

Livermore, ME, who is to be awarded three exceptional valor awards on November 9, 2009, for his extraordinary service to this Nation. Charles will be presented with the prestigious Silver Star Medal for his heroic role in combat against an overwhelming Viet Cong force at the Battle of Binh Gia, South Vietnam, on December 29, 1964. In addition, he will be awarded the Bronze Star Medal in honor of the 2 years, 1 month, and 24 days he spent in brutal jungle captivity as a prisoner of war—and the Bronze Star Medal with a “V” (valor) device for his outstanding achievement in smuggling out critical information for the United States—risking further retribution—I might add. Indeed, all Americans owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Charles for his inexhaustible service to this country contributions that we will never forget and that truly epitomize the valor of every man and woman courageous enough to wear our Nation’s uniform.

In fact, a year before most Americans became aware that there was a violent war being fought against the democratic government of South Vietnam, Charles was drafted into the U.S. Army and trained as a radio operator. Then, in November of 1964, he was sent to Saigon and became a military advisor to the Army of South Vietnam, ARVN, which was engaged in a bloody struggle against the Viet Cong insurgents.

That December, as Viet Cong forces attacked and held the village of Binh Gia which is located about 50 miles east of Saigon, Private Crafts, in his capacity as the radio operator for Sergeant Harold George Bennett, accompanied the 33rd ARVN Ranger Battalion in an attempt to retake Binh Gia. As they approached the village, their much smaller force of approximately 350 men came under heavy fire from an enemy force that was later estimated to be near 5,000 strong.

The majority of the ARVN Rangers were killed, wounded, or captured during the horrific battle that followed, but despite all of the challenges, Crafts successfully rebuffed attempts by the Viet Cong to jam radio transmissions during the deadly carnage around them. And due to his deft and flawless operation of their portable radio, they were able to warn approaching American helicopter pilots not to attempt a rescue of them in the Viet Cong killing zone.

Shortly thereafter, Sergeant Bennett and Private Crafts were captured as prisoners of war—forced to survive disease including several bouts of malaria, as well as malnutrition and even terrible retribution for attempting to escape—being told, on myriad occasions, that, “dying is easy; surviving is much more difficult.”

Both Crafts and Bennett would later be joined by CPT Donald G. Cook, a U.S. Marine Corps officer who was severely wounded at Binh Gia 2 days after their capture. And under the steadfast leadership of Captain Cook,

all upheld the military Code of Conduct to the utmost of their individual ability while resisting frequent Viet Cong interrogation and indoctrination sessions—facing untold hardships on behalf of each and every American. These brave men, in the face of such profound adversity, sustained themselves by their faith, trust in their country, and above all, each other.

And through all of the trials and tribulations, in light of the countless reasons to give up hope, Charles remained resolute—and that unwavering determination to survive and to return home came to fruition as the Viet Cong political leadership decided to release two American POWs, choosing Charles and Sgt Sammie Womack. A brief ceremony was held on February 16, 1967, in the midst of the jungle, but it was after they boarded a Vietnamese bus, stopping at a U.S. military checkpoint, that they again tasted freedom on February 23 that our Nation holds so dear. And as if all that Crafts had endured and accomplished had not been enough, he smuggled documents out of the jungle, providing even further intelligence for our country.

Following several months of hospitalization—growing stronger with each passing day—Charles was honorably discharged on May 17, 1967, with the rank of specialist four class, E-4. Throughout the entire ordeal, his parents, the late Leroy Bradford Crafts and Virginia (Voter) Crafts, never gave up hope for the return of their only son. And return to Maine he did to a welcoming and loving family, to a most grateful community and State, and, although he didn’t know it at the time, his future wife Juanita during a ceremony where his high school alma mater dedicated their yearbook to him. Now that is fate!

Throughout his entire life—from his time at International Paper Company to his role as a national service officer for the Disabled American Veterans and, of course, his tireless service to this country while serving in the Army—Charles has exemplified the very best that this Nation has to offer, and he is a shining example for why we celebrate Veterans Day every year.

It goes without saying that Charles Crafts is a true American hero who risked his life, time and again, so that our lives could be better. There are no words to adequately thank or appropriately honor Charles for all that he has done, but it gives me, and surely everyone in Maine, immeasurable pride that the Department of the Army has now approved three awards for Charles Earle Crafts: the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action during the Battle of Binh Gia, on December 29, 1964, the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device for valorous achievement in smuggling out several documents—hiding those documents among his few possessions and memorizing those which he was unable to sneak past the guards—and finally, the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service while caring for his fellow pris-

oners under extreme duress by his captors.

These awards reflect Charles’ unending patriotism and boundless spirit that, quite literally, saved lives and made this country stronger. And as we laud Charles for his limitless contributions to our Nation, I cannot help but also thank Retired Colonel Doug Moore, whose sterling efforts over the past decade were critical to collecting and providing the necessary information to ensure this fitting recognition for Charles’ heroic service in Vietnam.

I could not be more pleased to join with Charles’ friends and family in celebrating these phenomenal accolades and his remarkable service with his wife of 15 years, Juanita; his son, Jason, and wife, Julie, of Jay, ME; his two stepsons, Alan Levesque of Lewiston, ME, and Andy Levesque and fiancée Tara Averill of Poland, ME; his two sisters, Patricia Ridley of Wilton, ME, and Ann Crafts of North Jay, ME; as well as his four grandchildren, soon to be five—Sarah, Emma, Whitney and Bailey. It goes without saying that families and loved ones are undeniable pillars of strength for their tireless support and indispensable devotion to our veterans and to our country.

The enduring truth is that neither a single day nor single ceremony is enough to honor America’s veterans. We owe them and we owe Charles Crafts our praise and thanks on every day that we enjoy the blessings of liberty and benefits of security. These medals presented to Charles will be a lasting testament, commemorating his unflagging spirit of placing love of homeland above all else which has been the string upon which our pearls of freedom, liberty, and democracy have always been strung.●

RECOGNIZING MORRIS YACHTS

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, four centuries ago, in my home State of Maine, a group of colonists settled on the mouth of the Kennebec River. There, they built the Virginia, a 30-ton pinnace that voyaged across the Atlantic Ocean at least twice. By constructing the first English-built ship in North America, these early Mainers engendered a rich tradition of shipbuilding that continues still today. In this time of economic volatility, Maine shipbuilders who carry on this lofty practice are some of the many small businesses that are piloting our Nation out of this recession. I rise today to note the achievements of one of these remarkable companies, Morris Yachts, which is headquartered in the picturesque Maine village of Bass Harbor.

Since his business first set sail in 1972, Tom Morris has added immensely to the abundant history of Down-east shipbuilding. Mr. Morris’s passion for sailing spawned from summer vacations in Maine with his family. Similarly, he instilled his zeal into his son, Cuyler, who joined him at the wheel of Morris Yachts in 1995. With father and

son at the helm, the company outgrew its home of 27 years in Southwest Harbor a decade ago and now operates a complete yacht service company just down the road at its present facility.

During the company's near three decades in the Maine boatbuilding arena, Morris Yachts has become a trusted and dependable name for hundreds of clients. Its yachts generally range from 29 to 62 feet in length, and provide customers with semicustom boats of superb quality and beautiful woodworking. A testament to the Morris's remarkable craftsmanship, there are presently over 269 Morris Yachts sailing all over the world. Morris Yachts also has a connection to Hollywood, as its Pemaquid Friendship sloop was utilized as a prop in the popular film "The Truman Show."

Most recently, Morris Yachts has been asked to build four 44-foot sailing vessels for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy for use in training programs. With this new contract, Morris Yachts will be able to hire up to 20 employees, including mechanics, electricians, carpenters, and composite craftspeople this fall to work on the Coast Guard project, bringing the total number of Morris employees close to 100. While the initial contract asks for four boats, the Coast Guard Academy hopes to potentially double its order.

Not only does the company provide a valuable service to its local community, but with this contract, Morris Yachts will be able to serve the entire Nation. Providing ships to the U.S. Coast Guard is a true honor, and the firm's critical work will better equip our Nation's bravest men and women to protect our shores.

Despite the difficulty facing countless yacht manufacturers over the past year and a half, Morris Yachts has continued to produce sturdy and reliable boats. As a result, the company has been nominated for the 2010 Boat of the Year Award by *Cruising World* and *Sailing World* magazines. I congratulate everyone at Morris Yachts for this honor and look forward to the announcement of the award in January.

The Morris family story serves as an inspiration to all who pursue the American dream. I commend the Morris family for being chosen by our Nation's military to build these watercraft and congratulate them for their well-deserved accolades. Just as the colonists on the Kennebec River did centuries ago, I am certain the Morris family will continue the great tradition of Maine shipbuilding as they have for the past 37 years. Their success is proof that commitment, resolve, and hard work still lead to great things.●

RECOGNIZING NEW URBAN ARTS

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today I honor New Urban Arts of Providence, RI, which has been honored by the White House with the 2009 Coming Up Taller Award, the Nation's highest

honor for out-of-school arts and humanities programs. New Urban Arts is a model for what the arts can do in the lives of our urban youth, giving them the opportunity to explore the limitless possibilities of their own imaginations and helping them apply what they discover to goals they set for their futures.

New Urban Arts was founded in 1997 as a collaboration between local high school and college students, with the support of the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University. It has grown from those 14 students in a loft at Grace Church in downtown Providence into an organization that serves over 300 high school students every year.

The New Urban Arts afterschool and summer programs provide these students with the opportunity to work with established local artists who act as both mentors and peers, with the young people creating new works of art that reflect their experiences. We know that for youth who are on their own after school, the hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are a danger zone, a peak time for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs and alcohol. Not only does New Urban Arts give youth in Providence a place to go, it provides them with a safe space where they can express themselves through many different art mediums and with people who can nurture their talent. This includes members from Rhode Island's acclaimed arts community, which has long understood the need to invest in our state's youth and arts education. And luckily for the people of Rhode Island, the New Urban Arts gallery and exhibition spaces allow all of us to share in the joy of that new talent.

Our investment in the youth of Providence has paid dividends. Three-quarters of the students who participate in the New Urban Arts program are low-income and over half live in neighborhoods where the poverty rate is four times the national rate. Despite these challenges, over 90 percent of the seniors in this group graduate high school and attend college. When I was attorney general of Rhode Island, I saw what too often happened to students who did not know how to set goals for themselves or understand the importance of education—they ended up in the juvenile justice system. New Urban Arts helps students chart a course toward the future by inspiring them to create and introducing them to adults who are invested in them and treat them as equals.

This wonderful model has attracted national attention, including this most recent honor, the 2009 Coming Up Taller Award. This award recognizes afterschool and out-of-school arts and humanities programs for youth in traditionally underserved communities. It honors programs that foster the creative and intellectual development of our Nation's children. The ideals set out by the Coming Up Taller Award are certainly met by New Urban Arts, and

I know that they will build on this honor by helping more students.

I would like congratulate all of the students and mentors who make New Urban Arts such a dynamic and innovative program, as well as its executive director, Jason Yoon, and the chairwoman of the New Urban Arts Board of Directors, Myrth York. Their hard work and dedication to the youth of Providence and to the arts will ensure that New Urban Arts continues to help our young people realize their potential into the future, and to serve as model for the rest of the Nation.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:28 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3157. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, as the "Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

H.R. 3949. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, and the Servicemember Civil Relief Act, to make certain improvements in the laws relating to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The PRESIDENT pro tempore (Mr. BYRD) reported that he had signed the following enrolled bills, which were previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

S. 475. An act to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to guarantee the equity of spouses of military personnel with regard to matters of residency, and for other purposes.

S. 509. A bill to authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3157. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, as the "Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient