

At College High School in Valley City, his friends called him Willie. He participated in journalism, printing, basketball, football, and intramural sports.

Prior to his Army service, Willis served in the Air Force and in the Valley City Police Department.

Three weeks after arriving in Vietnam, Willis was shot, and he died a few days after because of that injury. He was awarded six medals in recognition for his actions while serving in Vietnam.

The Valley City AMVETS Post 3 and the Auxiliary are named after Willis in honor of his service and sacrifice to his country.

I want to thank Woody Wendt, a charter member of the Willis Weber AMVETS Post, Sarah Lerud, and Wes Anderson—all of Valley City—for sharing these details of Willis' life.

EDWARD ALEC WERMAN

Edward Alec Werman was from Hansel and was born April 11, 1938. He served with the Green Berets in the Army's Special Forces. Edward was 33 years old when he died on June 1, 1971.

In addition to his parents and five siblings, he left behind his wife Nancy, his daughter Robin, and his son Alec.

His sister Linda remembers Edward as a hard worker who loved his children. His daughter Robin loved traveling as a child with her family to places such as Myrtle Beach and Washington, DC.

Edward became a captain in the Army after attending West Point. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam and died when the helicopter he was in crashed and burned.

STEVE ESCALLIER

Steve Escallier enlisted while living in Portal and was born February 13, 1950. He served in the Army's 1st Cavalry Division. Steve died on October 31, 1969. He was 19 years old.

Steve's siblings remember him as an exceptional brother with good looks and long eyelashes. He held closely the Native American values of truth, life, family, and God. Steve was a firm believer in the United States and the obligation to help those who asked, so he chose to enlist. He had plans to become a teacher after completing his service.

Steve's sister Elyse believes the whole town where they lived in California mourned Steve's death. It took the family years after his death to be able to say "Vietnam" and even longer to be able to say Steve's name.

STEVEN HANSON

Steven Hanson spent his early childhood in Aneta and was born October 27, 1949. He served in the Army's 101st Airborne Division. Steve died on September 24, 1971. He was 21 years old.

His family and friends called him Steve. While growing up, Steven's father Gordon served as a Lutheran pastor in the small town of Dazey, and the family traveled all over the world with his father's work as an Army chaplain.

Steven's younger brother by 10 years, David, tells of a letter the family re-

ceived from a fellow soldier whose life Steven saved the day he died.

The letter described Steven as the pilot of his helicopter crew of four soldiers. Steven's helicopter was shot down, but he was able to guide it to a semicontrolled crash landing. A fellow pilot of Steven's also had survived a recent crash, and Steven was heard joking on the radio to tell so-and-so that he now has safely landed one, too.

One of his crew members was pinned under the helicopter and injured, so Steven helped to free him and called the evacuation helicopter. Later, a second chopper came and dropped down the cable to take Steven and his crewman to safety, but they were drawing fire, and the cable gave way. Steven fell 100 feet to his death.

In addition to his parents and siblings, Steven left behind a wife and son.

LEON COX

Leon Cox was from Jamestown and was born May 4, 1934. He enlisted in the Army's 1st Infantry Division. Leon was 35 years old when he died on May 17, 1969.

Leon, or "Fuzzy," as he was affectionately called by his family, was the seventh of 12 children. Leon grew up in a family dedicated to serving our country. His father served in World War I; two brothers, John and Alex, served in World War II; and two other brothers, Donnie and Jim, served in Korea.

Leon made a career out of his military service. During his senior year of high school, he joined the National Guard and was deployed to Korea. After returning from his deployment, he joined the Army and was stationed in Germany, where he and his wife adopted a young girl named Nicolette.

Leon's family remembers him as a proud man who believed in his country.

GUNDER GUNDERSON

Gunder Gunderson was from Walhalla and was born on July 25, 1941. He served in the Army's 1st Cavalry Division. Gunder was 24 years old when he died on November 23, 1965.

His fellow platoon soldier, Paul Guglietta, says that it was an honor to serve in the same platoon as Sergeant Gunderson. Paul remembers Gunder as being dedicated, hard-working, and very intelligent. He always drove himself to improve on everything he did. Paul was injured at the same time Gunder was killed and says that Gunder was a brave and courageous soldier.

ROY WAGNER

Roy Wagner was from Bismarck and was born February 23, 1947. He served in the Army's 1st Infantry Division. Roy died October 2, 1967, at the age of 20.

When Roy's brother Toby was drafted, Roy decided to enlist. When the draft board met the brothers together, they decided that Toby should go home because he had a wife and kids. Roy was more than happy to take Toby's place.

While in Vietnam, Roy met a young Vietnamese boy whose parents had been killed in the conflict. It was Roy's intention to adopt the boy once he married his fiancee while on leave, but Roy was killed before he could marry his sweetheart or adopt the boy.

The day he died, Roy was in the field with five other soldiers. The group was led into a tunnel and ambushed. Three of the men were shot, and Roy knew that he needed to buy them some time. He stood at the front of the group shooting at the enemy until all of the other men got out. He took seven bullets, saved all five men, and lost his life that day. All five men later contacted the family to tell them of Roy's self-sacrifice.

The AMVETS post in Bismarck is named after Roy to honor his service and his sacrifice.

I wish to thank Bismarck High School students Kyra Wetzel and Hunter Lauer for sharing their research about Roy Wagner with us.

These are just a few of the brave men who served our country in Vietnam. As we are now experiencing the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war, commemorated by an official proclamation by the President, I think it is important that we honor those who were killed in action and that we share their stories with the next generation of North Dakotans, the next generation of Americans, so they can truly appreciate the sacrifice of those who served us in the U.S. military and certainly the sacrifice which gave the last great measure of their lives.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FREEDOM FOR BOB LEVINSON

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, at 5:30 p.m. today, we are going to vote on S. Con. Res. 16, which calls on the Government of Iran to release Americans who are being held. It also calls on the government to cooperate in finding, locating, and ultimately releasing Bob Levinson.

Robert Levinson, a retired FBI agent, while visiting the tourist Island of Kish in the Persian Gulf, which is a part of Iran, suddenly disappeared in 2007. It has been 8 years since his disappearance, which occurred on March 9, 2007. Since Bob is a part of this resolution, this is just another of a continuing conversation this Senator from Florida has had over the course of the last 8 years. It is unbelievable that it has been 8 years.

It wasn't until 2010—3½ years after his disappearance—that the Levinson

family received a proof-of-life video. Then, 1 year later, they received photographs of Bob, in April of 2011. Since then, nothing.

Now, if the Government of Iran really wanted to help, they could. It may be that one part of the Iranian Government is keeping it from other parts. It could be the military—or the special part of the military, the Quds Force—knows, and it may be that the Foreign Minister and the President of Iran do not have the facts. But there is somebody in Iran who can produce the facts, if he wanted to, and that is the Supreme Leader.

Now, in this era of intense negotiations over preventing Iran from having a nuclear weapon and preventing them from the ability to develop a nuclear weapon any time in the next 10 years without us at least getting 1 year's advance notice so we can take countermeasures; in this time of intense discussions with Iran—of course, it is constantly brought up by our negotiating team, including Secretary of State Kerry, but it is rather inexcusable that the only answer Iran has is, We don't know anything about Bob Levinson.

This is, of course, personal to the FBI community because the hostage is one of their retired agents. It is personal to us in Florida as well. Bob left behind a wife, seven children, and four grandchildren. Christine Levinson lives in Florida. A number of the FBI agents who have tried to help her over the course of the years also live in Florida. We are hopefully and prayerfully expectant that if it is a successfully concluded negotiation to prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapon, that the Government of Iran will immediately release all Americans who are in jail whom we know about and likewise will make the effort to find Bob and bring him home to his wife and seven children. That is what humanity would absolutely require.

So at this particular time—8 years plus into the process—we make this plea for former FBI agent Bob Levinson.

Madam President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, spring in Washington, DC, is one of the most beautiful times of the year, as it is in Connecticut and around the country. We have endured a tough winter in the Northeast—a lot of snow and a lot of cold. And now a lot of potholes are all around the country. Spring means potholes, which are endemic not only to the Northeast but to our roads

all around America. Potholes are just the latest reminder of infrastructure challenges facing our Nation. That is one reason why this week is, in fact, Infrastructure Week, a time when we should be focusing on rail and roads, the decaying and aging infrastructure that bedevils and hobbles our Nation as we seek to compete globally. And our businesses in Connecticut seek to compete nationally as well as globally.

This time of year is also the beginning of the construction season, especially in the colder regions of the country, such as the Northeast and Iowa, Nebraska, and the Midwest.

In Connecticut, construction workers are ready to go, ready to take advantage of this chance to address our aging and decaying transportation assets.

I know that trade is on our agenda this week. I urge and implore that trade be set aside, that the trade bill be delayed—not forever, by any means. As the leader of our caucus has urged—our leader HARRY REID has implored that we focus on infrastructure. We face a deadline. May marks the last month of MAP-21, the law governing surface transportation funding. On May 31—just 20 days from now—the authorization governing our highway trust fund will expire. That is right. There is a highway cliff that we are just days away from going over. This Nation will go over that cliff unless we act, and now is the moment. Now is the time. Now is our opportunity, and it is an opportunity that will not excuse us from acting.

The bill covers more than just funding. It is crucial to keeping our roadways safe. Now, 2014 was a record year for auto recalls, auto problems, and issues. So part of what needs to be done in addressing the expiration of MAP-21 is to make safety a priority. But it cannot be achieved if we don't address the fundamental challenges of our aging infrastructure.

Fundamental reforms are needed at the NHTSA and other safety watchdogs to make sure our constituents are safe. So one would think now would be the time to discuss legislation that would fix our streets and stop potholes from imperiling our drivers and put construction workers back on the job, providing a lifeline to nearly 2 million Americans who have jobs directly tied to the transportation sector.

One would think we would want to cut down on our unemployment. In the construction sector, joblessness remains at a 10-percent level. You would think that now is the time to be advancing a multiyear, long-term bill that will provide certainty to States and municipalities so they can finalize planning for long-term projects. You would think that now is the time to take a hard look at our safety oversight agencies—NHTSA, the FRA, the Federal Highway Administration—and to make reforms and increase the tools that they have in fines and penalties they can exact to protect all who rely on our transportation network.

Unfortunately, the approach of this Congress is going to be, as engineers say, patch and pray. Patch the potholes, patch the roads, patch the railroads—even when the tracks are cracked, even when ballasts are failing. Patch the bridges. Patch and pray. We are about to become a nation of patch and pray when it comes to decaying, deficient roads, bridges, railroads, and all the vital nuts and bolts, literally, that transport our Nation.

How ironic it is at this moment—when it is spring, when the construction industry is about to rely on the opportunities it has to put people back to work, and when many of us in this Chamber and others at school commencements will be talking about the big ideas, the big challenges, the big dreams and hopes that our graduates have for the future—that we are thinking small. We are thinking about patching—patching our highway transit fund for months, maybe until the end of the year. A nation that patches and prays cannot be exceptional, cannot be a great nation when it comes to shortchanging investments in the vital facilities, in the nuts and bolts, in the roads and bridges that make it a national competitor.

This kind of short-term extension of a highway and transit system fails to match the challenges that our Nation faces. We spend less and invest less as a percentage of our gross domestic product than many other industrialized nations. Europe and China spend far more as a percentage of their gross domestic product than we do.

So I call on the leadership, my good friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle, to make infrastructure our priority for this week, as it should be for this decade. Within this decade, according to some projections, one in four of our bridges will be 65 years or older, making them even more prone to decay and disrepair.

The consequences are real and costly. Bridges collapse, such as the 50-year old Skagit River Bridge in Washington. The bridge collapsed sending cars into the river below. That wasn't a remote bridge. It was over Interstate 5, a major artery on the west coast. Of course, we all remember the 2007 bridge collapse in Minneapolis. We remember the Mianus River Bridge collapse in Connecticut, the Bridgeport derailment due to decaying and cracking tracks that were improperly repaired. We remember where lives were lost because of a derailment and the failure to invest in train communication and signaling that could have prevented that tragedy. We remember the railroad grade crossings where insufficient investment in modern technology causes deaths all around the country—hundreds of them every year—not to mention billions of dollars due to these collisions, derailments, crashes on the roads, costing lives and imperiling our Nation's future.

A short-term patch robs our States and municipalities of the certainty