

in action on 16 February 2005, and SPC Clinton Gertson of Houston Texas, was killed in action on 19 February 2005. Both men were snipers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Ft. Lewis, Washington. Lieutenant Colonel Michael E. Kurilla commands the 1–24 Infantry Regiment and he shares his comments made at the memorial service for these Great Americans.

GEN Bergner, COL Brown, SGTs Major, friends of Deuce Four, and most importantly the men of Deuce Four. Thank you for coming today to honor two of the finest warriors that I have had the privilege and honor to serve beside.

GEN William T. Sherman stated that War is Hell. My friends, he was right. It affects all those in its all consuming grasp. It affects us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—it does not differentiate between civilian or soldier. No one wishes for war—to do so is sheer madness. GEN MacArthur said it best—The soldier above all others prays for peace, for it is the soldier who must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war.

To the men of Deuce Four, we now honor our 7th warrior to die defending the freedom of a people we neither know nor completely understand. But such action is truly the nobility of our profession. We sacrifice all for a people that do not fully understand the extent of our sacrifice. A people that had never tasted the sweet waters of freedom until 30 Jan of this year. And it is because of your valiant actions, the valiant actions of heroes like SGT Adam Plumondore and SPC Clint Gertson.

I would like to tell you about what kind of men they were as I remembered them—for these were extraordinary men that accomplished extraordinary things.

Clint Gertson was the first man I met from Deuce Four three weeks before I took command of the Battalion. I was visiting Deuce Four in Feb 2004 conducting live fires at Yakima Training Center. I approached the support by fire position and this 6'4" square jawed PFC stood up and greeted me with that big Texas smile and asked me if I wanted a clinic on how to shoot; he subsequently proceeded to hit a man sized target at 500m. I immediately knew that I would love this battalion and that if the rest of the soldiers were half as impressive as he was, I would have the best battalion in the Army.

Gerty became a main stay of motivation for me. If one ever needed to know why it is a privilege and honor to command the sons and daughters of America they only needed to meet Clint Gertson.

I remember 11 Nov like it was yesterday. What started as a raid to kill or capture an HVT turned into a 6 hour firefight with 60 insurgents, leaving 25 confirmed enemy dead and estimates of up to 40 killed. This was

only because of men like Clint Gertson. We were taking significant small arms, RPG and mortar fire when we moved to the top of a building to get better fields of fire. As we arrived at the top of the building, I heard the distinctive bark of the .50 Cal sniper rifle from the corner and looked over to see Gerty in all his glory. Gerty and the sniper crew were killing RPG gunners as they moved between buildings in an attempt to reposition on Apache company. At one point he turned around and gave that big Texas smile and turned back to administering death to the enemy.

I also remember one month later when Gerty missed a shot on an enemy mortar team only 300m from his hide site (I think it was closer to 250m)—I teased him that he needed more range time but he quickly reminded me that at least it scared the shit out of the enemy to drop the mortar tube and we did capture it. Good point Gerty. Clint Gertson was the kind of man that made you proud to say that you served with him.

SGT Adam Plumondore was also such a man. An extraordinary leader that did extraordinary things. I had the privilege to observe the actions of SGT Plumondore on a daily basis—and stand back in awe and wonder.

Plum was a walking uniform violation—but strangely, that is one of the things I loved about this man. I do not think a day would go by where I did not tell him to roll down his sleeves, buckle his chin strap, or trim up his Delta Force mustache. Sure enough, he would make the correction and in the thick of a fire fight there would be Plum with sleeves up, chin strap unbuckled, a big smile on his face and a weapon that never missed—unless he was firing 40mm from his M203 which he often reminded me was an area weapon.

I remember 3 Dec like it was yesterday. Sixty to seventy enemy had set up a 2km ambush along Route Tampa and the Recon platoon and TAC found itself running a 2km gauntlet of 15 IEDs, over 30 RPGs, hand grenades and significant machinegun and AK47 fire. Six soldiers were wounded including SPC Moore who was blown from the hatch of his Stryker that was now running on 8 flat tires—without missing a beat SGT Plumondore immediately jumped up and manned the MK19 and suppressed and killed enemy positions allowing the platoon to get casualties to the CSH and then launch a Battalion counter attack that killed 22 enemy.

I remember 11 Dec like it was yesterday. As we were beginning to exfil from destroying a weapons cache a suicide car bomb slammed into the side of Hunter 1. The entire vehicle was in flames, 6 soldiers were wounded. The enemy then engaged with mortars, RPGs, and machinegun fire from 3 directions. Without even thinking twice, SGT Plumondore jumped from his vehicle with fire extinguishers in his hands and his weap-

on slung on his back. Without hesitation he began to put out the Stryker on fire and assist in the evacuation of the wounded from the Stryker. The fire out, Plum then turned his attention to the enemy and began to engage them with precision fires. Because of his actions, Plum saved soldiers lives and the Stryker did not burn to the ground—in fact his determined face was back in the gunner's hatch of his vehicle engaging an enemy RPG team that tried to ambush the platoon during exfil—complete with sleeves rolled up to the elbows.

How do you honor such heroes as Clint Gertson and Adam Plumondore? You honor them by telling the stories of their friendship, camaraderie, and fierce bravery. You honor them by continuing to fight to protect the man on your left and right who would lay down his life so that others might live. You honor them by continuing in this noble endeavor providing freedom to a people we do not know or understand the sacrifices that are made—but that is what makes America the greatest nation on earth.

We will miss them both terribly, but I know that our Deuce Four snipers, Gerty and Plum, are looking down from Heaven continuing to look out for us—that voice you hear in your head is Gerty calling the winds, Plum ensuring you have the correct distance, and both always reminding you to always look for the positive in life.

On this day, we ask almighty God to grant us patience and steadfast resolve in all that is to come. May God Bless Deuce Four, 1st Brigade, and may God Bless America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit this statement for the record and regret that I could not be present today, Thursday May 12, 2005 to vote on rollcall vote nos. 171, 172 and 173 due to a family medical emergency.

Had I been present, I would have voted: “yea” on rollcall vote no. 171 on H.R. 627—to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 40 Putnam Avenue in Hamden, Connecticut, as the “Linda White-Epps Post Office”; “yea” on rollcall vote no. 172 on H. Res. 266—supporting the goals and ideals of Peace Officers Memorial Day; and, “yea” on rollcall vote no 173 on H.R. 2107—the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Maintenance Fund Act of 2005.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, May 17, 2005 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 18

8:30 a.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine issues relating to protecting the judiciary at home and in the courthouse.

SD-226

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider comprehensive energy legislation.

SD-366

Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine eco-terrorism specifically examining the Earth Liberation Front ("ELF") and the Animal Liberation Front ("ALF").

SD-406

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine FEMA's response to the 2004 Florida hurricanes, and its impact on taxpayers.

SD-562

Indian Affairs

To hold oversight hearings to examine issues relating to the taking of land into trust.

SH-216

Judiciary

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD-226

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine Regulation NMS designed to strengthen our national market system for equity securities, focusing on recent market developments.

SD-538

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of David A. Sampson, of Texas, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce, and John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Commerce.

SR-253

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Business meeting to consider the proposed Workforce Investment Act Amendments of 2005, and pending nominations.

SD-430

10:30 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Science and Space Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine human spaceflight.

SR-253

2:30 p.m.

Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

MAY 19

9 a.m.

Foreign Relations

To receive a closed briefing regarding weapons proliferation, terrorism and democracy in Iran.

S-407 Capitol

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider comprehensive energy legislation.

SD-366

Environment and Public Works

Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water Subcommittee

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Endangered Species Act.

SD-406

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Philip J. Perry, of Virginia, to be General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security; to be followed by a hearing on the nominations of Carolyn L. Gallagher, of Texas, and Louis J. Giuliano, of New York, each to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service, and Tony Hammond, of Virginia, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Rate Commission.

SD-562

Appropriations

Interior and Related Agencies Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2006 for the Environmental Protection Agency.

SD-124

Judiciary

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD-226

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To continue hearings to examine Regulation NMS designed to strengthen our national market system for equity securities, focusing on recent market developments.

SD-538

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine weapons proliferation, terrorism and democracy in Iran.

SD-419

10:30 a.m.

Intelligence

To hold a closed meeting to discuss certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

1 p.m.

Foreign Relations

International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine S. 883, to direct the Secretary of State to carry out activities that promote the adoption of technologies that reduce greenhouse gas intensity in developing countries, while promoting economic development.

SD-G50

2 p.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Ben S. Bernanke, of New Jersey, to be a Member of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Brian D. Montgomery, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

SD-538

2:30 p.m.

Judiciary

Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the need for a constitutional amendment relating to the protection of marriage.

SD-226

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine accountability and results in Federal budgeting, focusing on steps being taken to ensure that federal programs are effective and accountable and to explore in-depth the Program Assessment and Rating Tool (PART), which is used by OMB to assess and evaluate federal programs.

SD-562

MAY 24

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider comprehensive energy legislation.

SD-366

10 a.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine S. 529, to designate a United States Anti-Doping Agency and to examine the competitive pressures that lead amateur athletes to use drugs, the sources of such drugs, and the science of doping.

SR-253

2:30 p.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Education and Early Childhood Development Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine issues relating to American history.

SD-430

3 p.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine money laundering and terror financing issues in the Middle East.

SD-538

MAY 25

9:30 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

Business meeting to consider comprehensive energy legislation.

SD-366

10 a.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine the U.S. Grain Standards Act.

SR-328A

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD-430

Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine S.J. Res. 15, to acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the United States Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States.

SR-485