

pinned down enemy had begun to close in on their position again. His actions resulted in the flight's ability to maintain continuous contact with the GFAC and continue to threaten the advancing enemy forces for over two and a half hours. After he had verified from command and control that no other airborne assets had 20mm or light ordnance, Captain Lipina's flight lead dropped 500 pound bombs within 100 meters of the crash site in order to keep the enemy forces at bay. Captain Lipina expertly sanitized the area for MANPADS and anti-aircraft artillery in the hostile and hazardous region of the downed helicopter. This was extremely important since a previous flight has been engaged by MANPADS. Meanwhile a second GFAC reported two critically wounded soldiers requiring immediate air evacuation. While his lead continued to work on pinning down the enemy, Captain Lipina began to coordinate for the air evacuation and offered his remaining bombs to escort the rescue helicopters through an area with numerous small arms and RPG threats. Additionally, he coordinated for other assets to move into position to support the survivors on the ground. The undaunted courage and heroism of Captain Lipina undoubtedly saved the lives of 21 uninjured survivors and 10 wounded in the crash site and enabled the safe recovery of all 39 Americans.

**JAMES R. SEARS JR.: DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS NARRATIVE**

Captain James R. Sears Jr. distinguished himself by heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as F-16CG flight lead, 18th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron on 20 January 2002. Captain Sears distinguished himself as On Scene Commander for a downed CH-53 in a heavily defended area of Taliban control in Northern Afghanistan during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. During the Combat Search and Rescue he organized, directed, and controlled a total of 13 aircraft including three Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, five helicopters, one C-130, two F-16s, and two F-18s. He rapidly developed a deconfliction plan that ensured the safety of all assets and allowed them to operate within a five nautical mile radius of the downed helicopter.

After receiving the initial coordinates of the crash site he realized they were over one nautical mile off the actual location in heavily mountainous terrain. After a diligent, methodical search of the area, Captain Sears was able to get his eyes on the site, provide a perfect talk-on for his wingman, and direct the other support assets to the crash site. Using on-board sensors, Captain Sears was quickly able to pass updated coordinates to the thousandth of a degree to command and control agencies without compromising the safety of the entire rescue operation. He expertly sanitized the 60 nautical mile ingress and egress route through enemy territory.

Captain Sears then executed the demanding task of rescue escort for two helicopters. This involved maintaining visual contact and constant coverage while flying over 300 knots faster and being 15,000 feet higher than the helicopters. Captain Sears, in conjunction with command and control assets, coordinated a plan to move three separate tankers close enough to the crash site to ensure constant command for the entire time on scene. Captain Sears' flawless flight leadership allowed him to intercept and visually identify a Red Cross aircraft flying in the vicinity of the downed helicopter, not identifiable by electronic means or talking to command and control assets, ensuring the safety of the entire rescue effort. Captain Sears passed off On Scene Commander duties to two United States Navy F-18s after 4.5 hours

on scene. Captain Sears' tireless efforts and tremendous focus was unprecedented considering in his single-seat F-16 he flew more than 3500 miles, logged 11.1 hours, and ten air refuelings requiring more than 120,000 pounds of fuel to be unloaded through hostile territory. Captain Sears' courage, superior airmanship, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of personal danger were instrumental in accomplishing this hazardous mission and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Air Force.●

**TO JAN OMUNDSON AND PAM ELJ**

●Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, on many occasions in the past year and a half, I have come to the floor on behalf of steelworkers and their families who live on Minnesota's Iron Range in northeastern Minnesota. Like other steel-producing regions, the Iron Range has been hard hit by unfair foreign imports, devastating the United States steel and iron ore industries. And last year, Minnesota's Iron Range economy was rocked by the bankruptcy and closure of the LTV Steel Mining Company in Hoyt Lakes.

When the LTV Steel Mining Company closed, 1,400 employees were thrown out of work. Many of these men and women had dedicated their entire working lives to LTV. They are hard-working people with families and bills to pay. In addition to the layoffs, 1,700 retirees lost portions of their pensions and all of their health insurance and life insurance.

But if you know anything about Minnesota, you understand that in hard times we pull together and we persevere. This is especially true about the hardworking people of the Iron Range.

Today, I'd like to recognize two very unselfish Minnesotans, Jan Omundson and Pam Elj, who have gone above and beyond the call of normal duty to help the people hurt by the LTV closing.

For the past 3 months, Jan and Pam traveled more than 160 round-trip miles each day, from the Cities of Duluth and Virginia respectively, to help hundreds of displaced LTV employees and retirees understand their health care options. When an economic tragedy like this strikes a community, it's often a very painful, stressful, and confusing time for the families affected. Thanks to Jan and Pam, people affected now have a much better understanding of their benefits and their rights.

In her role as coordinator of the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging's State Health Insurance Assistance Program, Jan Omundson led this team effort by organizing dozens of informational meetings to educate displaced LTV workers and retirees regarding their options. She was assisted by Pam Elj, who is a counselor with the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency's Senior Insurance Advocacy Program. Together, they met with hundreds of retirees, displaced workers, and their families and outlined detailed and valuable information about options for health care coverage.

Jan and Pam were key to the success of this effort and it would not have been possible without the support and resources of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, the Hoyt Lakes Community Credit Union, the City of Biwabik, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota.

I thank them all for their dedication and assistance during this very difficult time.●

**COMMUNITY HERO**

●Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, today I salute a community leader in my home State of Oregon. I want to recognize the efforts of Susan Abravanel, Education Coordinator at SOLV, a nonprofit organization in Oregon, in advocating for service-learning, one of the most exciting educational initiatives taking hold in our Nation today.

Service-learning gives students the opportunity to learn through community service, but it is important to note that it is much more than just community service. It is a method of classroom instruction that engages a student's intellect through hands-on work outside the classroom that benefits the community at large. Research shows that students participating in service-learning make gains on achievement tests, complete their homework more often, and increase their grade point averages.

In addition to producing academic gains, service-learning is also associated with both increased attendance and reduced dropout rates. It is clear to educators across the country that service-learning helps students feel more connected to their own education while strengthening their connection to their community as well. It is for all of these reasons that Susan Abravanel is working so hard to advocate for service-learning in classrooms in Oregon and across the nation.

Ms. Abravanel is working closely with my office and with education leaders in Oregon to ensure that my home state remains a national leader in service-learning. Just 2 months ago, I introduced a bill with my colleague, Senator EDWARDS, to strengthen our Nation's commitment to service-learning. I feel confident that this bill will soon become law and that with Ms. Abravanel's continued efforts both here in Washington, DC and at home in Oregon, students will continue to benefit from an education tied to civic engagement.

Ms. Abravanel exemplifies the type of engaged citizen our schools must endeavor to produce, and her persistence will ensure that future generations of Americans will give back to their communities just as she has. I would also like to note that Susan isn't just concerned about education, her interests and efforts in Portland's Jewish community are well known and highly appreciated, she is the new President of