

Berea. The Board of Trustees is grateful to Larry and Nancy for their extraordinary service to the College."

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this Monday, May 28, is Memorial Day. It is a day for all Americans to honor the brave men and women in uniform who have served and defended our Nation—especially those who sacrificed their very lives for this sacred duty.

It is only right that we set aside this day to remember those who have given us so much. Freedom as we know it in America could not exist without their heroism.

On Memorial Day, we honor servicemembers who laid down their lives fighting under the command of GEN George Washington, to those who have perished in Afghanistan and Iraq. What a proud legacy of fighting for freedom our country has. I am honored to live in a nation that boasts the bravest warriors in the world.

I am also honored to serve my fellow Kentuckians, who understand the importance of this day more, I think, than most. Kentucky has a proud tradition of military service that is upheld today by the many Armed Forces members at our State's military bases, the members of the Kentucky National Guard, our reservists, and Kentuckians fighting around the world. Since September 11, 2001, 107 Kentucky servicemembers have fallen while fighting for their country.

I have been honored to meet many of the family members of these soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who did not return home. I have let them know that their loved ones will not be forgotten. Memorial Day is a chance to make sure that message is heard loud and clear across America.

I want to share with my colleagues a special story about one soldier in particular from Kentucky. SGT Felipe Pereira of the 101st Airborne Division, based out of Fort Campbell, KY, recently was awarded the Nation's second highest military honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, for his acts of bravery in battle.

Sergeant Pereira is the first soldier from the 101st Airborne to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross since the Vietnam war. At a ceremony this April at Fort Campbell, Chief of Staff of the Army GEN Ray Odierno presented Sergeant Pereira with the venerated military decoration.

According to the award citation, on November 1, 2010, in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, a squad of soldiers that included Sergeant Pereira was on dismounted patrol when an improvised explosive device went off, killing two of Sergeant Pereira's comrades and wounding Sergeant Pereira with shrapnel that caused his lung to begin to collapse. As an enemy ambush began to unfold, "with little regard for his own safety or care" Sergeant Pereira drove an all-terrain vehicle into enemy fire to help evacuate wounded soldiers.

After moving the first set of casualties, the sergeant went back into the line of fire once more to help others. Sergeant Pereira is credited with "saving the lives of two of his fellow soldiers while risking his own [on] multiple occasions. Only after all the wounded soldiers had been evacuated and were receiving medical care did he accept treatment himself."

Mr. President, Sergeant Pereira's selfless actions demand our admiration and respect. What is more, so does his selfless attitude about his bravery on that fateful day.

"Every time I have the opportunity, I always say remember those that gave the ultimate sacrifice," said Sergeant Pereira in an article published by the Fort Campbell Courier. "I still get to come back and enjoy barbecues with my family and their love and everything. Those guys, they really gave it all. Those are truly the heroes. Just remember those guys. I think even on a happy occasion like this, I think we need to celebrate their life and their sacrifice."

I can't improve on those words. Sergeant Pereira has captured the meaning of Memorial Day right there, in those words of wisdom.

So I hope this Memorial Day, people will heed the advice of SGT Felipe Pereira. The men and women who "really gave it all" are truly the heroes, and this Monday is their day to receive our admiration and our respect. I know my friends in Kentucky and people across America will not forget that.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, Memorial Day is a time to pay tribute to those who have given "the last full measure of devotion" in the service of our great country. I believe this Memorial Day is especially significant as we pause to reflect on some of the events of the past year and acknowledge the passing of the last surviving veteran of World War I, the end the Iraq War, and a renewed commitment to wind down our engagement in Afghanistan by 2014.

Since the first colonial troops took up arms in the fight for our independence in 1775, more than 1.1 million American soldiers, sailors, and airmen have died in the wars and conflicts fought to defend our Nation, our freedom, and our ideals. In the past 10 years, we have lost over 6,400 brave Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan. The death of each one of these servicemen and women represents not only a tragic loss to their loved ones, but to their community, and to our Nation.

The American tradition of Memorial Day—originally known as Decoration Day—has its roots in local springtime tributes that were held in the North and the South during and immediately after the Civil War and following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865. On May 1, 1865, nearly 10,000 freedmen, teachers, preachers, missionaries, and Union troops properly landscaped and covered with flowers the unmarked graves of some 250 or more Union prisoners of

war who had died in captivity at the Charleston Race Course, a site now known as Hampton Park. On April 26, 1866, grieving mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters in Columbus, MS placed flowers on the graves of Confederate soldiers who had died in the Battle of Shiloh. While they grieved for their own lost loved ones, they saw that nearby graves of the Union soldiers were neglected, so they placed flowers on these graves as well. On May 5, 1866, an official commemoration was held in Waterloo, NY to honor local veterans of the Civil War. Businesses were closed and flags were flown at half-mast to honor the dead. On May 5, 1868, MG John A. Logan, who headed the Grand Army of the Republic, GAR, which was an organization of Union veterans, declared that May 30 of each year should be Decoration Day, a time for the Nation to festoon the graves of Union and Confederate war dead with flowers. Logan said, "We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. . . . Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic." The first large observance was held that same year at Arlington National Cemetery. In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon Johnson declared that Waterloo is the official birthplace of Memorial Day but it is apparent that many communities and people across America can claim some of the credit.

Shortly after World War I, Decoration Day ceremonies were no longer limited to honoring those who had died in the Civil War. Rather, the commemoration was altered to embrace the men and women who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Congress passed legislation to make Memorial Day a national holiday and to fix its date as the last Monday in May. In December 2000, Congress passed "The National Moment of Remembrance Act" (Public Law 106-579, which encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3:00 PM local time on Memorial Day for 1 minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to our Nation.

While the Memorial Day we will celebrate this Monday is approaching the sesquicentennial of its birth, the tradition of honoring those who have fallen in war is probably as old—or nearly as old—as human history itself. Over 2,400 years ago—in 431 B.C.E.—Pericles paid tribute to the Athenian soldiers who had fallen in battle at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, saying

For this offering of their lives made in common by them all they each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulchre, not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall call for its commemoration. For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb;

and in lands far from their own, where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten with no tablet to preserve it, except that of the heart.

This Memorial Day, in the spirit of compassion and empathy shown by the Confederate widows who placed flowers on the graves of Union soldiers in Columbus, MS nearly 150 years ago, I would like to mention some facts about those fallen servicemen and women we too often neglect to consider. According to a recent study by the Army, suicides among U.S. servicemembers increased 80 percent from 2004 to 2008. The study confirmed that there is an increased risk of suicide among those who experience mental health disorder diagnosis associated with the stress of combat. Protracted military operations requiring multiple deployments over the past decade have made mental health disorders the signature wounds for our military members returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. A comprehensive study by RAND found that approximately 18.5 percent of those servicemen and women returning from deployment reported symptoms consistent with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, or depression. Up to 30 percent of troops returning home from combat develop serious mental health problems within 3 to 4 months. And since mental health issues often are not immediately addressed while our servicemen and women are on active duty, or because of the lasting traumas of war, we see even higher numbers of mental illness diagnosis among our veterans. According to a Government Accountability Office report, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, data “show that from fiscal year 2004 through fiscal year 2008, the number of unique veterans receiving treatment for PTSD increased by 60 percent from over 274,000 to over 442,000.”

I believe that the best way we can truly honor those who have sacrificed themselves upon the altar of freedom is not just to fulfill our solemn obligation to care for their widows and orphans. More than that, we must care for their brothers and sisters in arms who have also borne the battle, and who have returned to us wounded, ill and injured, and for the family members and other individuals who selflessly care for them. These soldiers and sailors and airmen and their caregivers also deserve our gratitude, our accolades, our compassion—and our support. Therefore, I commend the VA Secretary Shinseki's recent decision to hire an additional 1,900 mental health staff at VA facilities to ensure greater care for our servicemembers suffering from the wounds of war, both physical and emotional.

It is not just about providing adequate resources, however. Having an adequate number of mental health professionals is just one component of ensuring access to care. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates cor-

rectly acknowledged that the greatest obstacle to servicemembers receiving necessary mental health treatment is the stigma too often associated with seeking help for their psychological injuries. I frequently hear from servicemembers who believe that seeking mental health services will hurt their military and post-military careers. We must overcome these real and perceived barriers to care by changing the policies that govern how we provide mental health care to our active duty military members, reservists, and veterans. Those who suffer in silence will seek treatment only when they are assured they can truly seek such treatment and speak about their problems freely and off-the-record. Meanwhile, as more and more go untreated, we will continue to see a rise in suicides and other tragic incidents among our military members and veterans—a preventable epidemic, which is heaping tragedy upon tragedy.

During this holiday weekend and on Monday in particular we will see many American flags and flowers adorning the graves of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. I will remember in particular the 114 Marylanders who have been killed in our most recent conflicts as I remind myself that our freedom is not free. And I will remind myself that the best way to honor their ultimate sacrifice is to ensure that we are unwavering in our resolve not only to care for their widows and orphans, but also for those who do return to us wounded, ill, and injured—including those whose injuries are emotional. Let us reaffirm our commitment to support all of these individuals and their families and other caregivers this Memorial Day, and every Memorial Day hereafter.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the importance of Memorial Day, a day that means so much to me and those I represent in Alaska. For so many of us, it means sunlight nearly all day, the unofficial beginning of summer, and enjoying the great outdoors.

But let us never forget the deep, true meaning of Memorial Day. It means the payment of respect, memories, time and energy to the sacrifices of men and women who have defended the rights and privileges we enjoy today.

Memorial Day first began nearly 100 years before Alaskan statehood, but even in our territorial days we had Alaskans fighting on our own soil against foreign enemies—one of the few States that can say such a thing. It is because of those early successes—and the success of Alaskans from then to those deployed today—that we salute our flag, speak our mind and continue to be a global leader.

As many Alaskans know first-hand, those successes often came at the ultimate price. On Memorial Day we make a small attempt to repay them with our support, prayers and appreciation. I ask that all Alaskans and Americans join me in devoting a few minutes of

our time in reflection as a small tribute to those who have given their lives for the cause of freedom.

Although we may not be able to fully measure the cost of our heroes' sacrifice, we can commit ourselves to preserving their memory. So on Memorial Day 2012, I ask that we honor our fallen heroes, comfort the loved ones of those we lost, and carry on our lives in a manner that is worthy of their sacrifice. May God continue to bless our great Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to the men and women of our Nation who have given their lives for the cause of freedom and to honor those who are still with us today. On this Memorial Day weekend, let us stand together as Americans to pay our respects and mourn the loss of those brave soldiers who fought in defense of our liberty. As we gather across the Nation, we need to remember the invaluable sacrifices of our troops and their families are debts that can never fully be repaid.

Every soldier whose life is taken in the line of duty is a great loss to our Nation. Lives have been sadly shortened, and we all feel an absence. We may never be able to measure the loss, but we can take solace in knowing that their lives served to inspire, defend freedom, and preserve life. Today, we commemorate the brave men and women in uniform who gave their lives while serving our country.

We must also remember the members of our Armed Forces who are currently in harm's way. In this trying time in America's history, our soldiers have accepted the call of duty, knowing that the road ahead is dangerous and full of hardship. Their courage and resiliency are what make our military the best in the world. Our servicemembers face perilous situations in order to protect Americans from harm, and I am so grateful for all they do. Their commitment of service and self-sacrifice is what we admire, appreciate, and respect. As we continue withdrawing some of our combat forces, we pray for their safe return.

As someone whose father is a disabled veteran and whose brother served overseas, I understand firsthand the struggles of our servicemembers and the significant sacrifices made by their families. The families of our military men and women also make tremendous sacrifices for our country and for the safety of our Nation. Each and every deployment causes great stress and a burden of separation that every member of these families experience. They have loved ones far away from home and are sacrificing their own well-being for the protection of our country. We must remember that these families serve as the backbone for the men and women who wear the uniform of our armed services, and our Nation owes them a debt of great gratitude.

Today, we honor those who have given their life in service to their country. We will never forget our soldiers

who fought for a better America and served our country with honor. I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring our Nation's heroes who have given the ultimate sacrifice to make sure that our country remains safe and free.

RECOGNIZING THE S.S. "BADGER"

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, recently Chicagoans were asked in a poll what asset of their great city they valued most. By a large margin, they chose Lake Michigan.

Lake Michigan is the primary source of drinking water for more than 10 million people—not just in my home State of Illinois but also in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan.

The lake is also part of the \$7 billion per year Great Lakes fishing industry. Millions of people visit Lake Michigan for its recreational opportunities like swimming, kayaking, boating, or just taking a walk along the beach. It is a beautiful lake.

Unfortunately, we are faced with a threat to the health of our Great Lake.

This week, on Thursday, May 24, the coal-fired car-ferry S.S. *Badger* will begin its 60th year sailing on Lake Michigan.

Many people have fond memories of the *Badger*, steaming from its homeport of Ludington, MI, to Manitowoc, WI, every summer. But they need to be reminded of this: It is the last coal-fired ferry in the United States, and every year it dumps another 500 tons of coal ash into Lake Michigan. Think about that for a moment—500 tons of coal ash every year since the 1950s. What must the bottom of the lake look like?

The owner of the *Badger* insists that the coal ash is basically just sand, but we know better. Scientists are concerned about coal ash because it contains chemicals like arsenic, lead, and mercury.

Once in the lake, these chemicals enter the food chain through the water we drink and the fish we eat. Then they accumulate in our bodies and can cause cancer and neurological damage. In fact, we already are facing problems from mercury contamination of the fish that are part of our food supply. How can we continue to accept behavior that will just make this problem worse?

If the *Badger's* owners had only recently found that dumping coal was a problem, it might be OK to cut them some slack. But the *Badger's* owners have a long history of avoiding the steps needed to clean up their act.

Most other vessels on the Great Lakes converted from coal to diesel fuel long ago but not the *Badger*.

In 2008, conversion to a new fuel was way overdue. But a waiver was placed into EPA's vessel general permit to allow the *Badger* to continue dumping coal ash through 2012. I think that was 5 years too many of toxic dumping. But to make matters worse, the *Badger's*

owners still have not made a reasonable effort to stop dumping coal ash into the lake. Instead, they are doing everything they can to avoid switching to a new fuel.

Last fall, the *Badger* was nominated to be a national historic landmark, and an amendment was added to House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act to exempt all vessels of historic significance from environmental regulation.

The national historic landmark designation was created to commemorate properties that have special significance in American history. The designation has been appropriately used to protect sites including the home of President Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, IL, and the S.S. *Milwaukee Clipper*, a retired steamship in Muskegon, MI. The national historic landmark designation was never intended to allow polluters to avoid complying with Federal regulations that protect our health and the environment.

I have urged Interior Secretary Salazar to oppose the designation of the *Badger* as a national historic landmark. I also ask my fellow Senators to join me in opposing language in the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act that would exempt "vessels of historic significance" from EPA regulation.

After I came out in opposition to this strategy, the *Badger's* owner came to Washington to talk to me.

He mentioned that he was applying for an EPA permit to continue dumping coal ash while he pursues conversion of the *Badger* to run on liquefied natural gas. He would like to make the *Badger* the greenest vessel on the Great Lakes. That would be terrific, but it just isn't a realistic option right now. Today, there are few suppliers of liquefied natural gas. There are no shipyards in the United States qualified to convert passenger vessels to run on liquefied natural gas. And it would take close to \$50 million just to develop the infrastructure needed to fuel the *Badger* at the dock.

One day, all the boats on the Great Lakes might be powered by natural gas. But it isn't a realistic plan for the *Badger* to stop dumping coal ash. It is just another delaying tactic, when the *Badger's* owners were given a deadline 5 years ago.

The *Badger* has blatantly avoided complying with current EPA regulations. We cannot reward the owners for their negligence with permanent statutory protection from EPA regulation.

This is more than a car ferry with a venerable tradition. This is a vessel that generates and dumps 4 tons of coal ash laced with mercury, lead, and arsenic into Lake Michigan every day. This Great Lake cannot take any more toxic dumping, no matter how historic or quaint the source may be.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I rise today to offer a Memorial Day tribute

to the brave men and women who have lost their lives protecting the safety and security of our citizens and American interests around the world.

Today, there are media reports about the American people becoming "war weary" after more than a decade of combat activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. Many lives and great expense have been marshaled since the 9/11 attacks, but I would submit that Americans are unfaltering in their appreciation for the honor, courage and dedication shown by our servicemen and women. This is especially the case for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives for their country.

This Memorial Day, I will take time to honor our brave fallen warriors, including the more than 70 military personnel from Mississippi who have died in the service of our Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world over the past decade.

For the RECORD, I offer the names of these brave Mississippians who have fallen since the Nation commemorated Memorial Day last year. They are:

Sgt. Christopher R. Bell, 21, of Golden, who died June 4, 2011.

Petty Officer Stacy O. Johnson, 35, of Rolling Fork, who died July 18, 2011.

LCpl. Edward J. Dycus, 22, of Greenville, who died Feb. 1, 2012.

SFC Billy E. Sutton, 42, of Tupelo, who died Feb. 7, 2012.

MSG Scott E. Pruitt, 38, of Gautier, who died April 28, 2012.

SSG Carlous Perry, 30, of West Point, who died April 30, 2012.

I am confident that the people of my State will join the national commemoration to remember these men and the thousands of Mississippians, who over the course of this great nation's history, have courageously served and sacrificed their lives in that service. We will also recall their families and their profound loss. On this day of remembrance, we salute those sacrifices and express our gratitude for their brave service.

In these challenging times, we should also reaffirm our commitment to the servicemen and women who today put themselves in danger on our behalf. We must remain resolved to ensure that those who join our Armed Forces are the best equipped and best trained in the world, and that we meet our obligations to those who have served and sacrificed in the defense of our nation.

Let me close by expressing my personal gratitude to all our fallen heroes, and communicating my sincere appreciation to those Mississippians and Americans who answer the call to arms and find themselves in harm's way.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent during today's votes on the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act due to my daughter's high school graduation. I supported this bipartisan legislation earlier this year when it was before the Senate Health, Education,