

duty, comprising the premier fighting force in the world. Whether it is the most senior Army general or the soldier standing guard at the North Korean border, the quality of our soldiers is unsurpassed. It is consistently proven that the investment we make in our military personnel today reaps the leaders of tomorrow.

One of my highest priorities here in Congress is maintaining the strength of that important investment, because it is crucial to our future. At the very root of our national security is the well-being of our soldiers. This includes supplying the best technologically advanced equipment in the world and ensuring our Armed Forces are funded at levels that adequately compensate our dedicated servicemen and women.

The dedication and sacrifices demonstrated by millions of Army veterans must never be forgotten, nor should their needs be neglected; honoring the commitments this nation has made to its veterans is vital.

As we celebrate the Army's 225th anniversary today, I encourage all Americans to reflect on the blanket of freedoms we are blessed with, thanks to the sacrifices made by those who valiantly heed the call of duty by serving in the United States Army, both in war and peacetime. I am proud to join my colleagues in congratulating the Army on this impressive milestone.

REPEAL OF THE TELEPHONE EXCISE TAX

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for a bill which I have co-sponsored. The bill, S. 2330, will repeal federal excise taxes on telephone services.

This tax was first introduced as a temporary luxury tax in 1898 to fund the Spanish American War. However, over 100 years later this tax remain in effect. The definition of temporary should not span an entire century.

This tax is imposed on telephone and other services at a rate of 3 percent. Furthermore, these taxes are not applied to a specific purpose that enhances telephone service in our nation—rather these taxes are directed in the general revenue account. In other words, there is no reason we shouldn't repeal this tax. It means only one thing—Montanans end up paying one more tax to encourage government spending.

As I said a moment ago, this tax was enacted to fund the Spanish American War. Considering that war was ended a mere six months after it began, I feel its time to repeal this tax. Instead, Montana consumers continue to pay this tax on all their telephone services—local, long distance, and wireless.

It is time to eliminate this excise tax. At the time of enactment, this tax was considered a luxury tax on the few

who owned telephones in 1898—this tax has now become an unnecessary burden on virtually every American taxpayer. Repealing this excise tax on communications services will save consumers over \$5 billion annually.

Furthermore, this tax is regressive in nature. It disproportionately hurts the poor, particularly those households on either fixed or limited incomes. Even the U.S. Treasury Department has concluded in a 1987 study that the tax "causes economic distortions and inequities among households" and "there is no policy rationale for retaining the communications excise tax."

Rural customers in states like Montana are also disproportionately impacted. This tax is even more of a burden on rural customers due to the fact that they are forced to make more long distance calling comparative to urban customers.

This tax also impacts Internet service. The leading reason why households with incomes under \$25,000 do not have home Internet access is cost. If consumers are very price sensitive, the government should not create disincentives to accessing the Internet. Eliminating this burdensome tax can help to narrow the digital divide.

Mr. President, this is a tax on talking—a tax on communicating—a tax on our nation's economy—I encourage my colleagues to join me in support of this bill to repeal this unnecessary and burdensome general revenue tax.

SEQUENTIAL REFERRAL

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD my letter to Senator LOTT dated May 8, 2000.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, May 8, 2000.

Hon. TRENT LOTT,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. LEADER: Pursuant to section 3(b) of S. Res. 400 of the 94th Congress, I request that S. 2507, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, which was reported out on May 4 by the Select Committee on Intelligence, be sequentially referred to the Committee on Armed Services for a period not to exceed thirty days.

With kind regards, I am
Sincerely,

JOHN WARNER,
Chairman.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, June 13, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,651,368,584,663.04 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-one billion, three hundred sixty-eight million, five hundred eighty-four thousand, six hundred sixty-three dollars and four cents).

Five years ago, June 13, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,903,284,000,000 (Four trillion, nine hundred three billion, two hundred eighty-four million).

Ten years ago, June 13, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,120,867,000,000 (Three trillion, one hundred twenty billion, eight hundred sixty-seven million).

Fifteen years ago, June 13, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,766,874,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred sixty-six billion, eight hundred seventy-four million).

Twenty-five years ago, June 13, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$528,036,000,000 (Five hundred twenty-eight billion, thirty-six million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,123,332,584,663.04 (Five trillion, one hundred twenty-three billion, three hundred thirty-two million, five hundred eighty-four thousand, six hundred sixty-three dollars and four cents) during the past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN VILHELM HANSEN (1917–2000)

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I submit for the RECORD the following, written by Marshall H. Cohen, photojournalist, and honorary life-member of the Association of Tall Ship, the *Danmark*, June, 2000.

Captain Vilhelm Hansen passed away at age 82 on May 3, 2000. Captain Hansen was master of the training ship the *Danmark* for twenty-two years from 1964 until his retirement in 1986. He was not only a legendary captain and educator, training thousands of Danish men and women for maritime careers, but also a familiar, and well-liked ambassador of good will to the United States with his ready wit, his unparalleled knowledge of seamanship, and his unbending strong character. Whenever the *Danmark* anchored in various East Coast ports, thousands of Americans, including members of the U.S. Congress, have been welcomed on board this beautiful full-rigged ship.

Captain Hansen received many honors and awards here in the United States. He has been presented with the keys to many U.S. cities, among them, Baltimore. He received the Danish-American Society's "Man of the Year" award in New York City in 1987, and this year (June 8, 2000) Captain Hansen posthumously received the National Maritime Historical Society Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Maritime Education in a ceremony in Miami, Florida.

The *Danmark* has played a significant role in the maritime history of the United States. In 1939, the *Danmark* was on a routine training mission to the United States when the Second World War began. The Captain at that time, Knud Hansen, was informed that Germany had invaded Denmark, and consequently, the *Danmark* remained in the United States for the duration of the war. The *Danmark* was based in New London, Connecticut, and served as a training ship for U.S. sailors.

The First Officer of the *Danmark* during the war was Knud Langevad, and he was in

charge of training more than 5,000 U.S. cadets. He also convinced U.S. authorities of the value of learning basic seamanship on a tall ship, and following the war the U.S. Coast Guard purchased its well-known tall ship the *U.S. Eagle*, to replace the *Danmark*.

Reflecting this special kinship between the two ships, the *Danmark* sails as the first foreign ship behind the *Eagle* in official Tall Ship Parades. It will be so honored again in June and July, 2000 during the millennium voyage of tall ships along the East Coast, from Miami to Boston.

On July 4, 1986 the *Danmark* was honored with the number two position sailing behind the *Eagle* during the Parade of Tall Ships celebrating the 100th birthday of the Statue of Liberty. It was Captain Hansen's final voyage as master of the *Danmark* prior to his retirement that year. Captain Vilhelm Hansen, in his white uniform and gold braided cap, steered his 253 foot ship into the South Street Seaport, New York City, for the last time. He barked his final commands to the officers, switched off the auxiliary engine, and ended his distinguished career during this memorable event in American history. ●

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL BLOUNT

● Mr. L. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to a Rhode Island hero.

Mr. President, Lieutenant General John Bruce Blount was just given an Honorary Doctorate Degree from his alma mater, the University of Rhode Island. A former star athlete, a decorated war hero of two wars, Korea and Vietnam, and a man who helped end the Army-McCarthy hearings of the 1950s, Rhode Islanders were happy to welcome him home.

The Providence Journal ran this article, "Hometown Hero Blount to be Honored at URI Graduation," about him.

Mr. President, I ask that the text of the article be inserted in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Providence Journal]

HOMETOWN HERO BLOUNT TO BE HONORED AT
URI GRADUATION
(By David Henley)

KINGSTON—A favorite son will be returning soon.

A decorated hero of two wars, a former star athlete who set the still-standing high school basketball record for points scored in a game over half a century ago and a man who helped end the Army-McCarthy hearings of the 1950s, Lt. Gen. John Bruce Blount will return to the University of Rhode Island in a few weeks to pick up his latest recognition. Blount will be one of four recipients of honorary doctorate degrees from his alma mater at the school's 114th commencement May 20.

"I'm 50 years away from Kingston, but this is a real thrill," Blount said Monday from his home in Columbia, S.C. "My whole family is coming in, from Carolina, Florida, Detroit. I've always maintained my connections back home, and I knew people were trying to do this, but I guess the planets were just in the right alignment."

Blount, known as Bruce, is something of a local legend, both at the university and at South Kingstown High school, where he was a student when he scored his record-setting

66 points. The team then played at the St. Francis Parish Hall on High Street; the games lasted only 32 minutes and there were no three-point shots then.

His military career has been written about many times. As the only URI alumnus to achieve the rank of three-star general, Blount's service in Korea and Vietnam earned him dozens of medals and decorations, including the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Korean Chung Mu Distinguished Service Medal and a Purple Heart when he was injured in combat on Korea's Old Baldy.

Blount became nationally famous when he stood his ground under questioning at the McCarthy hearings, earning praise even from Sen. Joseph McCarthy himself, and later produced photographic evidence discrediting the senator by proving he had doctored evidence.

But to many of his own generation, and to his elders, he is probably best remembered as just a kid with a basketball under one arm hitchhiking back and forth between Peace Dale and Kingstown.

Blount's family first moved into South County during the Depression, according to his brother Frank, a retired schoolteacher living on Great Island. The boys' father, Joseph Blount, an insurance salesman from Illinois who had met his Rhode Island bride while both served in the Navy in World War I, came to the area looking for work, which he found in local restaurants. Eventually Joe Blount opened Joe's Diner in Peace Dale, where Patsy's Package Store is now, and a second restaurant next to the Wakefield Diner on Main Street. But Loretta Blount had bigger plans for her children.

"My mother knew she wanted her children to go to college, so she moved us out of Peace Dale and out to Kingston, just to be near the campus, when I was about 7," Bruce Blount said. "She financed the house by renting rooms out to college kids. When I finally started at the university myself, I was the only kid who actually was farther away from campus in my frat house than I was at home."

Joe Blount continued in the restaurant business, opening the original Ram's Den in the house next to the family home on Upper College Road.

"I can remember getting up with my dad at about 4 in the morning and going down and getting the fires going," the general said. "He'd get the baking started for the day. By the time I was 10 I was making the bacon and eggs, putting them up for people. Basically, I was a short-order cook."

By that time he also had become a favorite of the school's basketball team, and particularly of its coach, Frank Keaney, another local legend. In fact the whole family was more or less adopted by the university community, to hear the sons tell it. One day, Frank Blount remembers, Keaney came in to see Joe Blount with an idea. It seems he had a team that needed to work to eat, but needed flexibility for practice and games; Joe hired them all as waiters, cooks and dishwashers. When they were playing he tended not to have that much business anyway. Loretta opened a soda shop at Lippitt Hall and worked as a switchboard operator, the same job she had had in the Navy. She became friends with each of the university's presidents over the years, and for years it was a tradition for the president to stop the commencement march to walk over and shake hands with Loretta Blount.

"She loved that," Frank remembered.

"I started out as waterboy for the team, and later I was the mascot," Bruce Blount said. "I grew up knowing more older men,

and more athletes, than I knew of kids my own age. "Back then we didn't just walk around in sneakers, you had regular street shoes, and coach wouldn't let me on the floor with them on. So I would stand in the corners during practice, and when the ball came to me, instead of tossing them back in I would just put them up. I developed a really different sort of shooting style, but I could hit from almost anywhere."

Once he started high school, Blount found himself constantly traveling between gyms, from URI's Rodman Hall to St. Francis and the Old Fagan's Hall in Peace Dale, the South Kingstown team's alternate gym. With his gym bag over his shoulder and a basketball under his arm, Blount became a familiar sight on Kingstown Road.

"I could get around better than anybody without a car," he said.

That famous basketball career could have led Blount away from Kingston but didn't. Despite being recruited by schools like Brown and Harvard, Blount knew he wanted to attend URI, then called Rhode Island State.

"There was never any question," he said.

"I was absolutely enthralled with the idea of playing for Rhode Island, and Coach Keaney was an idol to me." On his way to collecting more than 1,000 points in his college career, Blount also acted as captain of both the basketball and baseball teams. But he also found time to begin what would be his ultimate career. As an ROTC cadet, Blount became cadet colonel in his senior year and was commissioned in the regular Army as a second lieutenant in the Infantry when he graduated in 1950.

Starting out as a training officer in the 4th Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne, he was made platoon commander in Korea the next year, then company executive officer, then company commander in the 45th Infantry. He was selected as aide-de-camp by Maj. Gen. C.E. Ryan, commander of the Korean Military Advisory Group, and returned to the states with Ryan after his injury.

Since then he has worked his way up the ranks, spending time as a staff officer at the Pentagon, in the Southern Command in the Canal Zone and as commander of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam. In 1969 he was made secretary of the U.S. Army Infantry School in Fort Benning, Ga., and in 1971 was assigned to the European Command, eventually serving as community commander of the American Military Community in Wurzburg, Germany.

Finally, in 1983, he was promoted to lieutenant general and made chief of staff of the NATO Allied Forces South Command, consisting of units from Greece, Turkey, Italy the United Kingdom and the United States.

"I always followed Bruce, did whatever he did, only not as well," said little brother Frank Friday. "When he was in the NATO command, I thought that was a big deal. But I had the most fun when he was on the general's staff at Dix when he was stationed there. Whenever my company needed anything, they would come to me and I would call up, say, the motor pool and tell them I needed a Jeep. They'd ask who I was and I would say, 'This is Lieutenant Blount' in my best command voice and get whatever it was I needed.

"Of course it only lasted about a month before everybody figured out there were two Lieutenant Blounts on base, but we would begin to laugh our heads off whenever I told him what I was doing."

"For the longest time in my life I was 'Bruce Blount's brother,'" he said. "And to this day I am very proud of that." ●