

the National Guard as a chemical repair specialist, and was part of a team that installed armor kits on Humvees to protect soldiers.

Those who knew him know that he embodied all the qualities people admire about Nebraskans. His presence was an asset in any situation. His warmth and personality will be missed among his fellow troops, his friends, and especially his wife and his family.

I extend my sincerest thoughts and my deepest thanks to the family of SGT Fischer. He will be remembered for the service he has given to the American Armed Forces, and the ultimate sacrifice he has made for our country.

REMEMBERING THE NAPER 28

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, August 3, 2004 marks the 60th anniversary of what is believed to be the worst military aviation disaster in the history of the State of Nebraska. At 8:25 p.m. an Army C-47 transport airplane dropped from the sky near Naper, NE, killing 28 brave World War II servicemen. The dead included 26 Army pilots, one flight surgeon, and an aircraft crew chief. They were traveling from the Bruning, NE air base to Pierre, SD to complete their training before being shipped off to war.

On August 8, Naper Historical Society of Boyd County, NE will dedicate a permanent memorial to the Naper 28. They raised funds for the Naper 28 Memorial through a donation campaign. What is perhaps most touching about this fundraising effort is not the funds themselves, not even the speed with which they came, but it was the sentiments attached by way of note or letter from other World War II veterans or their widows. At the time of the disaster, very little attention was paid to this aviation disaster. Though it commemorates the tragedy that befell the Naper 28, the memorial at Knollcrest Cemetery in Naper, NE, also bears witness to a more enduring lesson in bravery and valor and preserving the freedom that defines America.

No doubt, the town of Naper, and citizens throughout Boyd County are delighted finally to have a fitting memorial for the 28 servicemen who lost their lives in 1944. It is fitting that the Naper 28 Memorial will be dedicated the same year as the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. This year marks an especially commemorative year for America's veterans, and is a year when all Americans gratefully remember and honor the bravery and valor with which America fought in World War II.

Anniversaries, like the 60th anniversary of D-Day and the 60th anniversary of the Naper 28, are important reminders about our history as a Nation, and about our character as Americans.

As America pauses to recall the thankless bravery and sacrifice of those who died protecting our freedoms on D-Day, the people of Naper and all

Nebraska also pause to remember the tragedy and sacrifices and lost opportunities of the Naper 28.

I submit the names of the brave souls of the Naper 28, as they appear on the memorial in Naper, NE, as further commemoration of their sacrifice.

They are as follows:

THE NAPER 28

F/O John F. Albert
 2nd Lt. William F. Acree
 2nd Lt. William Armstrong
 2nd Lt. Millard F. Arnett, Jr.
 2nd Lt. Herbert A. Blakeslee
 2nd Lt. George E. Broeckmann
 2nd Lt. Robert K. Bohle
 2nd Lt. Jack L. Brown
 2nd Lt. Richard E. Brown
 2nd Lt. James C. Burke, Jr.
 2nd Lt. Donald J. Clarkson
 2nd Lt. Lloyd L. Hemphill
 Sgt. Orson I. Hutslar
 2nd Lt. Arthur Johnson
 Capt. Clayton R. Jolley
 Capt. Leonard C. Jolley
 2nd Lt. Gerald C. Keller
 2nd Lt. Jack E. Lytle
 Capt. Stanley J. Meadows
 2nd Lt. Robert E. Nesbitt, Jr.
 2nd Lt. Bernard W. O'Malley
 2nd Lt. Anthony J. Paladino
 2nd Lt. Bruce S. Patterson
 2nd Lt. Lelan A. Pope
 2nd Lt. Charles V. Porter
 Capt. Leslie B. Roberts
 2nd Lt. Pat N. Roberts, Jr.
 2nd Lt. LaVon H. Sehorn

MASS MURDER OF ROMA AT AUSCHWITZ SIXTY YEARS AGO

Mr. CAMPBELL. Madam President, during World War II, some 23,000 Roma were sent to Auschwitz, mostly from Germany, Austria, and the occupied Czech lands. Sixty Years ago, on the night of August 2 and 3, the order was given to liquidate the "Gypsy Camp" at Auschwitz. Over the course of that night, 2,898 men, women, and children were put to death in the gas chambers. In all, an estimated 18,000 Roma died at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

During the intervening years, Aug. 2 and 3 have become days to remember the Porrajmos, the Romani word that means "the Devouring," and to mourn the Romani losses of the Holocaust.

As the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has suggested, Roma are "understudied victims" of the Nazis. What we don't know about the Romani experiences during the war is far greater than what is known.

But we do know that the fate of the Roma varied from country to county, and depended on many factors. We know that, in addition to the atrocities in Auschwitz, thousands of Roma were gassed at Chelmno. We know that an estimated 90 percent of Croatia's Romani population—tens of thousands of people—were murdered. We know that approximately 25,000 Roma were deported by the Romanian regime to Transnistria in 1942, where some 19,000 of them perished there in unspeakable conditions. We know that in many places, such as Hungary, Roma were simply executed at the village edge and dumped into mass graves. We know

that in Slovakia, Roma were put into forced labor camps, and that in France, Roma were kept in internment camps for fully a year after the war ended.

Still, far more research remains to be done in this field, especially with newly available archives like those from the Lety concentration camp in the Czech Republic. I commend the Holocaust Museum for the efforts it has made to shed light on this still dark corner of the past, and I welcome the work of nongovernmental organizations, such as the Budapest-based Roma Press Center, for collecting the memories of survivors.

I do not think I can overstate the consequences of the Porrajmos. Some scholars estimate that as many as half of Europe's Romani minority perished. For individuals, for families, and for surviving communities, those losses were devastating. Tragically, the post-war treatment of Roma compounded one set of injustices with others. Those who were most directly involved in developing the Nationalist-Socialist framework for the racial persecution of Roma—Robert Ritter and Eva Justin—were never brought to justice for their crimes and were allowed to continue their medical careers after the war. The investigative files on Ritter—including evidence regarding his role in the forced sterilization of Roma—were destroyed. German courts refused to recognize, until 1963, that the persecution of Roma based on their ethnic identity began at least as early as 1938. By the time of the 1963 ruling, many Romani survivors had already died.

During my years of service on the leadership of the Helsinki Commission, I have been struck by the tragic plight of Roma throughout the OSCE region. It is not surprising that, given the long history of their persecution, Roma continue to fight racism and discrimination today. I commend Slovakia for adopting comprehensive antidiscrimination legislation in May. As the OSCE participating states prepare for a major conference on racism, discrimination, and xenophobia, to be held in September, I hope they will be prepared to address the persistent manifestations of racism against Roma—manifestations that often carry echoes of the Holocaust.

NEED FOR THE INDEPENDENT NATIONAL SECURITY CLASSIFICATION BOARD

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Madam President, I am delighted to join my colleagues Senator WYDEN, Senator LOTT and Senator SNOWE in introducing a bipartisan bill that will begin to address our Government's dangerous tendency toward excessive secrecy.

I start from the belief that, in our democratic society, the people should have access to all information which their Government holds in their behalf. The only exceptions should be for necessary personal and company privacy concerns, such as tax returns, and for

legitimate national security threats, such as protecting the sources and methods of gathering extremely sensitive information. The current level of abuse of our classification system is so egregious as to be laughable.

To make matters worse, when the Congress has sought to declassify important information, we have allowed the fox to guard the henhouse—we have allowed the CIA and other agencies to determine what gets released to the American public from reports that are critical of their conduct.

I am personally most familiar with the report of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees' Joint Inquiry into the intelligence failures surrounding 9/11. After our report was filed in December 2002, it took 7 months to get a declassified version that we could release. And after all those months, the intelligence agencies and the White House refused to declassify pages and pages of information that might have caused them embarrassment—but certainly did not threaten our national security.

The most famous instance of censorship is the 27 pages that detail foreign sources of support of two of the 19 hijackers while they were living among us and finalizing their evil plot. For all we know, that pattern of support continues to this day. But our report found a number of instances where failures to share information were in and of themselves threats to national security.

Had Federal agencies' watch lists of terrorist suspects been shared, especially with State and local law enforcement officials, police might have detained prior to 9/11 several of the hijackers when they were stopped for traffic offenses. We also have learned that the President's Daily Brief of August 6, 2001, listed a number of pending threats to our homeland, including hijackings of commercial aircraft. If only that information had been shared with the airlines through the FAA, the airlines could have heightened security on board aircraft and more thoroughly screened their passenger lists. Instead, no steps were taken.

One of the Joint Inquiry's recommendations, No. 15, called on the President and the intelligence agencies to review executive orders, policies and procedures that govern national security classification of intelligence information:

in an effort to expand access to relevant information for Federal agencies outside the Intelligence Community, for State and local authorities, which are critical to the fight against terrorism, and for the American public.

The recommendation also called on Congress to review statutes, policies and procedures governing classification. As the recommendation states:

Among other matters, Congress should consider the degree to which excessive classification has been used in the past and the extent to which the emerging threat environment has greatly increased the need for real-time sharing of sensitive information.

The report called on the Director of Central Intelligence, the Attorney Gen-

eral, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State to review and report to the House and Senate committees with "proposals to protect against the use of the classification process as a shield to protect agency self-interest."

Regrettably, none of the executive branch agencies have responded to the Joint Inquiry's directives on this issue. So I am pleased to join my colleagues in cosponsoring this legislation, which will create an Independent National Security Classification Board within the executive branch to force the administration and the intelligence agencies to respond and to implement new procedures and standards. Once a new classification system has been adopted, the independent board will have access to all documents that are classified on the basis of national security concerns and the authority to review classification decisions made by executive branch employees. If the board disagrees with a decision, it can make a recommendation to the President to reverse or alter the classification.

If the President doesn't adopt the board's recommendation, he must within 60 days explain his decision to Congress:

and post such notification and written justification on the White House website.

This will, at the very least, let the American people know that they are being denied information.

COSPONSORSHIP OF S. 2623

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, I discuss a very important issue to my home State of Wisconsin, and that is the time limits placed on Supplemental Security Income, SSI, benefits for refugees and other humanitarian immigrants.—

Due to a provision included in the 1996 welfare reform law, some refugees and other humanitarian immigrants legally residing in the United States, including many members of the Hmong ethnic group, are beginning to lose their eligibility for SSI. The provision states that refugees and other humanitarian immigrants are only eligible for SSI for 7 years. Some of these legal immigrants have already lost their benefits, and for others the 7-year deadline is quickly approaching.

Many of the Hmong who currently reside in Wisconsin and throughout the U.S. provided invaluable assistance to the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. The Hmong made great sacrifices in fighting against communists in Laos and providing intelligence to the CIA, and could no longer stay in the region out of fear for their safety. In return for their sacrifices for our Nation, we relocated them to the United States, along with their families, to live under refugee or humanitarian immigrant status.

The refugees and other humanitarian immigrants who depend on SSI are elderly or disabled and often lack any other financial resources. Many Hmong

currently have applications for citizenship pending, and have been waiting for over 2 years for their applications to be processed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and now the Department of Homeland Security. Others are suffering from serious mental or physical disabilities that prevent them from completing the requirements necessary to obtain citizenship. Losing their SSI eligibility will cause significant strain to those Hmong who rely on SSI as their only financial means.

I am proud to cosponsor S. 2623, the SSI Extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugees Act, which was introduced by Senator SMITH. This bill would extend the 7-year deadline by 2 years, giving those refugees who depend on SSI some additional time to navigate the naturalization process.

It is my sincere hope that this bill will be taken up and passed quickly, since time is of the essence for this population. Many of the Hmong risked their lives to help the United States and I believe that the U.S. Government should do all it can to provide for them in their time of need.

AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN COLOMBIA

Mr. DODD. Madam President, last February, I rose before the Senate to draw attention to the fate of three Americans taken hostage by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)—Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Thomas Howes. It has been 5 months since then—17 months since Marc, Keith and Tom were captured. Since that tragic day, these Americans and their families have lived in fear, never knowing what tomorrow may bring. I say today what I said then—there must be no higher priority than ensuring that Marc, Keith and Tom return safely home. I commend the actions taken thus far by United States and Colombian officials to find these brave Americans, but I urge them to redouble their efforts.

Marc, Keith and Tom were taken captive when their plane crashed in FARC controlled territory on February 13, 2003. Two individuals, an American pilot, Tom Janis, and a Colombian intelligence officer, were killed by the FARC at the crash site, and Marc, Keith and Tom have remained in captivity since that time. A video documentary released last year containing interviews with the three men dramatically underscores the urgency of their dire situation.

I know that all of our prayers remain with these Americans and their families. As any parent knows, it is impossible to describe the pain these families suffer knowing that their sons are in danger, unable to communicate with them, and uncertain whether they will ever see them again. Marc Gonsalves' mother, Jo Rosano, is a Connecticut