

TRIBUTE TO NAVY SEALS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the 10 courageous sailors who lost their lives in <Afghanistan> during Operation Enduring Freedom on 28 June 2005 by printing the eloquent words of U.S. Navy RADM Joseph Maguire, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, during a memorial speech at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek on July 8, 2005.

I ask unanimous consent to print this tribute in the RECORD.

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

(By Rear Admiral Joseph Maguire)

Good Morning. On behalf of the Commander, United States Special Operations Command, General Doug Brown, the United States Navy, the proud men and women of Naval Special Warfare, I'd like to welcome everybody to this morning's memorial service for our ten fallen Sailors.

We're honored to have with us today the leaders of our nation and our Navy. We are joined this morning in grief. The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator John Warner, Congresswoman Thelma Drake, our local Congresswoman, Ambassador Joseph Prurer and Mrs. Prurer, Undersecretary of the Navy Aviles, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Willard and Mrs. Willard. The Commander Fleet Forces Command, Admiral Nathman and Mrs. Nathman, and the General Council of the United States Navy, Mr. Mora. In addition to that we have many general officers [From the joint services, retired community, retired Flag Officers. I'd also like to extend a welcome to our many veterans here today, our combat veterans.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our families in Naval Special Warfare, especially to the families of Squadron Ten, whose husbands are still deployed and engaged in combat operations far away. But most importantly I'd like to welcome the families of the ten SEALs that we honor here today. Earlier in this week I along with General Brown and many others have been attending memorial services for our United States Army Special Operations Aviation Regiment, the 160th, located at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and Hunter Army Air Field, where as you all know we lost eight brave Special Operations Aviators.

This morning we pause to honor the memory of ten Navy SEALs, in particular the six SEALs who were home ported here at the Naval Amphibious Base in Little Creek. I'd also like to extend a welcome to those who can't be with us physically in this theater right now. The theater holds 1800 people and we filled that up earlier this morning. And for those of you in the overflow where we have nearly 2000 people seated, I welcome you this morning and I apologize that we did not have space for everybody to be in here physically. But I know, spiritually, that you're with us and we sincerely appreciate you being part of the ceremony this morning.

My remarks will be short. I think it's important that you hear from the friends and loved ones, and also Commodore Pete Van Hooser has got some very important things to say.

But what I would like to say as the Commander for Naval Special Warfare and the head of this community, how proud I am to be the Commander for Naval Special Warfare and have the opportunity to lead and serve with these ten fine men. Naval Special Warfare is the smallest war fighting community in the Navy. There's 1750 enlisted men and six 600 officers. We're a small town, we literally know each other, and honestly, for those of you it may be hard to believe if you see the way we act with each other, we love one another.

Everything that you see here and everything this morning was put together by their Teammates. I'd like to call your attention to the operational equipment that we have forward here on stage. It traces its proud heritage back to World War II. The Underwater Demolition Teams and the Navy Combat Demolition Units and you'd have to go all the way back to World War II to get the number of Naval Special Warriors who died in one day in one military operation. The loss of one SEAL, the loss of one military man is more than we could possibly bear, but to have ten or our brave men perish in one day along with eight of our Nightstalkers is truly a remarkable day and one that will always be etched in our memory.

But before you though you have UDT swim fins, a UDT lifejacket, a web belt and a mask. And it may seem strange to you knowing that these Naval commandos died on a mountain top 7,500 feet in elevation in a country 300 miles from the sea. But our nation called. These are the same people that flew the planes into the Twin Towers that flew the plane into the Pentagon that also flew the plane into the ground in Pennsylvania. The Al Qaeda and the Taliban are barely distinguishable and these are the people that these brave men, these ten men, went out to meet and engage in combat. So although the operational equipment that they had on them that day on the 28th of June was not swim fins, not a UDT life jacket, not a mask, perhaps a K-Bar. We thought it's appropriate because we are first and foremost warriors from the sea, Navy men, that we honor them today as SEALs and Navy men.

The last thing I'd like to just mention is the knife that's on the web belt. The K-Bar also dates back to the knife used by the UDT in World War II. And a tradition in Naval Special Warfare when a young man finishes his training and is awarded his trident, when

he is awarded his trident he is also presented a K-Bar, and on that K-Bar is inscribed the name of a SEAL who went before him, where he died, and the date he died on. So that knife would always link him to the past and serve as an inspiration to him as a SEAL in combat in the future. These ten knives that we have up here are now etched with your husbands, your son, your brother, your father, your uncle, your nephew, your neighbor, your friend, and to us our Teammates names. You can take these home with you today, and I hope that you treasure them, but what I want you to know is that in the future when fellow SEALs become SEALS and they are presented with their K-Bars, the name of these men will be engraved to serve as an inspiration to future SEALs in combat, our teammates.

And I want to leave you with this. We have a creed, we have many things in Naval Special Warfare, but to sum it up, it is loyalty to our teammates dead or alive. These ten men are no longer with us, that doesn't mean that our allegiance and our covenant ends with them today. We will remain their teammates forever and to the family members sitting here, always know that we will always be there for them, always there for you and, we will always stay connected. God bless and thank you.

I'd like to go into the awards presentation now and I ask all of the guests and military to remain seated as we make the presentations so that all can see.

The Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal with Valor, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon and <Afghanistan> Campaign Medal will be presented posthumously for the actions in the following citation below.

On Tuesday 28 June 2005, thirty members of Naval Special Warfare Task Unit- <Afghanistan> were preparing to conduct a direct action mission when they were tasked to respond as a Quick Reaction Force to reinforce a four-man Navy SEAL reconnaissance element engaged in a fierce firefight near Asadabad, Konar Province, <Afghanistan>.

The reconnaissance element was bravely fighting Anti-Coalition Militia, who held both a numerical and positional advantage. The ensuing firefight resulted in numerous enemy personnel killed, with several of the SEALs suffering casualties.

After receiving the task to reinforce, the Quick Reaction Force loaded aboard two MH-47 U.S. Special Operations Army helicopters planning to air assault onto a hostile battlefield, ready to engage and destroy the enemy in order to protect the lives of their fellow SEALs. Demonstrating exceptional resolve and fully comprehending the ramifications of the mission, the Quick Reaction Force, while airborne, continued to refine the plan of attack to support both the reinforcement task and hasty execution of their intended deliberate assault.

As the helicopter approached the nearly inaccessible mountainside and hovered in preparation for a daring fast-rope insertion of the SEALs, the aircraft was struck by an enemy rocket-propelled grenade fired by Anti-Coalition Militiaman. The resulting

explosion and impact caused the tragic and untimely death of all SEALs and Army Night Stalkers onboard.

These men answered the call to duty with conspicuous gallantry. Their bravery and heroism in the face of severe danger while fighting a determined enemy in the Global War on Terror was extraordinary. Their courageous actions, zealous initiative and loyal dedication to duty reflected great credit upon themselves, Naval Special Warfare, and the United States Navy. For the President, Vern Clark, U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval Operations.

The presentations this morning will be made by Commodore Pete Van Hooser, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Group Two and Master Chief Chuck Williams, Command Master Chief of SEAL Team Ten.

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and <Afghanistan> Campaign Medal posthumously to LCDR Erik Kristensen, United States Navy.

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon and <Afghanistan> Campaign Medal posthumously to LT Mike McGreevy, United States Navy.

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and <Afghanistan> Campaign Medal posthumously to Chief Fire Controlman Jacques Fontan, United States Navy.

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and <Afghanistan> Campaign Medal posthumously to Electronics Technician 1st Class Jeffrey Lucas, United States Navy. Accepting his father's awards is his son, Seth Lucas.

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon and <Afghanistan> Campaign Medal posthumously to Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Jeffrey Taylor, United States Navy.

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and <Afghanistan> Campaign Medal posthumously to Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Danny Dietz, United States Navy.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with these exceptional remarks by Admiral Maguire. Our great country will forever owe these courageous SEALs a debt of gratitude for their selfless actions in battle on June 28, 2005. While I am sorry that the families of these men have suffered such an irreplaceable loss, I am proud that America produced such fine gentlemen who valiantly answered the call to defend these United States. Recalling our national anthem, I say, we would not be "the land of the free" were we not also the "home of the brave."

Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the 10 courageous sailors who lost their lives in <Afghanistan> during Operation Enduring Freedom on June 28, 2005, by reading the eloquent words of U.S. Navy CAPT Pete Van Hooser, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Group Two, during a memorial speech at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek on July 8, 2005.

I ask unanimous consent to print this tribute in the RECORD.

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

(By CAPT Pete Van Hooser)

I am always humbled in the presence of warriors. We have been in sustained combat for over 3 years-things have changed.

I find myself speaking in public a lot more than I would like, but I always start by thanking four groups of people. The first are our warriors who haven't fallen; the second, those who have guaranteed that those who have fallen will not be left behind. Some with their bravery, others with lives.

I thank those who have selflessly pulled themselves off the line to train the next warriors to go forward-so that they may surpass the prowess of those currently engaged.

And I am thankful for the families that nurture such men.

My remarks will be focused on these families and the men who wear the trident. We would not be able to do our jobs without the brave men and women of the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Task Unit-<Afghanistan> of Naval Special Warfare Squadron Ten, was comprised of SEAL Team Ten and SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team Two and One, had many U.S. Navy rates other than SEALs that trained and deployed by our side, and we recognize and are grateful for the professional efforts of all. But this time and this place is about the SEALs.

Leonidas, the Spartan King, hand-picked and led a force to go on what all knew to be a one-way mission. He selected 300 men to stand against an invading Persian force of over 2 million. They were ordered to delay the advance of the Persian Army. Selecting the battlefield was easy-the narrow mountain pass at Thermopylae restricted the combat power that the enemy could apply-allowing the superior fighting skills of the 300 Spartans to destroy the will of this Persian Army to fight. These Spartan warriors died fighting to the last man.

The Persian invaders were defeated by the Greek Army in later battles. Democracy and freedom were saved.

Most know this story. But most of us don't know how Leonidas selected the 300 men. Should he take the older seasoned Warriors who had lived a full life, should he take the young lions that felt they were invincible, should we take the battle-hardened, backbone-proven warrior elites in their prime, or should he sacrifice his Olympic champions?

The force he chose reflected every demographic of the Spartan Warrior class. He selected those who would go based solely on the strength of the women in their lives. After such great loss, if the women faltered in their commitment, Sparta would falter and the rest of Greece would think it useless to stand against the Persian invaders. The democratic flame that started in Greece would be extinguished.

The Spartan women were strong. They did not falter. I would even argue that we live in a democracy and have freedom because of the strength, skill, and courage of these 300 men and the extraordinary will and dedication of the women in their lives.

The women in our lives are the same. I see the pride in their wearing of the Trident symbol-I hear it in their voices when they are asked what is that symbol, and they say my husband, my son, my brother, or my dad is a Navy SEAL-usually they say nothing more.

If I were to say to the families, I feel your pain, that could not be so. I can never know the depth of your relationship or the anguish of your personal loss. What I can say is the truth I know. Those who wear the trident provide only brief glimpses into our world to those on the outside. Even our families see only a limited view of the path we have chosen. We are all different, but on the inside we share many common beliefs and actions. We spend most of our adult lives with other SEALs preparing for battle.

On this occasion I feel compelled to share our innermost thoughts. I want to show you a little more of our world so you can understand the way we see, the way we feel about what happened.

There is a bond between those who wear a trident-that is our greatest strength.

It is unique to this very small community. It is unique in its intensity. It is nurtured by the way we train-the way we bring warriors into the brotherhood. This bond is born in BUD/S. It starts to grow the first time you look into the eyes of your classmate when things have gone beyond what you or he thinks is possible. It grows in the platoon as you work up for deployment, and it grows around the PT circle. It's the moving force behind every action in a firefight. This bond is sacred. This bond is unspoken, unconditional, and unending.

When it comes to fighting we are all the same inside. During the first stages of planning, at the point where you know you are going into the battle, we think about our families. The master chief passing the word to the boys sums it up, "I am going home to my kids and you are going home to yours. Here is our next mission."

We never stop planning-we never stop thinking through every contingency-we want to cover every anticipated enemy action. This is the way we face the risk.

There is a significant difference between inserting on a mission where there may or may not be enemy contact or serious resistance and inserting into a fight where forces are already engaged. On 11 April, the men of this task unit-during their initial week in <Afghanistan>, immediately shifted from a helicopter training scenario directly into the fight as a quick response force to help soldiers and marines in a desperate battle. They made the difference-saving the lives of our fellow servicemen and destroying the enemy.

Last week when these fallen warriors launched on this mission, their SEAL teammates were fighting the enemy-fellow SEALs were in peril-as always in the teams-in this-situation there is no hesitation. It is not about tactics-its about what makes men fight.

As you are going in hot-you can't help it-you must allow one more small block of personal time. You think of those at home-the people you-the people you left behind. For this brief moment, there is no war.

Our souls have touched a thousand times before this moment

Boundless undefined shadows quietly surging through and waking each other

On a moonless star rich night we patiently wait for the dawn

There is no distance

You smile a cool wind that takes away thirst

I will never know hunger

I have never known fear

Unspoken-Unconditional-Unending

It's the same bond-now your focus returns to your SEAL teammates. Total focus on the approaching fight is all that exists.

In April, when I heard of the Task unit's first contact that very first week in country-when I saw the reports of the enemy casualties they had inflicted-I was happy but not too happy. Its was more of a quiet internal sharing of a sense of satisfaction they had executed flawlessly.

Last week when I was told of their deaths and saw what they were trying to accomplish, I was sad-but not too sad. It was more of a quiet and internal recognition that they had gone to the wall, and there was no hesitation. They were warriors-they are SEALs

We are not callous. We don't have the luxury of expressing our emotions at will. In these times our duty is to press on and finish the fight, for all depends on each man's individual actions.

We answer to a higher moral calling on the path that requires us to take and give life. It is this dedication to ideals greater than self that gives us strength. It is the nurturing of our families that gives us courage. Love is the opposite of fear-it is the bond that is reinforced when we look in the eyes of another SEAL that drives super human endurance. My teammate is more important than I.

The enemy we face in Afghanistan is as hard and tough as the land they inhabit. They come from a long line of warriors who have prevailed in the face of many armies for centuries. It is their intimate knowledge of every inch of the most rugged terrain on earth that is matched against our skill, cunning, and technology.

They are worthy adversaries and our intelligence confirms that they fear and respect us. They have learned to carefully choose their fights because as SEALs we answer the bell every time.

When you see the endless mountains-the severe cliff-the rivers that generate power that can be felt while standing on the bank-the night sky filled with more stars than you have ever seen-when you feel the silence of the night where no city exists-when the altitude takes your breath away and the cold and heat hit the extreme ends of the spectrum-you cannot help being captured by the raw strength of this place.

This is a great loss. These men were some of the future high-impact leaders of naval special warfare, but I take refuge in the thought that there is no better place a warrior's spirit can be released than the Hindu Kush of the Himalayas.

In their last moments, their only thoughts were coming to the aid of SEAL brothers in deep peril. I can say that any one wearing a trident would gladly have taken the place of these men even with full knowledge of what was to come.

Some of those on the outside may understand that the one man who was recovered would possibly make this loss acceptable. Only those who wear the trident know, if no one had come back, it would all have been worth the cost.

These men are my men. They are good men. The SEAL teams-this path is my religion. This loss will not go unanswered.

I am always humbled in the presence of Warriors.

Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with these exceptional remarks by Captain Van Hooser. Our great country will forever owe these courageous SEALs a debt of gratitude for their selfless actions in battle on June 28, 2005. While I am sorry that the

families of these men have suffered such an irreplaceable loss, I am proud that America produced such fine gentlemen who valiantly answered the call to defend these United States. Recalling our national anthem, I say, we would not be "the land of the free" were we not also the "home of the brave."