

Einar Dyhrkopp, business leader, public servant, and patriot, was a 19-year-old Navy firefighter assigned to the bowels of the USS *Aaron Ward* when the destroyer-minelayer was attacked by 25 kamikaze bombers in the battle for Okinawa.

In the years after World War II, Gen. George C. Marshall was asked if America had any secret weapons to win that conflict. General Marshall replied, yes, we do, "the best darn kids in the world." Einar was just the kind of kid General Marshall was talking about. About 365 men were assigned to the USS *Aaron Ward*; 42 of them burned to death or were lost overboard in the 52-minute battle on May 3, 1945. Einar was one of the lucky ones: he survived the attack, although his hair was burned to his scalp as he fought to douse the ship's flames.

When the war ended, Einar came home like so many World War II vets, found new ways to serve his country. He married Frances, and they had a son. He was a banker, a business leader, a livestock and grain farmer in southern Illinois, and a great politician. He was elected mayor of Shawneetown, IL, where he was born and lived his entire life. He was a self-described "dyed in the wool" Democrat. He was respected and admired by people from both political parties.

He was also a dedicated public servant. In 1993, Einar Dyhrkopp was appointed by President Bill Clinton to the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors and served two terms as the Chairman. During his tenure, the Postal Service experienced an unprecedented 5 straight years of positive net income. It also enhanced service and increased its ontime delivery rate for next-day delivery to 94 percent. He cared about the Postal Service's bottom line and its customers. He talked to me so many times about issues related to the Postal Service. He cared about the workers there too. He once invited picketing postal workers in for coffee and cinnamon rolls and, after talking with them, answered all of their questions. He visited countless postal facilities, asking employees what we can do to make their job better and make our services better in the Postal Service. In 2003, the post office in his beloved Shawneetown was rededicated and renamed in his honor. Einar had tears in his eyes as the tributes were read.

Mr. Dyhrkopp also served on several Illinois State commissions and was a member of the Regional Advisory Board of Southern Illinois University Public Policy Institute.

There was the one curious political chapter in his life. In 1986, Einar Dyhrkopp ran what he called a non-campaign for the U.S. Senate. He ran on the Illinois Solidarity Party slate, a roster of statewide candidates put together by Adlai Stevenson III. Mr. Stevenson, son of the two-time Democratic Presidential candidate, had won the Democratic nomination for Gov-

ernor, but that primary had been raided by the LaRouche party. He abandoned the Democratic Party ticket after two disciples of the extremist Lyndon LaRouche won slots on the Democratic slate in a disastrous primary election. Mr. Stevenson said he could not in good conscience share a ticket with people whose views he found so objectionable. State law required that the new Illinois Solidarity Party field a whole slate of statewide candidates, not just the gubernatorial candidate. So Einar stepped up and agreed to be the new party's nominee for U.S. Senate.

What a crazy campaign. Mr. Dyhrkopp did not accept a single penny in campaign contributions. He did not spend a dollar or make one speech. He did not even vote for himself, announcing he was going to cast his ballot for his friend, the incumbent, Senator Alan Dixon. As one political writer put it, his strategy was "not to leave the house until the election was over so he wouldn't draw attention or votes away from Senator . . . Dixon." Despite his best efforts to avoid the voters, Einar ended up with 15,000 votes. That is the kind of man he was—hard not to like. As my friend Paul Simon said some years ago, "Einar Dyhrkopp represents responsible citizenship at its best. He has aided his community and provided leadership on the State and national scene. He has gone out of his way to help those who need assistance."

For years after the bombing of the USS *Aaron Ward*, Einar did not talk about the attack. He told a reporter, "When you go through something like we went through together, almost everyone wants to get it out of their minds the first few years." Later in life, he changed his mind. He became active in a group of survivors of the *Aaron Ward* attack. He was interviewed by Southern Illinois University's public broadcasting stations in conjunction with the broadcast of "The War," by Ken Burns, a documentary on World War II. He told a reporter that his change of heart was simply because "[w]e do not want the experience lost. If you lose history, you're destined to repeat it."

America's history might have taken a far different and darker course had Einar Dyhrkopp and millions of others of "the best darned kids in the world" not sacrificed and served in that conflict and had they not come back home to serve their Nation in other ways for decades more.

He was a good man who gave much to his community, much to my State of Illinois, and much to America. Last Friday, at the urging of some friends who told me he was seriously ill, I called his home. Frances answered the phone, and I told her who I was. I said I thought I would say a word or two to Einar if he can take the call. Well, she said, I am not sure he can talk to you. I did not know how sick he was. And she leaned over, and I could overhear her saying: Einar, it is Senator DURBIN.

The next think I knew, Einar was on the phone. We only chatted for a minute or two. We talked about the great times we had together, about that wonderful man, Paul Simon, who inspired us all to get involved in public life.

He said: I think this is the end for me.

I said: You have had a good run at it, Einar. You have been with some great people, and you have been a great friend.

Those were our last words. He died the following day.

I offer my sympathy to Mr. Dyhrkopp's wife Frances, their family, including their three grandchildren, and so many friends in southern Illinois. Einar Dyhrkopp will be missed.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS

JOHN WARNER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, Today is a day I have dreaded. Today I say farewell to my good friend and esteemed colleague, Senator JOHN WARNER.

A few years ago, in an article for a Capitol Hill publication, Senator WARNER called attention to the courage of America's war veterans. He explained that the men and women who serve in our military are "heroes [who] share the timeless virtues of patriotism and selfless devotion to duty in defending our country."

Mr. President, Senator WARNER is one of my "heroes." He is a man who has always displayed "the timeless virtues of patriotism and selfless devotion to duty in defending our country."

Indeed, Senator WARNER has spent his life in service to our country. He enlisted in the Navy at the tender age of 17 in order to serve in World War II. A few years later, he joined the Marines in order to serve in the Korean conflict. From 1969 to 1972, he served as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and from 1972 to 1974, as Secretary of the Navy.

In 1978, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, and is now the second longest-serving Senator in the history of his beloved Commonwealth of Virginia.

His entire Senate career has been marked by his dignity, style, grace, and integrity. He is one of those men with whom one can disagree without rancor. I cannot recall ever hearing anyone speak ill of JOHN WARNER.

A few years ago, on another occasion in which I paid tribute to my good friend, I referred to him as "the classiest of class acts"—and he is. We

will miss his comity, his courtesy, and his refreshing bipartisan spirit always seeking consensus solutions for the good of the country. Whether in committee or on the Senate floor, he never succumbs to the bitter, destructive partisanship which has all too often characterized this chamber in recent years.

Senator WARNER has spoken out against his own party when he felt that the wrong course was being pursued. When the horrors of Abu Ghraib came to light, JOHN WARNER did not hesitate to help write the legislation to restrict the use of torture.

Senator WARNER embodies the guiding principles set down by another of our country's brave warriors, GEN Douglas MacArthur, who proclaimed his leading lights to be, "Duty, honor, country."

Mr. President, without qualification, I can say that it has been an absolute pleasure to have served with this distinguished and esteemed Virginia gentleman, and I will miss him.

CHUCK HAGEL

Mr. President, I came to know Senator HAGEL in 1997 when we worked together on the Byrd-Hagel Resolution related to the Kyoto Protocol. We made a good team because our effort was approved unanimously, by a vote of 95-0.

In our work together, I made a new friend because I found Senator HAGEL to be a likeable and cooperative person as well as a knowledgeable and hard-working Senator.

My respect for this dynamic Senator increased as I watched him become one of the Senate's most outspoken critics of Mr. Bush's war in Iraq. Several of us were already pointing to the disastrous results of the Bush administration's flawed and failed Iraqi war policies. But Senator HAGEL's opposition to the war carried very special impact. He is a conservative, a member of the President's own political party, and a military veteran. In fact, he still carries shrapnel in his chest and remnants of burns to his face from his service as an infantryman in Vietnam. Senator HAGEL now calls Mr. Bush's war in Iraq "an absolute replay of Vietnam."

I will miss my friend and colleague. The Senate needs strong, independent voices like Senator HAGEL—lawmakers who are willing to put the best interests of our country and American people over partisan politics.

PETE DOMENICI

Mr. President, when the Senate convenes next January, it is difficult to accept that Senator DOMENICI will not be here.

This son of an Italian immigrant grocer was elected to the Senate in 1972, making him the first Republican in nearly 40 years to be elected to the Senate from the great State of New Mexico. He is now the longest serving Senator in the history of New Mexico.

In the Senate, he established himself as an expert on fiscal policies and the intricacies of the Federal budget. Hav-

ing served with Senator DOMENICI on the Appropriations and Budget Committees, I have come to know and respect him not only as a dear friend and colleague, but also as a formidable opponent. Senator DOMENICI and I have clashed swords many times on the Senate floor, and, believe me, when you clashed with him, you would have the fight of your life. He has one of the sharpest minds on Capitol Hill. He is one of the most knowledgeable people on the budget on Capitol Hill. And he is always prepared.

Oh, how I regret that he will be leaving us all too soon. But I would like to use this opportunity to thank the senior Senator from New Mexico for his wonderful service and to congratulate him on an outstanding career in the Senate.

Thank you, Senator DOMENICI, for all your work for your State, and our country. And, thank you, PETE, for being a friend.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR BENJAMIN VENNING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Major Benjamin Venning, U.S. Marine Corps, for his 3 years of service to the U.S. Senate and for his continued service to our Nation and its Corps.

From December 2005 to December 2006, Major Venning served in my office as a military fellow. He came to my office soon after a tour in Fallujah, where his actions in service to the United States earned him a Bronze Star. Major Venning had experienced first-hand the rising violence in Iraq. His on-the-ground experience in Iraq gave him tremendous insight on issues affecting servicemembers and veterans.

Many who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have returned with serious physical injuries or have even paid the ultimate price. Others have returned with more invisible wounds, injuries that are not immediately apparent but that bring pain and suffering to a returning veteran and his or her family. Today, traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress syndrome are recognized as signature injuries of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. While Major Venning served on my staff he helped draw attention to these invisible wounds. With his relationships at Bethesda Naval, he helped me understand the impact of traumatic brain injuries on returning soldiers and marines. With Major Venning on my team, I was able to ask hard questions about how our government was responding to the growing number of veterans needing help for these serious injuries.

In April 2006, I sent a letter that Major Venning worked on, which was one of the first to ask the Department of Veterans Affairs to closely review its ability to provide proper mental health care to returning veterans. Another Senator from the State of Illinois signed that letter: Barack Obama. Today, as the world awaits his inau-

guration, the President-elect has promised he will continue to improve mental health treatment for troops and veterans suffering from combat-related psychological injuries.

After his service as a military fellow, Major Venning was named the Deputy Director of the Marine Corps Senate Liaison Office. It is no surprise that he was as loved in that office as he was in mine. It was my pleasure to host his promotion to major, with his friends and family in attendance, in my office in the Capitol. His commanding physical presence is matched only by his compassion and understanding of the issues facing our returning servicemembers, which was never on better display than when he helped shepherd wounded veterans as my guests at the State of the Union.

Major Ben Venning is a marine in the best tradition of the Corps. His efforts have informed the Congress and have represented the Corps' values and capabilities. His performance here will leave a lasting mark on my office, the U.S. Senate and the Marine Corps long after he has departed.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is my pleasure today to congratulate and thank Major Benjamin Venning of the U.S. Marine Corps. This week, Major Venning finishes up a highly successful assignment as Deputy Director of the Marine Corps Liaison Office to the U.S. Senate, which is responsible for providing information about the Corps to this institution. He has served the Senate and the Marine Corps superbly, and he is a credit to the entire Corps.

Major Venning learned about the Senate during a fellowship in 2006 with Senator DURBIN of Illinois. He worked on timely reserve pay and budget issues, getting to know the ins-and-outs of the often arcane appropriations process. Senator DURBIN, as I am, is a member of the Senate's Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, which handles the Senate's work in writing the annual budget bill for the Department of Defense. That was an ideal perch for Major Venning to grasp the complicated but essential financing of our extensive national security operations.

In his next assignment, joining the Corps' liaison office, he brought the same sense of intelligence and integrity that he showed in that year with the senior Senator from Illinois. Major Venning was always prompt in answering questions about the Marine Corps, whether about plans for growth of the force or the minutia of a particular program. He and the entire team in the liaison office provided excellent support for Senate delegations traveling to foreign nations to meet with international leaders and to review foreign assistance programs. He ensured that extensive itineraries unfolded smoothly and productively.

Major Venning is a marine through and through, displaying great dedication to and knowledge about the force. Staffing a recent mission overseas, for example, hewing to longstanding tradition, he made sure that the Corps'