

we talk about access to health care—we must consider waiting times for an appointment. Many of the delays in appointments, referrals, and transfers that veterans experience stem from inadequate staffing, especially the increasingly critical shortage of skilled nurses. I have recently introduced legislation to improve VA's ability to recruit and retain nurses, whose skills are essential to providing high quality health care in a timely fashion.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the many volunteers who help bring rural veterans closer to health care. Disabled American Veterans (DAV) operates a nationwide Transportation Network that helps sick and disabled veterans reach VA medical facilities for care. Since its inception, DAV volunteers in West Virginia have dedicated more than 700,000 hours of time to driving veterans to medical appointments, often in vans donated by DAV to the VA. Nationally, DAV Hospital Service Coordinators operate 185 such programs, where 8,000 volunteers donated almost 2 million hours last year alone. Although this program does not replace VA's obligation to bring services close to the veteran where possible and to smooth transfers between medical centers, this service is certainly indispensable to disabled veterans who must reach a VA medical center for necessary medical care.

Mr. President, in closing, I look forward to working with VA and my colleagues in the Senate to find the best ways to extend health care more efficiently—and effectively—to veterans in our Nation's rural areas. We owe our veterans nothing less.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SIXTH NAVAL BEACH BATTALION

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the bravery and fortitude of the Sixth Naval Beach Battalion, many of whom gave their lives for their country on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Recently, a small group of the living members of the Battalion gathered in Normandy, France to unveil a commemorative plaque dedicated to their fellow sailors who paid the ultimate price for the defense of liberty. This memorial will serve as a small reminder of the tremendous sacrifice that these men made in order to secure the freedoms that we, as a nation, now enjoy.

Unfortunately, for many years, the Sixth Naval Beach Battalion was known as the "Forgotten Sailors." While many of its members were individually recognized for their bravery, the Battalion as a whole had never been recognized. However, thanks to the persistent efforts of its living members, the Battalion was finally honored last year with the Presidential Unit Citation. This great honor was presented to the Battalion at its annual reunion last year, and I am proud that the valiance of these men has finally been recognized.

The World War II generation is frequently referred to as America's "Greatest Generation," and this is no more true of the Sixth Naval Beach Battalion. They landed on Omaha Beach early in the morning of June 6 and faced extraordinary peril on that historic day. Yet, the Battalion demonstrated its courage and fought gallantly despite overwhelming odds. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all of the members of the Battalion, both living and deceased, for the hard-fought victory over tyranny that was achieved on that day.

I would like to share my gratitude for the bravery and selflessness of the Sixth Naval Beach Battalion. I would hope that America never forgets the great sacrifice that the Battalion's members made in the defense of our liberty. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the speech given by Lieutenant Commander Joseph Vaghi at the unveiling of the commemorative plaque be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEDICATION ADDRESS OF THE 6TH NAVAL BEACH BATTALION PLAQUE AT OMAHA BEACH—NORMANDY, FRANCE

(By LCDR Joseph P. Vaghi, USNR (Ret.))

We are here today this 5th day of June 2001, to unveil a plaque dedicated in memory of the men of the 6th Naval Beach Battalion who gave their lives on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

A small remnant of living members of our Battalion is also here today to pay tribute to their comrades, who have fallen and paid the ultimate price by giving their lives.

Each and every person here for this unveiling shares in the victory of freedom over tyranny by the selfless action which took place 57 years ago on this sacred soil of Omaha Beach.

You will remember that for four long years the fate of freedom flickered in the shadow of the world's aggressions.

We watched as the war in Europe spread across the English Channel to Britain. Then came Pearl Harbor. We as a nation were at war.

It was on these beaches of Normandy that the 6th Naval Beach Battalion made its contribution in the fight for liberty and against tyranny. This became the greatest military operation in all of history.

The men of the 6th Naval Beach Battalion had great faith that what was head of us was right and just. We knew what we were doing had to be done.

It made little difference if we were 18 or 38 years of age. We knew that what we were about to do was in some manner exactly what God wanted us to do.

The men of the 6th Naval Beach Battalion prepared for D-Day at Camp Bradford, VA., and Fort Pierce, FL., on the beaches of Slapton Sands, England, and in training with the 5th Engineer Special Brigade in Swansea, Wales.

At each step, we become more aware of the responsibility we would be asked to assume as we landed on the shores of France.

Elements of our battalion who were part of the Underwater Demolition Team landed at H-Hour (6:30 in the morning) with the main body of the battalion coming ashore an hour and five minutes after H-Hour at 7:35 a.m.

Of the thousands of men who came ashore that day, 9386 are at rest in the cemetery above the cliffs behind us.

This plaque we dedicate today is in memory of our comrades, and in extension is in memory of all who were laid to rest in the hallowed ground of the Normandy Cemetery. The plaque will be a perpetual reminder of the sacrifices made here on this beach, not only the 6th Naval Beach Battalion but the Coast Guard and Army too.

Last year at the 12th annual reunion of our battalion we were presented with the Presidential Unit Citation. It had been recommended by the Joint Command of Operation Overlord, which was the code name for the invasion of France, both the Army and Navy issued approval and recommendations that the 6th Naval Beach Battalion be honored with the citation.

When inquiries were made by some of our men, the Defense Department began looking into the situation and in September of last year there followed a full ceremony for the presentation of the award.

For 56 years we of the 6th Naval Beach Battalion were known by writers as the "Forgotten Sailors." Many of the officers and men of the Battalion had been recognized for individual heroism but not the Battalion as a unit.

Our being here today is the cap-stone of our *raison d'être*, the 6th Naval Beach Battalion stands with all the great body of men who have been immortalized here on these beaches. Permit me to close by quoting President Roosevelt, "The quality of our American fighting men is not all a matter of training, or equipment, or organization. It is essentially a matter of Spirit. That Spirit is expressed in their faith in America!"

That was the faith we had then and the faith we have today. Thank you, may God bless America.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of this year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred July 27, 1990 in Grand Chute, WI. Two policemen, from Marathon County and Blanchardville, were accused of disorderly conduct in the beating of a gay man. Witnesses said the officers, who were in a local nightclub, began taunting the victim on the dance floor with anti-gay slurs. Witnesses said they later saw the officers beat and kick the man in the parking lot. The victim was treated for bruised ribs and internal injuries.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Judiciary Committee

has reported another group of executive branch nominees and that the Senate will be acting on the President's nominations to head the Civil Rights Division and the Tax Division of the Department of Justice so promptly.

Just as the committee proceeded promptly with the consideration of the President's nomination of John Ashcroft to be Attorney General, when I temporarily chaired the committee in January, we are continuing to move promptly on other nominations this month. In January, the Senate did not receive the nomination of John Ashcroft until January 19 and reported it to the Senate the very next day. In deference to the President, the committee had moved ahead with hearings on the nomination the week of January 16 in advance of receiving the nomination by the President.

The Senate has confirmed the President's nominations of the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General and a controversial nomination to serve as Solicitor General. The President has yet to nominate anyone to be Associate Attorney General, the third highest ranking position at the Department of Justice. We have confirmed nominees to serve as Deputy Attorneys General to head the Criminal Division, the Antitrust Division, the Office of Legislative Affairs, and the Office of Legal Policy.

In late May, Chairman Hatch conducted a hearing on the nomination of Ralph F. Boyd, Jr., to be the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Rights Division. I had included Mr. Boyd's nomination on the agenda for a business meeting of the Judiciary Committee last week, our first week in session after the adoption of a Senate organizing resolution and the assignment of committee membership. But less than half of the Republican members of the committee showed up for the business meeting on July 12. We were unable to reach a quorum last week to report out the President's nominations to the Justice Department. Yesterday, at our next business meeting of the Judiciary Committee, we reported that nomination to the Senate.

It took the Senate the entire month of June to pass S. Res. 120, a simple resolution reorganizing the committees. It was only last Tuesday that assignments to committees were completed. Last Wednesday, the first day after the committee membership was set, we proceeded to hold a confirmation hearing including additional an executive branch nominee, Eileen O'Connor to be Assistant Attorney General for the Tax Division of the Department of Justice. Today the Senate has that nomination before it because we were able to expedite its consideration by the committee at our business meeting yesterday. I expect the Senate will confirm Ms. O'Connor, another of the President's nominations to a key post at the Department of Justice. I am glad to be able to accommodate the request of the Attorney General to expedite her consideration.

This week the Judiciary Committee proceeded with back-to-back days of hearing on the important nominations of Asa Hutchinson to head the Drug Enforcement Administration and James Ziglar to head the Immigration and Naturalization Service. I have noticed another hearing for next Tuesday for judicial and executive branch nominees, including the President's nominees to be Assistant Attorney General to head the Office of Justice Programs and to be the Director of the National Institute of Justice.

The Senate received the President's nomination of a new FBI Director on Wednesday of this week and I proceeded that same day to notice hearings on that important nomination to begin a week from Monday. It is my hope that with the cooperation of all Members and the administration we should be able to make progress and work toward Senate consideration of the nomination of Robert Mueller to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation before the August recess, if possible. I have asked for the cooperation of all members of the committee, on both sides of the aisle. I noticed the hearings on Robert Mueller's nomination to begin on July 30. We will see if it is possible for the committee act on that nomination before the August recess, which would be my preference.

I regret that Senators and their staffs will have not have more time to prepare for so important a hearing as that on the nominee to be the next Director of the FBI. It is my hope that the series of oversight hearings regarding the FBI in which we have been engaged, including our hearing this week, have helped and that Senators will be able to adhere to an expedited schedule for the hearing, a very brief turnaround time for written follow up questions and immediate Committee consideration.

We have set an ambitious schedule of five confirmation hearings this month on the President's nominees. We have completed three of those confirmation hearings and have another scheduled for each of the next two weeks. We have also reported a number of nominees, including the three Judicial Branch and two Executive Branch nominees before the Senate for consideration today.

The nomination of Ralph Boyd, Jr., to head the Civil Rights Division was reported unanimously and without objection by the Judiciary Committee. Senator KENNEDY, in particular, has been a strong and consistent advocate for this nomination and I thank him for his efforts. This will be one of the least contentious paths for a nominee to head the Civil Rights Division in some time. Indeed, the Judiciary Committee refused for the last three years of the Clinton administration even to report to the Senate President Clinton's nomination to head the Civil Rights Division. The handling of this nomination and the treatment of the nominee by Members not from the

President's party stand in sharp contrast to the treatment of Bill Lann Lee.

I join with Senator KENNEDY in urging the Senate to act favorably on the nomination of Ralph Boyd, Jr.

NOMINATION OF JOHN D. GRAHAM

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to express my opposition to the confirmation of John D. Graham, Ph.D. to direct the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, (OIRA), at the Office of Management and Budget, (OMB).

As Administrator of OIRA, Dr. Graham would be the gatekeeper for all Federal regulations. In my view, Dr. Graham, with his anti-regulatory views, is simply the wrong choice to serve in this important policy making position.

In enacting the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Clean Air Act and other safety and health and environmental laws, Congress made a clear policy choice that protection of health and the environment was to be paramount consideration in setting regulations and standards. Dr. Graham's views and opinions are directly at odds with these policies.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MONTGOMERY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1951

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I believe that it is our families, friends and communities that create the very essence of our beings. They serve as our roots, instilling the values that shape our personal relationships and our professional careers.

In youth, we often fail to realize the crucial role that these people play, and we often lose touch with the people who mold us into whom we are today. With the passage of time, we can only wonder what path we might have otherwise taken had we maintained contact. Today, I would like to join a very special group of West Virginians—the Montgomery High School class of 1951—as its members renew the bonds of youth in celebrating the 50th anniversary class reunion.

As the members of Montgomery High School class of 1951 gather for their 50th anniversary reunion, they will recall the carefree days of their youth. Once again, they will refer to themselves as the Greyhounds of Montgomery High. Visions of victorious football games and summer vacations will waft through their collective memory as they join in singing their beloved Alma Mater.

They'll reminisce about Saturday nights at the Rockette and spending afternoons with friends at Kelly's Drug Store. More importantly, they will remember the diversity that makes Montgomery such a very special place.