

rural veterans access to the care they need in their communities. Before he became VA Secretary, I had the opportunity to join Dr. David Shulkin on a visit to both the Caribou CBOC and Cary Medical Center, where he praised the innovative work being done being done to provide veterans with top quality healthcare close to where they live. Veterans in Aroostook County and throughout America are grateful for Cary's leadership.

Our State has long history as a leader in working to expand and improve veterans' access to quality healthcare. One year ago, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the very first national hospital for veterans: Togus, in Maine, which opened its doors in November of 1866. In 2014, we celebrated the opening of the women's clinic at Togus in recognition of the fact that more and more women serve our country in uniform.

I am determined to continue those early efforts on behalf of our rural veterans. The recent enactment of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017, which I cosponsored with my Maine colleague Senator ANGUS KING, is an important step toward keeping this obligation to our veterans, both urban and rural. As well as providing additional funding for healthcare access in the community, the legislation authorizes 28 leases for VA facilities across the country, including a much-needed CBOC in Portland. The result of this crucial legislation is increased access to quality care for all who have defended our freedom.

Maine is home to more than 125,000 veterans. To put that in perspective, Maine has more veterans per capita than all but two of the other States in the country. We are proud of our State's contributions to protecting our Nation and of Maine's impressive record in caring for our veterans.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the legislation establishing a national network of hospitals for Civil War veterans on March 3, 1865. The very next day, he concluded his second inaugural address with a commitment "to bind up our nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle. . . ."

We must uphold that commitment. Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country. We owe them all that we can do to ensure they receive the best care possible. The veterans and grateful citizens who fought for the Caribou CBOC knew that, and, on this 30th anniversary, we honor their dedication by carrying on their work.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL FREDRICK B. "BEN" HODGES

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a great leader and an exceptional Army officer, LTG Frederick B. "Ben" Hodges who is currently serving as the commanding general of U.S. Army Europe in Wiesbaden, Germany, as he prepares for his transition and retirement from Active Duty.

LTG Ben Hodges has served our Army and our Nation for more than 35 years. He has been a true professional and a dedicated soldier, leader, and officer. Throughout his career, he has commanded our great soldiers at many levels, he has deployed to combat numerous times in defense of the Nation, and he has been assigned the most critical positions in our Army. Lieutenant General Hodges continues to provide outstanding leadership, advice, and sound professional judgment on numerous critical issues of enduring importance to the Army, Congress, and this Nation.

A native of Quincy, FL, Lieutenant General Hodges graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in May 1980 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant of infantry. After his first assignment in an infantry unit in Germany, he commanded infantry units at the company, battalion, and brigade levels in the 101st Airborne Division and in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom during the initial invasion of Iraq as Bastogne 6, leading the 327th Infantry Regiment.

Throughout his magnificent career, Lieutenant General Hodges has served in a variety of important positions within the U.S. Army, proving over and over again his exceptional leadership and staff skills. These positions include service as a tactics Instructor at the Infantry school, aide-de-camp to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and service as both the deputy chief and then chief of legislative, liaison for the U.S. Army in Washington, D.C.

Lieutenant General Hodges' assignments as a general officer include deputy commander for stability, Regional Command-South, International Security Assistance Force supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan from August 2009 until October 2010. Before arriving in Germany, Lieutenant General Hodges also held a leadership position at NATO, serving as the first commander of Allied Land Command, Izmir, Turkey, from November 2012 to October 2014.

For the past 3 years, Lieutenant General Hodges has been the commanding general of United States U.S. Army Europe. During this period of extraordinary change and challenge in Europe's security environment, Lieutenant General Hodges has improved relationships with NATO allies and European partners. Through his leadership, Lieutenant General Hodges has successfully led his command through some of the most complex issues our Army has faced in recent years with unparalleled results. While increasing the transparency of Army operations within Europe, Lieutenant General Hodges has led his command through the rapid growth in the frequency and complexity of multinational training exercises, thus increasing interoperability and strengthening NATO's commitment to deter potential aggression. The foundations set by Lieutenant General Hodges will allow NATO and

our Army to meet every mission requirement in Europe.

On behalf of Congress and the United States of America, I thank LTG Ben Hodges, his wife, Holly, and their entire family for their continued commitment, sacrifice, and contribution to this great Nation. I join my colleagues in wishing him future success in all aspects of life and I am sure that many soldiers will continue to emulate him as a role model for service, sacrifice, and leadership.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, today I am proud to stand to honor Phyllis Schlafly, a woman who was not only an incredible Missourian, but an incredible American. She was a strong conservative, engaged citizen, proud wife and mother, powerful speaker, passionate lawyer, devout Catholic, and good friend of mine. We lost her a year ago, and I take this moment today to pay tribute to her and the impact she had on our Nation.

There is no doubt that the name Phyllis Schlafly will be mentioned in the history of conservatism.

Upon Phyllis's receiving of the Women of Achievement Award in 1963, publisher of St. Louis Globe-Democrat Richard Amberg stated that "Phyllis Schlafly stands for everything that has made America great and for those things which will keep it that way."

Our late President, Ronald Reagan, said to Phyllis Schlafly, "Eagle Forum has set a high standard of volunteer participation in the political and legislative process. . . . You've been out front on so many of the most important issues of our time. . . . Your work is an example to all those who would struggle for an America that is prosperous and free. . . . Our nation needs the kind of dedicated individual volunteer service you and Eagle Forum have demonstrated over the last 20 years."

Phyllis was born and raised in St. Louis, MO. She attended college at Washington University and received her master of arts degree at Radcliffe College. She married John Fred Schlafly, Jr., in 1949 and had six children. In 1972, Phyllis established Eagle Forum, and her work to strengthen conservative principles flourished from there. Her voice became the conservative conscience of the GOP, and she was never afraid to let me or any other member of the Republican Party know when she felt we were not true to those ideals.

While I wish today to commemorate her upon the anniversary of her death, I would be remiss if I didn't point out that her passing did not end her life's work.

Her legacy of strong conservative values continues today through organizations, books, and through the passion

she ignited in fellow conservatives. Whether or not one agrees or disagrees with her points of view, one must acknowledge her crucial part in the history of American politics.

When she began speaking publicly in the 1960s, Phyllis blazed a trail and encouraged women and mothers everywhere to step into American politics and issues of the day. She wasn't afraid to voice the thoughts she had that others agreed with, yet were too afraid to speak; nor was she afraid to challenge those with whom she disagreed. Phyllis demonstrated to all of us that every voice matters and reminded us that a powerful voice lies not in whoever is talking the loudest but whoever sees potential for change.

Phyllis was a pioneer for women in the world of politics, especially for conservative women, and simultaneously encouraged all Americans to get involved in issues bigger than themselves.

She advocated tirelessly throughout her life and never retired. She was one of the first conservatives to publicly endorse then-candidate Donald Trump. At her 2016 funeral, President Trump said, "Her legacy will live on every time some underdog—outmatched and outgunned—defies the odds and delivers a win for the people."

Phyllis Schlafly lived a life of dedication and perseverance. She continuously served our Nation through her inspiring speeches, encouraging attitude, and passion for the future. We miss her and thank her for all the work she has done. Today we honor her and her legacy and take a moment to recognize the longstanding impact she has had on our Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. JERRY C. DAVIS

● Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Dr. Jerry C. Davis, president of College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, MO. Dr. Davis is the recipient of the prestigious E. Burr Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award, given by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, CASE.

The lifetime achievement award honors individuals in higher education who have made a significant and lasting impact in the field of institutional advancement through their professional accomplishments. It also honors those who have earned the deep respect and admiration of their professional colleagues.

Dr. Davis is one of the longest sitting college presidents in the entire United States, serving for over 40 years. He became president of Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky in 1977 and served until 1988, when he became president of the College of the Ozarks, where he remains today.

Throughout his tenure as president, he has transformed the College of the Ozarks into a unique higher education institution with an endowment over \$500 million. Nearly every student

graduates debt-free by working at on-campus jobs—a significant achievement at a time when student loans are a major burden for many students and families around the country.

Dr. Davis is also responsible for creating the College of the Ozarks Patriotic Travel Program. This program pairs veterans with college students to help instill appreciation for the sacrifices of American servicemen and women by traveling back to the battlefields of our Nation's wars. To date, over 300 students have traveled to Vietnam, Japan, and South Korea with over 150 veterans.

Dr. Davis's deep love for his country is also reflected by his work to honor those that have sacrificed for our Nation by building memorials on campus. Under Dr. Davis's leadership, the college built memorials honoring Missouri Vietnam veterans, the heroes of 9/11, and Missouri Gold Star families. In the spring of 2018, the college will dedicate a new memorial honoring the Korean war.

Dr. Davis has received many awards and accolades for both his specific institutions and in the realm of higher education. He has been active at multiple levels of both the Southern and North Central Accrediting Agencies, serving on more than 50 accreditation teams and chairing over half of them. Dr. Davis also served two terms as president of the American Association of Presidents of Independent Colleges and Universities.

In 2015, Dr. Davis and the College of the Ozarks received the National Freedom Award. This award is the highest honor given by the U.S. Department of Defense to employers for support of National Guard and Reserve Employees.

Dr. Davis's leadership has truly transformed the College of the Ozarks, and there is no doubt why he was selected to receive this lifetime achievement award. I know that the students, alumni, local community, and all those connected to the College of the Ozarks are grateful for his leadership, as am I.

Thank you.●

TRIBUTE TO GAIL BATES

● Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Gail Bates and not only wish her a happy birthday but also reflect on her years of service to the State of New Hampshire and our country.

Gail Bates was born Gail Oberlin in Cleveland, OH, on June 10, 1917 and received a degree from Vassar College in Italian and art history, then was awarded her master's in social work from Columbia University.

When the United States of America joined the Allies and went to war in 1941, Gail answered her country's call, serving in the American Red Cross from 1943 to 1945. She was stationed overseas to England with the Ninth Air Force, where she served with Red Cross Aero Clubs and worked long hours, supporting aircrews and soldiers from 6

AM to midnight. As a member of the Aero Club, Gail worked to provide food, coffee, music, and other reminders of home to American soldiers stationed so far from our shores.

On D-Day, Gail first heard of the Allied landings in Normandy while eating breakfast in a London cafe. She would soon join the Allied armies in continental Europe, arriving in Sainte-Mère-Eglise, France, in July, where she hosted a party for the children of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, providing a brief respite from war for the first liberated town in France. Following Allied victories in eastern France and Belgium, Gail accompanied General George Patton and his Third Army into Germany and was one of only two women who served in the Red Cross Aero Club in Berlin.

After the war, while working at the American Alpine Association, Gail met and then married Bob Bates, an educator and mountaineer, and they traveled the world together. Both avid mountaineers, they traveled to many remote areas around the world, including the Andes, the Himalayas, and the Karakorum Range. In 1962, Bob was recruited by Sargent Shriver to be director of the first group of Peace Corps volunteers in Nepal, and Bob and Gail lived together in Kathmandu, where they made many lifelong friends and invited a young Nepali woman, Tsering Yangdon, who is now a member of their extended family, to study at the University of New Hampshire.

As much as the world called to them, however, Bob and Gail never lost their attachment to and love for their local community. They protected historic New Hampshire buildings and preserved our open spaces and beautiful, wild areas of nature. In 1996, Gail established an endowed fund to permanently support the Robert H. Bates Mountaineering Room at Phillips Exeter Academy in the Class of 1945 Library. The collection contains many of Bob's collected mountaineering books and memorabilia.

As Senator for New Hampshire, I want to honor Gail's lifetime of service and good citizenship. I join with Gail's friends and family, as well as many, many people across the Granite State, in wishing her a very happy 100th birthday.●

TRIBUTE TO SHANE DOAN

● Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor a National Hockey League—NHL—legend, an Olympian, and a point of pride for Arizonans. After 21 seasons, 1,540 games, and 972 points scored, Shane Doan can now retire his skates with pride. A pillar in the Arizona community and a legend to hockey fans worldwide, Shane has left an indelible mark on the game, inspiring future generations of hockey players.

Shane's career started in 1992 in the Western Hockey League's Kamloops Blazers—during which the team won