working criminal cases in Ohio, Special Agent Deerr swapped the Buckeye State for the divided city of Berlin. Since renamed as the Capital of a united Germany, Berlin was then a city carved into sectors of control—a virtual battleground of espionage and counter-espionage activities. Intelligence operatives from the east and west worked feverishly against one another, both to steal secrets and to protect secrets from being compromised. For two years, Special Agent Deerr conducted critical and successful counterintelligence operations defending against foreign intelligence services stationed in the communist sector of Berlin. As a demonstration of the sensitivity of the operations he conducted, his experiences and cases in Berlin remain classified to this day, twenty years after he initially reported for duty there and ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

From 1987, when he left Berlin, until 1994, Special Agent Deerr earned and held positions of increasing responsibility and importance within the Office of Special Investigations, including those of Chief, Central European Counterintelligence Operations, Wiesbaden, West Germany. Later, as the OSI Director of Counterintelligence, he managed OSI counterintelligence investigations and operations around the world and represented OSI and the Air Force on a number of senior policy boards that crafted our national counterintelligence strategy and policies.

While freedom loving people in the United States and throughout the world heralded and celebrated the implosion of communism in the early 1990s, an ironic byproduct of the end of the Soviet Union ensured America's Cold Warriors would enjoy little respite. While the USSR was a threat to peace and security for almost fifty years, it was a threat that we were able to identify and engage. After the Cold War, the world became, in many regards, a puzzling patchwork of active and potential adversaries of the United States and American citizens. Not only were foreign governments targeting our secrets and threatening our security, so were criminal and terrorist organizations. In recognition of this new dynamic, in 1994, the President of the United States directed a re-examination of the U.S. Counterintelligence Program, including ways to improve coordination, integration and accountability of American counterintelligence efforts. As a result, Presidential Decision Directive 24 was issued in May 1994. The directive, in part, mandated the establishment of the National Counterintelligence Center, and Special Agent Deerr was tapped as the Deputy Director of the new National Counterintelligence Center, an impressive distinction and a testament to his reputation and suc-

cess as one of America's premier spy catchers.

In 1996, Special Agent Deerr returned to Air Force OSI as its Executive Director—the senior civilian Special Agent in the United States Air Force. During his five-year tenure in the top civilian position within OSI, Mr. Deerr earned a reputation for innovation and excellence in leadership. He took the helm at an interesting and challenging time in the history of OSI. As a result of the end of the Cold War, diminishing budgets, and retirements of personnel who entered government service at the height of the Cold War, he faced personnel upheaval and institutional reorganization. America and our Armed Forces were faced with new and daunting challenges that required institutional agility, professional creativity, and cutting-edge technical skills. Under Executive Director Deerr's steady stewardship, OSI "re-invented" itself as a model for the 21st Century in the fields of counterintelligence, anti-terrorism, and crime fighting.

OSI built DoD's Computer Forensics Laboratory—America's premier electronic media forensics lab dedicated to ferreting out evidence of computer crime, network intrusions, and felony tampering with DoD computer systems. OSI started and still manages the Defense Computer Investigations Training Program—DoD's "graduate school" for those tasked with investigating cyber-related crimes. Furthermore, Executive Director Deerr emerged as a visionary leader of the Defense Criminal Investigative Organizations, DCIO, Enterprise-Wide Working Group, the DEW Group. Mr. Deerr and the DEW Group devised innovative enterprise-wide pilot programs to leverage scarce DoD resources, improve training and deployment of America's front line investigators, and save taxpayer dollars.

Executive Director Deerr's influence and innovations extended far beyond DoD. Through his active membership in the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the IACP International Policy Committee, Tim Deerr was instrumental in proliferating enduring principles of policing professionalism, integrity, civil liberties, and selfless service to the international policing executive community across the globe.

After 26 years of service, Executive Director Timothy Deerr left Air Force OSI an even better agency than the one he joined in 1975. His career ran the gamut from criminal investigations to catching spies, and from being a rookie agent to the top civilian on the payroll. During his almost three decades of service, the world changed dramatically from a bipolar one where there was a constant threat of nuclear war to one where the United States must be prepared to counter threats on a multitude of new fronts. Through his uncommon dedication and selfless devotion to duty he has left an indelible

mark on the face of counterintelligence within the U.S. Government. I am certain that all my colleagues will want to join me in commending Mr. Deerr on a successful career and a job well done as well as wishing him, his wife Terri, and their daughter Alexandra, great health, happiness, and prosperity in the years to come.

LOOMING NURSE SHORTAGE

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am enormously pleased to bring to my colleagues' attention not only a serious problem that threatens health care throughout this Nation, but my optimism that the Department of Veterans Affairs can serve as a pathfinder in seeking solutions to this problem.

On June 14, the Committee held a hearing to explore reasons for the imminent shortage of professional nurses in the United States, and how this shortage will affect health care for veterans served by Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, health care facilities. Quality of care issues have always been important to this committee and to me, and skilled nurses are indispensable to high quality health care. Representatives of nursing associations, unions, and VA testified about the conditions that have created this critical nurse shortage and what VA—the largest employer of nurses in the United States—can do to address them.

The problem can be stated simply: too few nurses are caring for too many patients in our Nation's hospitals. Fewer young people seek nursing careers every year, while the demand for skilled nursing care, especially long-term care, is climbing. Although we have faced health care staffing shortages before, experts warn that we are on the brink of a severe and long-lasting crisis. Unless we take steps to address this problem now, the demand for nurses will exceed the supply for many years to come.

Working conditions for nurses—never easy—have become even more challenging. Managed care principles lead hospitals to admit only the very sickest of patients with the most complex health care needs. As the pool of highly trained nurses shrinks, many health care providers rely heavily upon mandatory overtime to meet staffing needs. Several registered nurses, including Sandra McMeans from my state of West Virginia, testified before the committee that unpredictable and dangerously long working hours lead to nurses' fatigue and frustration—and patient care suffers.

Astonishingly, VA has not been included in the other hearings on the nurse shortage that have taken place during this session of Congress. VA is the largest employer of nurses in the Nation, and its nurses are closer to retirement age than those in other health care systems. This makes the problem even more critical in VA