

transferred from artillery to infantry. With 5th Marine Division, he transferred to Hawaii as infantry battalion executive officer. As battalion executive officer, Russell landed in the third assault wave on Iwo Jima, Red Beach One, where he observed the historic flag raising.

Despite wounds to his face and being evacuated, Russell volunteered to stay and lead the battalion after his commander went down. On the 10th day, Russell was elevated to infantry battalion commander, one of the youngest battalion commanders in World War II, and so served the remainder of the campaign.

Russell commanded one of two units to land in Japan for occupation, at Kyushu, and provided protection for the U.S. technical teams covering the atomic bomb site at Nagasaki. Commander Russell accepted the surrender of the Tsushima Islands off the coast of the Japanese mainland. He was then returned to the U.S. and was assigned to the Staff Officers Basic School in Quantico, Virginia, where he served as instructor.

In 1949, Russell was assigned to the 1st Marine Division, Korea, where he served as commander of frontline infantry battalion for 8 months, and as chief of the advisory group of a frontline Korean Marine brigade for 8 months. When he returned to the U.S., he was assigned to the Marine Corps Research and Development Staff in Quantico, Virginia.

In 1952, Russell was assigned to staff, U.S. European Command, Paris, France. That year, he returned to Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., and later transferred to Quantico, assigned as director of the Amphibious Warfare School. He transferred to Camp Lejeune, then appointed commanding officer of the 8th Marine Infantry Regiment. Later, Russell was transferred to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to command U.S. Ground Defense Force during the early difficulties with Cuba.

In 1967, Colonel Russell was transferred to Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., where he served as Head Marine Corps Division of Morale Services until his retirement from the Marine Corps in 1968.

Russell retired from the Marine Corps on a Friday and started work on Monday as the assistant to the provost at Penn State University. While at Penn State, Colonel Russell served as assistant to the provost, assistant to President Oswald, and assistant secretary for the Penn State Board of Trustees, assistant professor, and assistant to dean of College of Health and Physical Education, and as associate dean until his retirement in 1987.

Since his retirement from Penn State, Colonel Russell has continued as a tireless community volunteer, volunteer advocate, and is known throughout central Pennsylvania and beyond.

Today, Colonel Russell serves as a member of the Centre County United

Way Board of Directors, chairman of the Centre County United Way Day of Caring, and remains active in various efforts, which include the Pennsylvania Special Olympics, Centre County Toys for Tots, and many other programs that benefit our community.

After a long and distinguished career, Colonel Russell has a Republic of Korea Distinguished Service Medal, Bronze Star with "V" for Valor, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, Purple Heart Medal with two gold stars, U.S. Presidential Citation with four stars, Korean Presidential Unit Citation with three stars, Navy Meritorious Unit Citation, the Defense Medal, Asiatic Pacific Medal with three stars, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Medal, World War II Japan Occupation Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, among others, for his eminent service to our country.

A decorated veteran with almost three decades of active service, today Colonel Russell is one of just three living regimental commanders of Iwo Jima. The Battle of Iwo Jima served as a watershed moment for the United States in World War II. After capturing Iwo Jima, U.S. Forces were able to have a staging ground for the aerial assault that would help defeat the Japanese Empire.

I want to thank Colonel Russell for his service to this great Nation. Happy birthday, Colonel Russell.

This great victory did not come without great sacrifice. More than 70,000 Marines participated in the Battle of Iwo Jima, 17,372 Marines were wounded and 5,931 Marines made the ultimate sacrifice for this Nation.

Through a life of sacrifice and service to others, Colonel Gerald F. Russell today stands as a living memory of those who lost their lives in WWII and the many others who've given the ultimate sacrifice for this Nation.

Again, thank you for your service to this Nation.

#### CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY'S 400TH SPECIAL ORDER ON IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today, first of all, to pay tribute to a true champion for peace and justice, Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY. Her leadership is reflected in the fact that today marks the 400th occasion on which she has spoken on the House floor against the ongoing war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan.

Today is really a landmark not only because of Congresswoman WOOLSEY's outstanding commitment to ending the wars we are engaged in, but also because she is my good friend. And she will be retiring at the end of this term. I was truly honored to be by her side when she announced her retirement after 20 years of bold and visionary service in this House and serving her district. It was a bittersweet occasion. But I know she will do wonderful things in the next chapter of her life.

Congresswoman WOOLSEY should really be commended for being an unparalleled leader and a guiding light, a truly guiding light in Congress for peace, for SMART Security, and for justice.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank Congresswoman WOOLSEY for her unwavering leadership and commitment to end the unsustainable wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. She introduced the very first resolution calling for us to bring our young brave men and women home from Iraq. I believe she pulled together then, what, 130 votes maybe for that resolution? And I want to remind you, this was a time when this body was, quite frankly, very timid in its opposition to the war.

□ 1040

She broke that silence, and I have to thank you for that very historic moment, Congresswoman WOOLSEY. Now we must ensure that the 45,000 United States troops and our military contractors who remain in Iraq leave Iraq at the end of this year, as stated in our Nation's Status of Forces Agreement with Iraq.

Congresswoman WOOLSEY's fight to end these wars is directly tied to, really, the impasse that we are facing over our Nation's debt limit, which we are discussing today. She has tirelessly reminded this body, time and time again, that in order to pay for these wars, the United States has taken on incredible debt. This reckless spending and resulting debt are now being used by many in a dangerous political game which threatens the economic future of our country.

Allowing our government to default on this Nation's legal obligations would threaten every American's economic security, it would devastate people's retirement savings, and it would cripple an already struggling housing market.

The truth is, and Congresswoman WOOLSEY always reminds us of this, is that raising the debt ceiling should be really a very simple thing. This should be a straightforward vote to allow the United States Treasury to fund all of the programs and obligations of the entire government that are already in the law, very simple.

Republicans in the House have already passed a \$9 trillion increase in the national debt. And now, instead of working to fund the programs that they already voted to authorize, Republicans are playing a high-stakes game of chicken with the safety and security of every single American so that they can protect the massive tax breaks for the super rich, Big Oil and, of course, hedge funds. They have taken an incredibly irresponsible position that protecting tax breaks for the super rich and Wall Street is more important than protecting the United States Government and Main Street from defaulting on our debt.

And, again, Congresswoman WOOLSEY has been a leader in protecting Social

Security, and I want to remind all of us today that Social Security and Medicare did not create the national debt, and that is really unconscionable to ask our most vulnerable communities to be the ones who must bear the burden of balancing our budget.

It was the Republicans who told us that the financial markets would regulate themselves. In return, what did we get? The financial crisis.

It's the Republican politicians who keep telling us that tax cuts pay for themselves and create jobs. In return, we have a huge deficit and an unacceptable unemployment rate. And it was Republicans who told us that we could fight two wars while giving more tax breaks to their rich friends.

Of course, Congresswoman WOOLSEY for years and years and years had reminded us that, first of all, the wars did not need to be fought, but, secondly, they were morally and fiscally wrong. In return, now we will end up paying a cost of nearly \$6 trillion by borrowing the money and adding this to the tally of our Nation's debt.

Now, unfortunately, Republicans are blaming their debts on the most vulnerable Americans. Even now they continue to drive our Nation closer and closer to the brink of disaster just to protect massive tax breaks for billionaires.

So once again, in closing, I am proud to stand here with Congresswoman WOOLSEY as a member of the triad. She is working to end our Nation's wars and will continue to do so to promote national security and to protect our seniors and our children, our working families and the most vulnerable Americans.

Thank you. We owe you, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, a debt of gratitude.

#### AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, on the floor today I think America and all of us in Congress are certainly concerned about the debt ceiling issue and what we are going to do and how we are going to be able to resolve it. But like many of my colleagues on the Democratic side, I am here today to talk about the war in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, I have beside me a really profound photograph of a wife in tears and a little girl sitting on her knee, who is too young to understand that her father, United States Army Sergeant Jeffrey Sherer, is laid under the flag that is now folded, being presented to the wife.

This is the pain of war, and I do say to Ms. WOOLSEY, thank you very much for what you have done to try to wake up the Congress and the American people.

Ten billion dollars a month going to Afghanistan. We can't even fix the bridges, we can't fix the roads, we are

cutting children's programs, we are cutting senior programs. And yet Mr. Karzai, who is known as a corrupt leader of Afghanistan, is going to get his \$10 billion a month while these programs that we are going to cut are going to be denied \$10 billion a month. It doesn't make any sense, Madam Speaker.

That brings me to an article written by A.C. Snow. He is well-known in North Carolina, where I am from, for his writings in *The News and Observer*, which is a State paper in Raleigh, North Carolina. This past July 4th, his article was titled "Time to Bring Them Home, Let Them Live."

"Time to Bring Them Home, Let Them Live."

Let this little girl's father live. Obviously, he will not live. He's dead. But how about the next little girl or little boy, or the wife and, in some cases, the husband?

Let me share with the House from A.C. Snow's writing, "Time to Bring Them Home, Let Them Live":

"It seems we never run out of wars. It is as if one small country after another sends out engraved invitations reading: 'We're having a war. Please come.' And Uncle Sam goes, lugging borrowed billions and thousands of young men and women to sacrifice on the altar of so-called freedom or 'nation building.'"

Snow closes his comments by quoting lyrics from "Les Miserables": "He is young. He is only a boy. You can take, you can give, Let him be, Let him live. Bring him home, Bring him home."

Snow further writes, "It's way past time to stop playing politics with the lives of America's youth. Bring them home. Let them live. Not just 30,000 of them. All of them."

Madam Speaker, I sit here day after day, in committees and on the floor of the House, listening to debate, sometimes being part of the debate. I just hope that the American people will understand that in this discussion at the White House with the leadership of the House and the leadership of the Senate, we could save \$100 billion. That's what it costs per year to be in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, I have Camp Lejeune Marine Base in my district. I have over 60,000 retired military. I listen to them. No, I did not serve, but I listen to those who are serving and those who did serve.

And like my colleagues, I go to Walter Reed, I go to Bethesda. I see the broken bodies, the amputated legs, the paralyzed; and I have written over 10,300 letters to families like Sergeant Sherer's to say to the families, I regret that I voted to send our kids into Iraq. It was a lie that got us there, and we never should have gone.

So I join my colleagues in both parties to do my part to say let's bring them home from Afghanistan. Let's bring them home before 2014 or 2015.

And, Madam Speaker, may God bless our men and women in uniform, and may God bless America.

#### FICTITIOUS DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my Republican colleague from North Carolina for that very powerful statement, and I am very glad that Congresswoman WOOLSEY was in the Chamber to hear that, Congresswoman WOOLSEY who has worked so hard to remind us of the terrible consequences of war.

I often sit here as we debate and seize from time to time at the statements of Republican colleagues, but that was profoundly moving, and I thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

I stand today, Madam Speaker, to talk on another issue that should unite our parties, and that is the fundamental question about whether or not the United States honors its commitments.

□ 1050

Today is July 12, exactly 3 weeks before August 2. August 2 is the date at which this government can no longer honor its commitments, at which time it will be forced to choose between paying those soldiers that we heard so movingly described and sending out Social Security checks, running a court system, paying Social Security and Medicare. Do we honor our commitments in the United States of America? I would think that both parties would say "yes" to that question. The Treasury Secretary, CEOs of American corporations and economist after economist have told us, Do not play around with the debt ceiling.

What is this debt ceiling, by the way, that is putting into peril the question of whether we honor our commitments? The debt ceiling is a pernicious fiction. It is a fiction that was put in place by this body decades ago to try to convince the American people that we could control our debts. And since then, it has never done that. It has been raised dozens of times as this body took the spending decisions and the tax cut decisions that required borrowing.

Under the Bush administration, the debt ceiling was raised seven times. Dozens and dozens of times, the debt ceiling has been raised. It is a fiction. It is a particularly pernicious set of smoke and mirrors that this institution uses to make people feel better while the debt rises, as it did under President Reagan, as it did under the first President Bush, as it did not under President Clinton, and as it did under President George W. Bush and President Obama.

So now the question is, do we honor the commitments made historically in this Chamber? We raise the debt ceiling not to spend more new money, to start new programs or to cut new taxes, but because we honor the commitments that were made in this Chamber to cut taxes in '01 and '03, to go to war twice in the last decade and