

Mullen, USN, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Resources, Requirements, and Assessments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to allow my judicial nomination staffer, Cory Gardner, to be allowed to sit next to me on the floor along with a member of Senator HATCH's Judiciary staff, Ryan Higginboth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following calendar items en bloc: Calendar No. 54 and Calendar No. 55.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bills by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 711) to amend title 37, United States Code, to alleviate delay in the payment of the Selected Reserve reenlistment bonus to members of Selected Reserve who are mobilized.

A bill (S. 712) to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide Survivor Benefit Plan annuities for surviving spouses of Reserves not eligible for retirement who die from a cause incurred or aggravated while on inactive-duty training.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about two bills—S. 711 and S. 712. I am honored to cosponsor these bills with Senators LINDSEY GRAHAM, CHAMBLISS, and ALLEN. There may be others that also wish to cosponsor these bills to support our service men and women.

S. 711 simply authorizes a Selective Re-enlistment Bonus, SRB, for National Guard and Reserve service members who would be eligible for SRB if they were in a nonmobilized or drilling status. However, when they are mobilized under a Presidential select Reserve callup and they re-enlist during that period, National guardsmen and reservists are prohibited from receiving SRB payments until after they get off active duty or mobilization status sometimes 1 to 2 years later.

S. 712 authorizes Survivor Benefit Plan, SBP, benefits to survivors of National Guard and Reserve service members who die while performing inactive duty training or weekend drills.

This legislation provides equity with active duty service members and is consistent with Defense Department regulations when National guardsmen and reservists are mobilized under a Presidential select Reserve callup.

However, since January there have been 13 Reserve Component deaths during weekend military training while their units were preparing for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom where families of National guardsmen and reservists did not receive the survivor benefit payments.

Furthermore, this legislation would cover those Reserve Component personnel who were serving in a drill status in the Pentagon during the attacks on the United States on 9/11.

This bill has the support of the Military Coalition, a consortium of nationally prominent uniformed services and veterans organizations representing more than 5.5 million members, the National Guard, and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The roles and missions of the Reserve components has changed over the past several years, as the active duty force has evolved from the downsizing of our military forces during the last decade. I suspect that more changes will come as our national military strategy continues to evolve.

Instead, we have a military force that continues to rely more on the Reserve Components—men and women in the National Guard and Reserves—to go to war and to perform other critical military tasks abroad and at home. Many combat, combat support and other support missions are being carried on the backs of our active and Reserve Component forces—soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines.

For example, in March 2001, the Army National Guard 29th Infantry Division took command of the American peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. The significance of this deployment was enormous, considering that more than 75 percent of the 4,000 U.S. Army soldiers on the ground were Army Reserve and Guard soldiers from 17 states—not just headquarters' staff, but operational units as well.

More recently, in October 2002, Fighter/Attack Squadron 201's commanding officer received the call to mobilize that many Reserve Component commanding officers have recently received. With few exceptions over 100 Navy reservists mobilized with their 12 F/A-18 Hornet A-plus jets, and began work-ups with Carrier Air Wing 8 in Nevada and full day and night carrier qualifications at sea. The impact of this accomplishment cannot be overstated. It was the first time since the Korean War that an entire Naval Air Reserve Squadron has deployed aboard an aircraft carrier, and this time VFA-201's base was not Fort Worth, Texas but the flight deck of the USS Theodore Roosevelt, CVN-71.

The reports from the field are outstanding. VFA-201, like hundreds of other aviators during the first night of "shock and awe," flew their Hornets downtown to Baghdad. The pilots and their maintenance crews hailed from Texas, Arizona, California, New Mexico, Georgia, Florida, Nevada, Utah and Colorado. They are citizen soldiers. Thirteen of eighteen VFA-201 pilots are airline pilots who took a temporary leave of absence from their airline jobs.

They were similar to active duty sailors, yet they were different. Because they were reservists, every aviator has cruise experience, over 1,000 flight hours, and many have over 1,000 or 2,000 hours in the F/A-18. VFA-201's squadron aviators provided leadership

to the air wing in strike planning, flight execution and carrier operations. Their day and night time boarding rates and landing grades have exceeded all other Carrier Air Wing 8's squadrons.

While these are only two of the deployments that have taken place in recent years, they highlight the ever-increasing role of reservists in defending America's security interests around the world, and mark a radical departure from the past.

The figures are quite staggering when considered in total.

Today, nearly 60,000 reservists and National Guardsmen, including volunteers, are deployed under three Presidential callup orders for Bosnia, Kosovo, and Southwest Asia. For Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom over 275,000 men and women from the National Guard and the Reserves have been mobilized.

During each of the past 5 years, Reserve and National Guard service members have performed between 12 and 13.5 million duty days in support of the active force. These numbers are a direct contrast to 1990, when 1 million duty days were performed at a time when there were 25 percent more reservists.

Reservists also currently make up more than half of the airlift crews and 85 percent of the sealift personnel that are needed to move troops and equipment in either wartime or peacetime operations. In addition, reserve medical and construction battalions and other specialists are critical to a wide range of operations.

National Guard and Reserve service members are performing many vital tasks: from direct involvement in military operations to liberate Iraq in the air, on the ground, and on the sea; to guarding nuclear power plants in the United States; to providing support to the War on Terrorism through guarding, interrogating, and providing medical service to al-Qaida detainees; to rebuilding schools in hurricane-stricken Honduras and fighting fires in our western states; from overseeing civil affairs in Bosnia, to augmenting aircraft carriers short on active duty sailors with critical skilled enlisted ratings during at-sea exercises as well as periods of deployment.

I believe that the civilian and uniformed leadership of our Armed Forces and the Congress must recognize this involvement, and at a minimum provide equality in benefits for Reserve Component service members when they put on the uniform and perform their weekend drills or other critical training evolutions. Reservists, on duty, who resemble their active duty counterparts during training evolutions and are deployed at times around the world, should be treated equally when the administration and Congress provide for quality of life benefits.

I hope that all my colleagues will support these bills as a small expression of support and willingness to provide not just equality in quality of life benefits for our National guardsmen and reservists but support to all our men and women—our treasure—who are sacrificing so much for our nation, our freedoms and the freedom of the Iraqi people.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills be read a third time and passed, en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, en bloc; and that any statements relating to the bills be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bills (S. 711 and S. 712) were read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 711

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PAYMENT OF SELECTED RESERVE REENLISTMENT BONUS TO MEMBERS OF SELECTED RESERVE WHO ARE MOBILIZED.

Section 308b of title 37, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (d), (e), and (f) as subsections (e), (f), and (g), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection (d):

“(d) PAYMENT TO MOBILIZED MEMBERS.—In the case of a member entitled to a bonus under this section who is called or ordered to active duty, any amount of such bonus that is payable to the member during the period of active duty of the member shall be paid the member during that period of active duty, notwithstanding the service of the member on active duty pursuant to such call or order to active duty.”

S. 712

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN ANNUITIES FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES OF RESERVES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR RETIREMENT WHO DIE FROM A CAUSE INCURRED OR AGGRAVATED WHILE ON INACTIVE-DUTY TRAINING.

(a) SURVIVING SPOUSE ANNUITY.—Paragraph (1) of section 1448(f) of title 10, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(1) SURVIVING SPOUSE ANNUITY.—The Secretary concerned shall pay an annuity under this subchapter to the surviving spouse of—

“(A) a person who is eligible to provide a reserve-component annuity and who dies—

“(i) before being notified under section 12731(d) of this title that he has completed the years of service required for eligibility for reserve-component retired pay; or

“(ii) during the 90-day period beginning on the date he receives notification under section 12731(d) of this title that he has completed the years of service required for eligibility for reserve-component retired pay if he had not made an election under subsection (a)(2)(B) to participate in the Plan; or

“(B) a member of a reserve component not described in subparagraph (A) who dies from an injury or illness incurred or aggravated in line of duty during inactive-duty training.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for subsection (f) of section 1448 of such title is amended by inserting “OR BEFORE” after “DYING WHEN”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as of September 10, 2001, and shall apply with re-

spect to performance of inactive-duty training (as defined in section 101(d) of title 10, United States Code) on or after that date.

TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF DEATH GRATUITY TO ARMED FORCES MEMBERS

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Armed Services Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 704 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 704) to amend title 10, United States Code, to increase the amount of the death gratuity payable with respect to deceased members of the Armed Forces.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 704) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 704

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. INCREASE IN DEATH GRATUITY PAYABLE WITH RESPECT TO DECEASED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) INCREASE IN DEATH GRATUITY.—Section 1478(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking “\$6,000” and inserting “\$12,000”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on September 11, 2001, and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after that date.

RECOGNIZING 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF SINKING OF USS “THRESHER”

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 102, which was submitted earlier today by Senator SUNUNU.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 102) recognizing the 40th anniversary of the sinking of the USS *Thresher*.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, this legislation pays tribute to the 129 officers, sailors, and civilians who lost their lives aboard the USS *Thresher* 40 years ago next week.

The loss of these brave individuals was a tragedy for the U.S. submarine service, for the Navy, and the Nation. Yet out of this tragedy, the Navy was able to learn important lessons about submarine safety and acted to correct design and construction concerns that existed on other subs, and prevent engineering and design flaws on future

submarines. These measures have served to benefit our Navy ever since.

Built at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and commissioned in August of 1961, the USS *Thresher* was the lead ship in a new class of nuclear-powered attack submarines.

In the fall of 1961 and throughout 1962, the *Thresher* was put through its paces along the eastern seaboard to test its new technological and weapons advancements. Once these tests were completed, the *Thresher* returned to New England for an overhaul where she remained until the spring of 1963.

On April 9, 1963, the *Thresher* departed the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to conduct deep sea diving exercises some 200 miles off the coast of New England. In the morning hours of April 10, 1963, after reaching her assigned depth, the USS *Thresher*, signaled her companion surface ship, the USS *Skylark*, that it was experiencing difficulties. Shortly thereafter, the crew of the *Skylark* realized that something had gone very wrong as they heard the sound of the *Thresher* breaking apart.

In the investigation that followed this terrible accident, the conclusion was reached that the *Thresher* in all likelihood had sunk due to a failure in its piping, a subsequent loss of power, and an inability to blow the ballast tanks which would have allowed the sub to rise. To this day, the remains of the *Thresher* rest some 8,500 feet below the ocean's surface.

As a result of the *Thresher* incident, the Navy initiated two significant changes to enhance submarine safety. The first of these was the SUBSAFE program, which ensured that every submarine in the fleet and every future submarine built had to pass a rigorous testing program on hull integrity systems as well as pressure-related parts. No sub would go into service without a 100-percent certification.

Second, this tragedy inspired the Navy to encourage a new ocean engineering discipline within a handful of prestigious educational institutions. Today, engineers in this discipline are trained to design and implement systems that can withstand the rigors of a lifetime's use in ocean waters.

Today, I join with Senators GREGG, SNOWE and COLLINS to submit this resolution to honor the naval and civilian crew of the USS *Thresher*.

This resolution will provide Senate recognition of the 40th anniversary of the *Thresher* incident—April 10—and pay tribute to her valiant crew. The resolution also calls on the Senate to express its deep gratitude to all American submariners who are on “eternal patrol.”

Next week, on the 40th anniversary of the *Thresher* accident, Senators GREGG, SNOWE, COLLINS and I will submit another resolution that will call on the Secretary of the Army to erect a modest memorial at Arlington National