

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SALUTE TO THE 147TH FIELD ARTILLERY

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, yesterday the 5th U.S. Army demobilized Battery C, 1st Battalion of the South Dakota National Guard's 147th Field Artillery. This unit, headquartered in Yankton was among more than 20 Guard and Reserve units from my State called to active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Today, these soldiers and their service become a part of South Dakota's military heritage. Like those who served in the two world wars, in Korea, in Vietnam and numerous other places, this new generation has answered the call. They have offered to make every sacrifice, including life itself, to protect our freedom and security. We must never forget them or the honor with which they served.

This unit participated in a mobilization with few precedents in South Dakota history. Nearly 2,000 Guard and Reserve troops were called to active duty in our State, by far the largest mobilization since World War II. At the time the fighting began, units from more than 20 communities had been called up, from Elk Point in the south to Lemmon in the north, from Watertown in the east to Custer in the west. Indeed, our State's mobilization rate ranked among the highest of all the States on a per capita basis.

These soldiers were proud to serve, and their communities are proud of them. Across the State, thousands of citizens pitched in to participate in send-off parades, to lend a hand for families who suddenly had to get by without a mom or dad, and even to assist with financial hardships caused by the mobilization. This mobilization was a statewide effort, in many ways.

South Dakota's Guard and Reserve units provided our Active-Duty Forces in Iraq with invaluable support. Many units did not participate directly in combat, which ended more quickly than anyone expected. But we all know that the battle would have been waged much differently if our Guard and Reserve units had not been ready to deploy as needed. Furthermore, we know that some units will play an important role in the work of restoring peace and order to Iraq, as well as rebuilding basic infrastructure. These tasks will be vital to ensuring that Iraq becomes a stable nation, hopefully with a prosperous economy and democratic government. This is how we can win the peace—and save future generations from another conflict.

In addition to the service of this particular unit, I want to acknowledge the sacrifices and dedication of the families who stayed home. They are the unsung heroes of any mobilization. They motivate and inspire those who are far from home, and they, too, deserve our gratitude.

Today, I join these families and the State of South Dakota in celebrating the courage, commitment, and success of the members of the 147th Field Artillery, and I honor their participation in this historic event in our Nation's history. Welcome home. Thanks to all of you for your courage, your sacrifice, and your noble commitment to this country and its ideals.

HEADQUARTERS SERVICE BATTERY

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, yesterday the 5th U.S. Army demobilized the Headquarters and Headquarters Service Battery, 1st Battalion of the South Dakota National Guard's 147th Field Artillery. This unit, which operates the battalion's headquarters in Sioux Falls, was among more than 20 Guard and Reserve units from my State called to active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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BATTERY A

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, yesterday the 5th U.S. Army demobilized Battery A, 1st Battalion of the South Dakota National Guard's 147th Field Artillery. This unit, headquartered in Mitchell, was among more than 20 Guard and Reserve units from my State called to active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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BATTERY B

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, yesterday the 5th U.S. Army demobilized Battery B, 1st Battalion of the South Dakota National Guard's 147th Field Artillery. This unit, from Sioux Falls and Salem, was among more than 20 Guard and Reserve units from my State called to active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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BATTERY C

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AN OKLAHOMA LOSS IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, over the past few weeks we have seen dramatic proof that the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein is over and that a new day is dawning for the Iraqi people.

President Bush has announced that major military combat operations in Iraq have ended, and that America and her Allies are turning our efforts toward helping the Iraqi people build a free society.

Like many Americans, I was thrilled and heartened by the dramatic images of U.S. troops helping Iraqi citizens tear down statues and paintings of Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi people needed our help, our tanks, our troops, and our commitment to topple Saddam Hussein.

For the first time in their lives, many Iraqis are tasting freedom, and like people everywhere, they think it is wonderful. I am proud of our military and America's commitment to make the people of the Middle East more free and secure.

Our military men and women may face more difficult days in Iraq, and the Iraqi people will be tested by the responsibilities that come with freedom. The thugs who propped up the previous regime and outside forces with goals of their own may cause problems, stir up trouble, and initiate violence. Freedom is messy—nowhere more so than in a country that has just shaken off a brutal dictatorship.

But today I rise to honor a man who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country. LCpl Thomas Alan Blair was Oklahoma's first known casualty in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This 24-year old Broken Arrow native was killed on March 23 in a fierce battle near Nasiriyah when an enemy rocket propelled grenade hit his amphibious assault vehicle.

Tommy graduated from Broken Arrow High School in 1997 but had decided long before then that he would be a marine. He chose his career nearly a decade ago when he watched his older brother SSgt Al Blair graduate from boot camp. In a way he followed in his brother's footsteps, but his family will tell you that he would have been a marine no matter what. His brother recalled that Tommy "truly wanted to help people."

As we watch the dawn of a new day in Iraq, let us never forget that the freedom we enjoy every day in America is bought at a price.

Lance Corporal Blair did not die in vain. He died so that many others could live freely. For that sacrifice, we are forever indebted. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family today and with the troops who are putting their lives on the line in Iraq.

Mr. President, recently we have seen dramatic proof that the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein is over and that a new day is dawning for the Iraqi people.

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But today I rise to honor a man who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country. LTC Dominic R. Baragona, 42, was stationed at Fort Sill. He was killed in Iraq on May 19, when a tractor-trailer lost control and hit his Humvee near Safwan.

Colonel Baragona was assigned to and commander of the 19th Maintenance Battalion. He was deployed to CENTCOM in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 16 with about 100 other members of his battalion.

Colonel Baragona's cousin Anthony said, "wherever they needed him, that's where he went." Baragona, like so many of our military men and women, placed the call to duty above self.

Our prayers and debt of appreciation now go to his family, who had expected him to come home in June. He is survived by his parents who live in St. George Island, FL.

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But today I rise to honor a man who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country. Sgt Randall Rehn died April 3 amid fierce fighting for control of what is now Baghdad International Airport. He is survived by his wife Raelynn and daughter Megan of Lawton, as well as his family in Colorado.

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Sergeant Rehn did not die in vain. He died so that many others could live freely. For that sacrifice, we are forever indebted. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family today and with the troops who are putting their lives on the line in Iraq.

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But today I rise to honor a man who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country. One of eight brothers and sisters, Todd Robbins, 33, who was stationed at Fort Sill, served in the Navy for the first gulf war before joining the Army. He leaves behind a wife at Fort Sill and a 13-year-old son. "He always wanted to be in the Army," said his father Dale Robbins. "He lived, ate, and slept the Army. He loved it."

Tragically, the death of Sergeant Robbins was said to be a result of friendly fire in the form of coalition bombs. While our military always works to prevent such accidents, they always occur during war fighting.

The fact that his death was accidental in no way diminishes his sacrifice. He gave his life to protect us, and our freedoms, and to make people he had never met, half way around the world, free in their own country.

As we watch the dawn of a new day in Iraq, let us never forget that the freedom we enjoy every day in America is bought at a price.

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But today I rise to honor a man who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country. Donald Oaks, who was stationed at Fort Sill, would have turned 21 on April 26. He was a bright young man who was good at math and computers. Also, he enjoyed playing baseball and fishing with his dad. He joined the Army to get money for a college education after his service. His mother Laurie Oaks said, "He was my best friend and was always my hero. He still is." He was engaged to be married.

Tragically, the death of Specialist Oaks was said to be a result of friendly fire in the form of coalition bombs. While our military always works to prevent such accidents, they always occur during warfighting.

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Specialist Oaks did not die in vain. He died so that many others could live freely. For that sacrifice, we are forever indebted. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family today and with the troops who are putting their lives on the line in Iraq.

TRIBUTE TO CMSGT RET. LOUIS BROWN

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I just received word that a dear friend of mine, the Air Force Academy, and the State of Colorado passed away last night and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize retired Chief Master Sergeant Louis Brown Jr. One of Colorado's finest citizens, CMSgt, Ret., Louis Brown Jr., has made numerous contributions to the young

men and women—past, present and future—of the United States Air Force Academy. Chief Brown has been a steadfast proponent and volunteered more than 10 years of service to recruit, advise, interview, and mentor cadets for the Air Force Academy with my congressional office. Additionally, he has spent over 30 years of tireless interaction with some of the Air Force's finest officers and Academy graduates.

Chief Brown has made a difference to the Air Force, the Air Force Academy, and to Colorado as a whole. Specifically, he has worked countless hours with members of my staff since my tenure in the United States Congress helping to interview potential candidates to the academy, educating them on the appointment process, and encouraging these young men and women to contribute to the United States armed forces. He has been a mentor and a role model to countless cadets who have gone forward to become Air Force officers.

I want to honor the life of Chief Brown who served the Air Force first as an enlisted Airman and later in life as an advocate for recruitment of future officers. His contributions to the State of Colorado and the United States Air Force will not be forgotten. I ask the Senate now to join me in thanking Chief Brown and his family for these contributions and also to pray for his loved ones in their time of mourning.

MEMORIAL DAY: HONORING OUR FALLEN HEROES

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the many individuals who have died in defense of our great Nation. Next week we will all return to our States to join our constituents in honoring those who gave their lives to ensure that we enjoy the principles of liberty and justice as Americans.

One of my constituents, Mr. Keith Haugen, has written a song entitled "Walking Through the Memories, A Requiem to the Fallen." Mr. Haugen served in the U.S. Army and has been honored by a number of organizations for songs he has written to honor military members and veterans. Mr. Haugen will perform this song on Memorial Day at the National Memorial of the Pacific.

I have reviewed the lyrics to this melody and have Mr. Haugen's permission to share them with my colleagues. I ask unanimous consent to print a copy of these lyrics in the RECORD.

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

WALKING THROUGH THE MEMORIES, A REQUIEM TO THE FALLEN

(By Keith Haugen, ASCAP)

The peace they fought for is right here, between the rows of crosses
They died to save our freedom, they're numbered among our losses

Although they came from far and wide, this place is now their home

A peaceful, final resting place, where they'll never be alone

And I'm walking through the memories, where honor knows no end

That unmarked grave is special, for I know that he's my friend

We were comrades on a foreign shore, buddies to the end

In the distance I hear a bugle call, as I stroll alone with God

It's haunting voice is singing "Taps" for those beneath the sod

And I'm walking through the memories of those who gave their all

Walking, walking, walking, past graves both old and new

Their sun has set, their day is done, they were the chosen few

We salute and pay our tribute, flags and flowers all abound

They all came back to make their home in this hallowed ground

And I'm walking through the memories of those who gave their all

Yes, I'm walking through the memories where honor knows no end

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, this Memorial Day is an especially meaningful time for our Nation. It comes as the images of defending freedom and democracy are still fresh in our minds.

This weekend, we remember and honor the men and women who paid the ultimate price for their country. Flags fly at half-mast, relatives and friends place wreaths and flowers on the graves of their loved ones, and communities host parades adorned in red, white, and blue. In actuality, these tributes are small acts we perform in an effort to express our gratitude to those who have served the cause of freedom.

Since the time of the Civil War, communities have paid tribute to fallen soldiers with spontaneous gestures of remembrance. In May of 1868, GEN. John A. Logan officially recognized the public's desire to honor those who died in pursuit of liberty by declaring May 30 of each year a day to decorate the graves of fallen soldiers. A century later, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation declaring, in part, that Memorial Day be held the last Monday of May every year.

Memorial Day weekend has since become a signal for family gatherings, barbecues, sales at the mall, trips to the beach, and the opening of community pools. We should celebrate our freedom but we must also remember that freedom is not free—it comes to us at a great cost. In our Nation's history, upwards of 40 million Americans have risked life and limb to defend our country and make the world a safer place. More than a million service men and women have died for our country. Moreover, 140,000 were taken as prisoners of war and many of them have never been accounted for. They are our Nation's heroes who acted selflessly throughout our history to bring forth freedom and opportunity for generations.

We also honor the families who bear the heaviest burden of liberty. Our fallen and missing soldiers were moms,