

General Barnidge began his Air Force service as I did, through the Reserve Officer Training Corps, and was commissioned as an officer in 1971. Since then, he has held a variety of operations and maintenance assignments, including major command and joint staff billets. He is experienced in aircrew operations, flight line maintenance and combat support activities. The general has also performed major command staff and executive support functions, as well as duties as a force planner and division chief in the joint staff. He has commanded a combat crew training squadron, a logistics group, an operations group, a B-1B bomb wing at Ellsworth, and the B-2 wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

General Barnidge also completed the program for senior officials in national security at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Seminar XXI, Foreign Political and International Relations, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received special recognition in 1999 as the winner of the Air Combat Command Moller Trophy, recognizing him as the best among all 28 wing commanders. General Barnidge has amassed over 2,900 hours in the T-37, T-38, OV-10, B-52G, B-1B, and B-2 aircraft.

In his years of working with the Congress, General Barnidge provided a clear and credible voice for the Air Force, consistently providing accurate, concise and timely information. His integrity, professionalism, and expertise enabled him to develop and maintain an exceptional rapport between the Air Force and the Congress.

On behalf of the Congress and the country, I thank General Barnidge, his wife Sandy, and his entire family for their commitment and many sacrifices. Sandy always went out of her way to make my staff and me feel welcome, and I know she, too, has done much for the Air Force and her country during the past 32 years. Thanks to both of you for a job well done. On behalf of a grateful nation, we wish you all the best during your retirement.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senators BROWNBACK and DODD to introduce legislation authorizing the establishment of the National Museum of African American History and Culture within the Smithsonian Institution.

The effort to construct a museum dedicated to African American history and culture began in the early 1900's by an association working to commemorate the valor and deed of Negro soldiers and sailors who fought in American wars and contributions of African Americans in science, art, literature, business and other endeavors.

I have conferred with African American constituents in Alaska regarding the significance of this bill—the late JP Jones, Bill Sykes, and James Hayes to name a few.

Today, we are taking an important step toward bringing this overdue effort closer to a reality.

The provisions of the bill direct the Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents to consult with the Commission on Fine Arts, the National Capitol Planning Commission, and three members of President Bush's Commission on the National Museum of African American History and Culture when selecting the museum site. The legislation directs the Board of Regents to complete this work within 18 months.

The legislation authorizes \$17 million in federal funds for the museum in fiscal year 2004. The funding for the museum will be fifty percent federal funding and the remaining fifty percent will come from non-federal sources.

I look forward to working with my colleagues as this bill moves through the legislative process.

PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT OF RE-AUTHORIZATION OF ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, in 1994 President Clinton signed into law a ban on the production of certain semiautomatic assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. The 1994 law banned a list of 19 specific weapons as well as a number of other weapons incorporating certain design characteristics, such as bayonets and pistol grips. This law is scheduled to sunset on September 13, 2004. If the law is not reauthorized, the production of military-style semiautomatic weapons can legally resume.

In March of this year, in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Attorney General John Ashcroft indicated the Bush administration's support for the current ban on assault weapons but would not indicate support for reauthorization of the ban. Recently, the White House indicated the President does support reauthorizing the ban. However, a senior White House adviser reportedly said that this bill would never make it to the President's desk. And a spokesperson for House Majority Leader TOM DELAY recently said "we have no intentions of bringing it up."

Failure to reauthorize the legislation would be irresponsible because the assault weapon ban works. According to National Institute of Justice statistics reported by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, gun trace requests for assault weapons declined 20 percent in the first calendar year after the ban took effect, dropping from 4,077 in 1994 to 3,268 in 1995. Over the same time period, gun murders declined only 10 percent and trace requests for all types of guns declined 11 percent.

Given the firepower of these firearms, it is not surprising that so many law enforcement organizations supported the Federal assault weapons ban and worked for its passage. Among the many that supported the ban were the Law Enforcement Steering Committee, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Inter-

national Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major City Chiefs Association, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, the National Black Police Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the Police Executive Research Forum, and the Police Foundation.

It is critical that we reauthorize the assault weapons ban. Absent such action, AK47s, UZIs, and other semi-automatic weapons will again become easily obtainable weapons of choice for gang members, drug dealers, and other dangerous criminals. I urge the President to show his support for this bill by asking the House Republican Leadership to pass this bill in the House and the Senate Leadership to pass it in the Senate.

MEMORIAL DAY 2003

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, on this Memorial Day, I encourage New Mexicans to take a few moments to remember those Americans who have given their lives in the name of freedom. It is upon the sacrifice of these Americans—from all generations—that the freedom we enjoy today is built.

From the Bataan Peninsula to Normandy, from the Ia Drang Valley to Inchon, from Afghanistan to Iraq, and many other conflicts, American men and women have fought and died because they believed in their country and believed in preserving its many blessings.

As we enjoy this holiday weekend with our families and friends, let us take a few minutes to recognize the courage with which so many of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines have fought when called upon by their country. Let us also remember all those who never made it back to the country they loved because they gave their lives for it in a far away land.

At this moment in America's history, I could not be more proud of our men and women in uniform. I think it is important to note that in the wake of successful combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the same courage and commitment shown by Americans of generations past lives on today in the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I rise to observe the significance of Memorial Day—and to pay tribute to the Americans we honor on this day. Three days from now, we will, as a nation, remember those who lost their lives in service to our country. They secured our freedom with the most precious gifts they could offer—their love for this country and their lives.

America has honored its fallen soldiers with a Memorial Day, sometimes called Decoration Day, since the Civil