

from Iraq. Twenty-three of us had stood up and said no to that war, and afterwards, we worried very much about what would happen with our troops in what was shaping up to be a long war with no exit strategy. Opening up his office here in the Capitol, Senator Byrd organized us, saying, "We need to talk about ways that we can bring this war to an end."

He cared so much about everything he did here, from working to create opportunity for West Virginians and all Americans to maintaining the traditions and the dignity of the Senate. And for me, just to have been in his presence and to watch him work has really been an amazing experience, and so I am proud to pay tribute to him today.

Senator Byrd stayed here through thick and thin, with a cane or a wheelchair, through the sheer force of will, suffering to be in this place that he loved so much and that he respected so much. There isn't a Member on either side of the aisle that didn't respect Senator Byrd for his intelligence, his strength, his extraordinary biography, and his dedication to the people of his State.

What a legacy he leaves. It is a great loss for his family, for all of us in the Senate, for the people of his beloved State of West Virginia and for all Americans. I extend my deepest condolences to his family.

REMEMBERING CODE TALKER MOSE BELLMARD

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it was 2 years ago that I worked to pass and have signed into law by the President the Code Talkers Recognition Act, a bill to give Congressional Medals to the many Native American Code Talkers who served in World Wars I and II. Today, I wish to honor an original Code Talker, Mose Bellmard, a Kaw Indian who bravely served our country during World War I. As a veteran and ardent supporter of the armed services, I always take pride when I have the opportunity to recognize the service of fine Oklahomans like him.

Bellmard, considered by many to be one of the last hereditary chiefs of the Kaw Indians, was born on February 16, 1891, to Josephine and Leonard Bellmard in Indian territory. U.S. involvement in World War I began when Bellmard was 26, and, even though Native Americans were not yet considered full citizens of the United States, he was one of the first to volunteer. He trained at Fort Sill in Lawton, OK, was made a 1st lieutenant with Company E in Oklahoma's 1st Infantry Unit.

After a few weeks of training, he deployed to the frontlines of the war in France. The setting was dangerous, and a number of his men were quickly killed during routine patrols of their area. Upon investigation, Bellmard realized that the Germans had painted sections of barbed wire that allowed them to easily spot his patrolmen's

movements. Creatively, he thought to use a large bed mattress—instead of a person—to draw fire so his units could locate and neutralize the enemy. The scheme apparently worked, and in addition to saving lives his unit was able to use the tactic to destroy a number of German gun installations along the Western front.

But this would not be Bellmard's only contribution to the war effort, nor would it be his most impactful. When Bellmard entered the war, the Germans had been able to decipher nearly every one of the Allies' codes, making it difficult for them to operate in secrecy. Bellmard recognized this problem, and as the leader of the Native American unit saw a tremendous asset in his soldiers' diverse languages. These languages were completely foreign to Europeans and had never been written down. They were ideal candidates for new codes.

Lieutenant Bellmard suggested to his superiors that his unit's men be scattered throughout troop dispatch points as communications officers. There, he reasoned, they would be able to disseminate orders in their native tongues and then translate them back into English. His plan was put into practice and quickly proved to be reliable and secure. Bellmard and his original Code Talkers of Oklahoma allowed many Allied forces to move safely through battle zones without fear of interception, and to this date there are no records of the Central Powers ever cracking their "code."

Bellmard's suggestion carried over into World War II, during which Code Talkers were widely recruited and were critical to the Allied Forces' victory in the Pacific theater. Bellmard's simple idea to use Native American tongues to thwart and confuse enemies proved a lasting and effective tool for the U.S. military. It is fitting he was promoted to the rank of captain for his role.

Unfortunately, Captain Bellmard died before we could thank him personally for his contribution to our freedom. But our thanks are still important, especially as we remember Independence Day and the cost of securing that freedom. We owe our sincere gratitude to all American heroes like Mose Bellmard, and I pray that more emerge in generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL PHILIP C. SKUTA

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a close friend of the Senate, COL Phil Skuta. Over the past 2 years, Colonel Skuta has served as the Director of the Marine Corps Liaison Office to the U.S. Senate.

Throughout Colonel Skuta's service in the Senate he has escorted 14 CODELs to 27 countries. I have traveled with Phil to visit our troops in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Last year, I had the privilege of spending Thanksgiving with the Wyoming Army National Guard 115th Fires

Brigade in Kuwait. With only 2 weeks' notice, Colonel Skuta and his team provided the support to execute this trip. As a selfless leader, he did not task a junior officer to take on the trip. He postponed his Thanksgiving plans with family to be with our troops in the Middle East.

Throughout these travels I got to know Colonel Skuta very well. Colonel Skuta is a native of Williamsport, PA. Phil joined the Marine Corps in 1984 through the Platoon Leader's Class program while studying at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown.

From Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm to Joint Guardian and Iraqi Freedom, Colonel Skuta has led his marines through many trying and dangerous situations. On his most recent deployment, he led the Second Battalion, Seventh Marines into Iraq to train and conduct operations with the Iraqi Security Forces. The 2d Battalion, seventh Marines' primary area of operations was Ramadi and west of the Euphrates River in Al Anbar province.

Throughout his career he has handed down from one marine to the next his excellent leadership skills. Colonel Skuta's example will teach the next generation that will come to know the Marine Corps. Under Phil's leadership, steady hand and sharp instincts, the USMC Senate liaison team has well served General Conway and all marines. The USMC liaison office has provided invaluable support for the Senate.

While the U.S. Senate and Marine Corps are losing a valuable and trusted ally in this body, we wish Colonel Skuta well on his next assignment to be Director of the USMC Strategic Initiatives Group.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO AL SMITH

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, today I recognize the exemplary work of Allen Smith, Jr., of Helena, MT. This week, Al will be awarded the American Association for Justice Partnership Award in recognition for his work as the executive director of the Montana Trial Lawyers Association. I commend Al for all his work on behalf of the justice system and Montana's strong network of legal advocates.

The mission of the American Association of Justice is "to promote a fair and effective justice system—and to support the work of attorneys in their efforts to ensure that any person who is injured by the misconduct or negligence of others can obtain justice in America's courtrooms, even when taking on the most powerful interests." I can think of no one that reflects this mission more than Al Smith.

Since joining the team at the Montana Trial Lawyers Association in 1997, Al has shown a commitment to promoting justice and fairness in our

country's legal system. His desire to serve MTLA comes from his respect for its members who, each day, work for justice by holding governments, corporations, and other powers accountable to individuals. As MTLA president Sydney McKenna wrote last year, "[Al] articulate[s] in a compelling way why the courts are necessary, that causes and damages are part of justice, and that justice matters."

During the past 13 years serving as the executive director of the Montana Association, Al has worked hard to represent the bar in both State and Federal matters. I have had the privilege of working with Al on a number of Federal initiatives and have always appreciated Al's thoughts on how Federal legislation could impact the rights of individuals in the legal system.

Al also serves on the boards of directors for the National Association of Trial Lawyer Executives and A.W.A.R.E., a private, nonprofit organization providing quality, community-based services for persons with disabilities. Al served as the executive director and attorney for the Montana Advocacy Program, which works to protect and advocate for the human, legal, and civil rights of Montanans with disabilities. In 2009, Al was awarded the Montana Trial Lawyers Associations Public Service Award. Al received the Annual Award for Advocacy from the National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy in 1991. He received his bachelor's in political science from Montana State University and his juris doctor from the Hastings College of the Law at the University of California.

As a lifelong Montanan, Al has a deep appreciation for the State and all it has to offer. In his spare time, Al enjoys to hunt, fish, kayak, and climb Montana's beautiful mountains. Al is married to Marilyn, who was born and raised in Anaconda, and together they have two children—daughter Kait and son Ben.

I again congratulate Al for his recognition by the American Association for Justice.●

REMEMBERING PHILLIP ORTIZ

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Los Angeles County Highway Patrol Officer Phillip Ortiz. Officer Ortiz, a 28-year veteran of the Los Angeles County Highway Patrol, died on June 22, 2010, from being struck by a vehicle while in the line of duty. His loss should remind us all of the very serious dangers that our law enforcement personnel face every day as they do their jobs. I would like to take a few moments to recognize Officer Phillip Ortiz's life.

Officer Ortiz grew up in Santa Monica, CA, and joined the California Highway Patrol in August 1982 at the age of 21. Soon after, he successfully completed motorcycle training and in 1982 was eventually transferred to the

West Los Angeles area where he remained for the rest of his career. He loved riding motorcycles both professionally and in his personal time. Officer Ortiz had a distinguished career and was very dedicated to the California Highway Patrol.

I invite all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing and honoring Officer Phillip Ortiz for his leadership and dedication to the safety of over 10 million Los Angeles County residents. He is survived by his wife and childhood sweetheart, Jessica; his parents, Irene and Claude Clauser; and his sister, Anna, to whom I send my heartfelt condolence. Officer Ortiz leaves a lasting legacy of service.●

TRIBUTE TO OFELIA VALDEZ-YEAGER

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize the career accomplishments and service of Ofelia Valdez-Yeager as she retires from her position as chief administrative liaison to the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools.

Ofelia—a native of Tayoltita, Durango, Mexico—immigrated with her family to the United States in 1958. Although she began first grade as a non-English-speaker, she completed the school year at the top of her class—realizing her parents' high expectations for the academic achievement of their 10 children, even though they themselves had been educated only at the elementary level in Mexico.

Ofelia was admitted to the University of California, Riverside—UCR—in 1965 as one of the initial group of five Educational Opportunity Program—EOP—students. After graduating in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in Spanish and completing the requirements for an elementary teaching credential in 1971, she embarked upon a professional career that has included work as an Upward Bound tutor and counselor, high school counseling assistant, elementary school teacher, bilingual resource teacher, and consultant for several public agencies.

In 1992 Ofelia was elected to serve as the first Latina trustee on the Riverside Unified School District Board; she was later elected vice president of this same body. She expanded her commitment to public service by accepting a part-time position as administrative assistant to the mayor—focusing her expertise and energies on youth, education, and crime issues. She also served as executive assistant to the superintendent of the Riverside Unified School District.

In addition to her current responsibilities as chief administrative liaison, Ofelia also serves on boards and committees of a number of local agencies and organizations, including the United Way, Concilio Child Development Centers, Fiesta de la Familia, Mission Inn Foundation, Raincross Group, Riverside County Library Foundation, Riverside Library and Museum

Taskforce, UCR Medical School Community Advisory, Riverside Community College Foundation, Hispanic Education Foundation, and the Riverside County Sheriff's Commission on Recruiting, Retention, and Diversity. As founder of the Latina Women's Health Forum, as one of three founders of the Latina Network, and as a strong influence behind the Nati Fuentes Centro de Ninos on the Eastside, she continues to exert influence on education and community priorities.

In recognition of her professional contributions and service, Ofelia has received the Hope Luminarias Award and the La Sierra University President's Community Service Citation. She has been named CHARO Minority Business Advocate of the Year and has been cited by the Riverside Press-Enterprise newspaper as one of the People Who Make a Difference.

It is my pleasure to recognize Ofelia Valdez-Yeager as she prepares to retire from the Office of the Superintendent, Riverside County Schools. I commend her for her fine service to the community.●

REMEMBERING WALTER SHORENSTEIN

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring the memory of an extraordinary real estate investor, philanthropist, Presidential adviser, civic leader and dear friend of mine, Walter Shorenstein. Walter passed away on June 24, 2010. He was 95 years old. Walter's legendary entrepreneurship and civic involvement will benefit future generations of Americans for decades to come.

Walter Herbert Shorenstein was born into a hard-working middle class family in Glen Cove, New York on February 23, 1915. He briefly attended the University of Pennsylvania before cutting his undergraduate studies short in order to serve his country in World War II. During the war, Walter was stationed in North Africa, where he managed logistics and resources for troops in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Walter met his future wife Phyllis while serving as a major at Travis Air Force Base in California. They were married in 1945, and Walter began his real estate career upon moving to San Francisco in 1946.

Walter joined the commercial real estate firm, Milton Meyer & Company, and became its only partner in 1951. He later purchased the company and in 1960, began rapidly expanding its holdings over the next three decades. At various times, the company, which was renamed Shorenstein Co. in 1989, has owned numerous notable buildings including the Bank of America Tower in San Francisco, the John Hancock Center in Chicago, and the Washington Harbour Complex in Washington, DC. The Shorenstein Co., under the leadership of Walter's son, Douglas, currently controls roughly 30 million square feet of commercial real estate nationwide.