

While I could continue to list her professional successes, one cannot comment on her career without saying a few words on her outstanding character. Ellen combines a sunny disposition with a deep-rooted sense of fairness. She is a true master of her field, and always eager to share her knowledge and experience with her colleagues. While consistently a good steward of the taxpayer's money, her patriotism has insured that the welfare of the men and women serving in uniform has always been foremost in her mind. And finally, everyone who knows Ellen also knows of her remarkable and touching relationship with her husband, Rob. They are truly a magical couple, and I understand that they have plans to travel the world later this year.

Ellen Maldonado has had an outstanding career in three decades of service in the Department of Defense and the Senate. On behalf of the whole Committee on Appropriations, I wish to thank Ellen for her tireless and outstanding work on behalf of the members of the Armed Forces, her colleagues, and the people of the United States. I wish Ellen and Rob all the very best in their future plans.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT ANNA DIXON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the impressive accomplishments of a remarkable woman and native of the Commonwealth, Lieutenant Anna Dixon of the U.S. Coast Guard. Lieutenant Dixon has always possessed an adventurous spirit and harbored a desire to expand her horizons and explore the possibilities of the world outside of her hometown of Barbourville, KY. So it came as no surprise to those who know her that upon graduating from Barbourville High School and attending the University of Kentucky to study architecture for a year, Lieutenant Dixon decided to take advantage of an exchange program and follow her dream of becoming a marine biologist at Coastal Carolina College in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Upon graduating with her degree in marine science and working at an environmental testing lab, Lieutenant Dixon decided to take another adventurous and courageous leap and enlist in the U.S. Coast Guard. Lieutenant Dixon not only completed her basic training at Camp May, NJ, in August of 2004, but also graduated at the top of her class and was assigned to the Coast Guard Station in Long Beach, CA, where she remained for 2 years.

In the years that followed, this bright and determined woman worked tirelessly to qualify for numerous positions within the U.S. Coast Guard, including Officer Candidate School where she graduated third in her class, as a patroller on the Coast Guard Cutter Spencer, and as Chief of Contingency Preparedness at the Coast Guard Sta-

tion in Key West, FL. Most recently, Lieutenant Dixon was assigned the duties of public information officer for the Florida Keys response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and was hand-selected to be the lead advance officer and deputy press secretary for now-retired National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen of the U.S. Coast Guard.

During her time in the post from July to October of 2010, Lieutenant Dixon worked steadfastly to coordinate daily national press conferences for Admiral Allen and other high-ranking national leader, to make sure information on one of the Nation's most devastating offshore disasters was delivered in a timely and accurate manner. Because of her strong sense of leadership and her eye for detail, Lieutenant Dixon was selected by a board of Coast Guard officers to attend a fully funded graduate program to further her experience in communications and public relations, as well as to complete a follow-on tour as a public affairs officer for a multistate Coast Guard district.

It is unquestionable that Lieutenant Dixon's career successes, including her recent change in rank, have come with much sacrifice, but have been well-deserved. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the accomplishments of LT Anna Dixon, and in sending congratulations to her proud parents Katy Jones and Bill Matt Dixon, and step-parents Michael Jones and Kay Dixon. I wish Lieutenant Dixon continued success for the future.

The Mountain Advocate recently published a story about Lieutenant Dixon and her successful career. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Mountain Advocate, Jan. 6, 2011]

(By Eddie Arnold)

JUST CALL HER 'LIEUTENANT'

When Anna Dixon graduated from Barbourville High School in 1998, she had dreams of being a marine biologist. However, with the nearest ocean hundreds of miles away, pursuing such a career seemed even unlikely.

Little did she know that working in and around oceans is something that she would eventually do—not as a marine biologist but as a member of the United States Coast Guard.

Even more ironic is that she never even considered the military as a young girl. "I never even thought about it," she said.

After one year at the University of Kentucky as a student of architecture, she chose to take advantage of an exchange program and moved to South Carolina, where she graduated from the Coastal Carolina College in Myrtle Beach with a B.S. degree in marine science.

"There are very few jobs for marine biologists that don't have an advanced degree," she said. It was then that her best friend's husband, who was in the Army, suggested that she consider the Coast Guard. "I didn't even know what that was, I thought they were water cops."

However, the suggestion planted a seed in Dixon's mind. "At first it was a joke. But the

more I joked about it, the more I thought maybe it's not that bad of an idea," she said. After graduation and while living in Savannah, Dixon worked at an environmental testing lab. "It was like real chemistry, but I could tell that was what I would be doing forever if I didn't make a change and go out on a limb. So I went and talked with a recruiter," she said, adding that she made the decision to enlist. "It sounded like a really good idea."

Dixon graduated from basic training at Cape May, New Jersey at the top of her class in August 2004. After going on to Boatswain's Mate "A" School training, she was assigned to the Coast Guard Station Los Angeles/Long Beach where she remained from December 2004 to March 2006.

"I worked really hard and got qualified as quickly as I could and got recommended to go to Officer Candidate School, where she graduated third in her class."

From there, she went to a ship—the Coast Guard Cutter Spencer out of Boston, Massachusetts.

"I never wanted to do ship life," she said. "But I thought if I didn't do it then, I would never get the chance to do it."

During her two years aboard ship, they patrolled from the northeast coast off Canada all the way down to the Caribbean, including doing migrant patrols.

Even though Dixon said she learned a lot on that assignment, she longed to get her feet back on dry land. When she applied for a new assignment, she noticed that Key West was available. "I thought to myself there's no way I'm going to get that. There will be thirty other people in line for that. When I learned that I had got it, I was off the coast of Canada. It was like eight degrees," she said. "At three o'clock in the morning I got an email saying I was going to Key West."

Being a female presented its own set of challenges for Dixon. "During my whole time in the Coast Guard it has been a challenge no matter where I go. But within a month, they find out that I am for real. But I've never had any real problems," she said.

Since being assigned at Key West through the present, Dixon's job as Chief of Contingency Preparedness has posed challenges also.

In April of this year she was assigned the duties of public information officer for the Florida Keys response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

"Since I've been doing that it has been a full-time thing," she said. "But I am still the chief of planning."

Dixon was hand-selected to be the Lead Advance Officer and Deputy Press Secretary for National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen (USCG-Ret.), a job she held from July through October of this year.

During her time in the post, she coordinated daily national-level press conferences for Allen and other high-ranking national leaders including Dr. Lane Lubchenco, Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Although she has enjoyed her duty assignments so far, Dixon said she is looking forward to the next level in her career.

"I have been selected by a board of Coast Guard officers to attend a fully-funded graduate program to study communications and public relations, with a follow-on tour as a Public Affairs Officer for an entire multistate Coast Guard district," she said.

Dixon, who was recently promoted to the rank of lieutenant, said she has enjoyed her six plus years in the Coast Guard. "I didn't know what to expect when I went in but I definitely didn't expect to live in eight states and have all these different experiences. It has been unbelievable," she said, adding that her family and friends are really proud of me.

"My friends laugh because they say 'Anna is in charge of things?' They don't see me as Lt. Dixon, they just see me as Anna. But they are all super proud of me."

Over the holidays, she came home to spend some time with her family, including her parents Katy and Michael Jones of Corbin, Bill and Kay Dixon of Barbourville, and brothers John W. Dixon and Matthew Dixon.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, 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.)

BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012—PM 5

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975 as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on Appropriations; and the Budget:

To the Congress of the United States:

America is emerging from the worst recession in generations. In 2010, an economy that had been shrinking began to grow again. After nearly 2 years of job losses, America's businesses added more than one million jobs. Our capital and credit markets are functioning and strong. Manufacturing is coming back. And after teetering on the brink of liquidation just 2 years ago, America's auto industry is posting healthy gains and returning money to the taxpayers who helped it through a period of turmoil. The determination and resilience of the American people and the tough choices we made over the past 2 years helped to pull our economy back from the brink of a second Great Depression.

Two years after those dark days, the stock market is booming. Corporations are posting record profits. Momentum is building. Yet, in America, we have always had a broader measure of economic health. We believe in a country where everyone who is willing to work for it has the opportunity to get ahead; where the small businessperson with a dream or entrepreneur with a great new idea has their best chance to make them a reality; where any child can go as far as their talent and tenacity will take them. That is the genius of America. That spirit is what has built the greatest prosperity the world has ever known.

So even as recovery begins to take hold, we have more work to do to live up to our promise by repairing the damage this brutal recession has inflicted on our people, generating millions of new jobs, and seizing the economic opportunities of this competitive, new century.

These must be the priorities as we put together our Budget for the coming year. The fiscal realities we face require hard choices. A decade of deficits, compounded by the effects of the recession and the steps we had to take to break it, as well as the chronic failure to confront difficult decisions, has put us on an unsustainable course. That's why my Budget lays out a path for how we can pay down these debts and free the American economy from their burden.

But in an increasingly competitive world in which jobs and businesses are mobile, we also have a responsibility to invest in those things that are absolutely critical to preparing our people and our Nation for the economic competition of our time.

We do this by investing in and reforming education and job training so that all Americans have the skills necessary to compete in the global economy. We do this by encouraging American innovation and investing in research and development—especially in the job-creating industries of tomorrow such as clean energy. We do this by rebuilding America's infrastructure so that U.S. companies can ship their products and ideas from every corner in America to anywhere in the world. And finally, we do this by coming together as Americans, not Democrats or Republicans, to make the tough choices that get America's fiscal house in order, investing in what works, cutting what doesn't, and changing the way business is done in Washington.

Growing the economy and spurring job creation by America's businesses, large and small, is my top priority. That's why, over the course of the last year, I pushed for additional measures to jump-start our economic recovery: tax credits for businesses that hire unemployed workers; assistance to States to prevent the layoffs of teachers; and tax cuts and expanded access to credit for small businesses. At the end of the year, I signed into law a measure that provided tax cuts for 159 million workers saving the typical worker \$1,000 per year. And the same law extended important tax credits to help families make ends meet and afford to send their kids to college. This bipartisan tax cut plan also gave businesses two powerful incentives to invest and create jobs: 100 percent expensing on the purchase of equipment and an extension of the research and experimentation tax credit.

Moreover, my Administration has moved aggressively to open markets abroad and boost exports of American made goods and services, signing a new trade agreement with South Korea, the twelfth-largest economy in the world.

And last month, I laid out a balanced approach to regulation that is pragmatic, driven by data, and that will protect the health and well-being of the American people and help lay the groundwork for economic growth and job creation.

These steps will help the economy this year. But it is also essential that we take stock and look to the future—to what kind of America we want to see emerge from this crisis and take shape for the generations of Americans to come. This Budget lays out our roadmap not just for how we should invest in our economy next year, but how we should start preparing our Nation to grow, create good jobs, and compete in the world economy in the years ahead.

At its heart is a recognition that we live in a world fundamentally different than the one of previous generations. Revolutions in communication and technology have made businesses mobile and commerce global. Today, a company can set up shop, hire workers, and sell their products wherever there is an Internet connection. It is a transformation that has touched off a fierce competition among nations for the jobs and industries of the future.

The winners of this competition will be the countries that have the most skilled and educated workers; a serious commitment to research and technology; and access to quality infrastructure like roads and airports, high-speed rail, and high-speed Internet. These are the seeds of economic growth in the 21st century. Where they are planted, the most jobs and businesses will take root.

In the last century, America's economic leadership in the world went unchallenged. Now, it is up to us to make sure that we maintain that leadership in this century. At this moment, the most important contest we face as a Nation is not between Democrats and Republicans or liberals and conservatives. It's between America and our economic competitors around the world.

There is no doubt in my mind that we can win this competition. The United States is home to the world's best universities and research facilities, the most brilliant scientists, the brightest minds, and some of the hardest-working, most entrepreneurial people on Earth. But our leadership is not guaranteed unless we redouble our efforts in the race for the future.

In a generation, we've fallen from first place to ninth place in the proportion of our young people with college degrees. We lag behind other nations in the quality of our math and science education. The roads and bridges that connect the corners of our country and made our economy grow by leaps and bounds after World War II are aging and in need of repair. Our rail and air traffic systems are in need of modernization, and our mobile networks and high-speed Internet access have not kept pace with some of our rivals,