

Milt and his comrades knew the dangers they faced. After flying a mission at night, he would later recall that ground fire is frightening during the day, "but to see it at night at a low altitude, you think every shot coming up has your name on it."

Yet despite the dangers, he fought without fear.

After World War II, Milt continued to serve in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel and retiring with 20 years of honorable service in 1962.

Even when his active duty service had ended, he continued to serve our country through his work with several firms providing weapons systems and equipment to the Department of Defense. This association continued until his civilian retirement in 1989 at the age of 72.

The measure of a man's life is not solely in what he did, but in what he did for others. Throughout his life, Milton Sanders constantly sacrificed his time and talents in service to others in his church, his community, and his Nation. Every person who came into contact with him knew he was a friend they could always count on, no matter the hour, no matter the need.

Perhaps Milt's greatest contribution to our Nation comes from the legacy of his 46 years of loving marriage to his wife Jean. They have eight children, including two graduates of our military service academies; 28 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

I will always treasure the memories of my monthly home teaching visits to the Sanders home. His piano playing, story-telling and beautiful prayers will always be vividly present in my mind. Jean, I learned during these visits, has always been the foundation of their wonderful relationship.

Like so many other members of his generation, Milton Sanders was a great yet humble patriot. Because of the sacrifices they made, our lives are immeasurably better than they otherwise might have been. Our Nation owes them more than words can ever convey.

HOMAGE TO BILL AND TERI POPP

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, today I pay homage to Minnesotans who are helping the Minnesota National Guard and their families. The National Guard serves our country and the States as a unique organization among all branches of the United States Armed Forces. The Guard is America's community-based defense force, located in more than 2,700 cities and towns across the Nation. Sixty-two of those cities are located in Minnesota. National Guard members are citizen-soldiers and airmen who are integral members of their communities. Minnesota National Guard members live, shop, work, worship, and go to school in Minnesota's cities and towns. This inexorable link between the community and its citizen-soldiers is what makes

the National Guard an important and necessary part of their local and national communities.

The Minnesota Army and Air National Guard are reserve components of the United States Army and Air Force. During times of national emergency, National Guard members may be called into active Federal service by the President of the United States. Guard members from Minnesota have served in every major conflict involving the United States Armed Forces since the Guard's inception more than 360 years ago. At this time, Minnesota National Guard members are serving in Iraq, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Kosovo, as well as in other countries and within the State of Minnesota.

For the past 40 years, National Guard members have primarily served within their own communities, helping assist local law enforcement agencies during emergencies. In this capacity, members worked for the Guard on a part-time basis, usually just during emergency situations. Guard members earned the majority of their income from their jobs in the community. In the past couple of years, Guard members have been called to active duty. Because of this, they no longer earn their civilian incomes. For the most part, their civilian pay far exceeds their pay on active duty. In addition, when Guard members are deployed, they and their families need to support two households—the Guard member in their remote location and the family the Guard member leaves behind. While employers are encouraged to meet the pay differential for the Guard, oftentimes small companies cannot meet this obligation. Many Guard members and their families are caught in an unanticipated set of circumstances due to long terms of deployment overseas while supporting and protecting our country.

Inspired by the National Guard's members' dedication, patriotism, and selflessness, many Minnesotans have stepped forward to help Minnesota National Guard soldiers and their families. The efforts of Bill and Teri Popp, of Minnetonka, MN, deserve special praise. Long-time supporters of the Guard, they gave generously and challenged other Minnesotans to join them in supporting the Minnesota National Guard. Bill, founder and owner of POPP Telecom, believes that his company can and should improve the quality of life for everyone in his community. To that end, the Pops donated \$1,000 to every Minnesota National Guard member who was serving in Iraq, as of November 14, 2003. The gift the Pops made to Guard members in Iraq totaled \$166,000.

A true patriot, Bill included a thank you letter to each Guard member that received the donation that provided: "Thank you for putting your life on hold, and on the line, in service to our country. Thank you for . . . risking your life to advance liberty and justice for all people of the world."

To then set an example to the community, the Pops made an additional

donation to the Minnesota National Guard Foundation to help Guard members in financial need. Bill, through his company, also prepared and ran announcements on Minnesota radio stations encouraging other people and companies in Minnesota to make donations to the foundation to support members of the Minnesota National Guard and military reserves who have been impacted economically by extended periods of active duty service.

The Pops not only have promised to make sure the sacrifices the Guard and other military personal make in service to our country will not be forgotten, they have followed through to help that promise come true. They epitomize the strength and patriotism of our great Nation.

On behalf of all Minnesotans, I express my heartfelt appreciation to Bill and Teri Popp for their generosity and patriotism. They deserve all our thanks.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT BENJAMIN GILMAN

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in tribute to U.S. Army Sgt. Benjamin Gilman, of Meriden, Connecticut, who died in Afghanistan on January 29, 2004, at the age of 28.

Sergeant Gilman was killed along with seven other American soldiers in a weapons cache explosion near the town of Ghazni. He was part of the 41st Engineer Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, based in Fort Drum, NY.

Benjamin Gilman was always doing his best to help others, long before he enlisted in our Armed Forces. As a teenager, he won an award for his volunteer work at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center. When visiting his mother at her job at the Curtis Home for the elderly, he would spend time with the senior citizens who lived there, sharing conversations over games of checkers. While working at a fast food restaurant at the local mall, Benjamin made friends with a group of elderly women he would come to call his "adopted grandmothers."

While he was committed to service of all kinds, it was always Benjamin Gilman's dream to serve his country in the military. Even as a 7-year-old playing with action figures, young Benjamin told anyone who would listen that he would be a soldier someday.

Benjamin was a special person for many people, and there were many people who were special to him. One of those people was Jean Moran. When Benjamin was 11 years old, he met Jean through a local Big Brother/Big Sister program. It was the first time that the program's organizers had assigned a big sister to a boy. But Jean became a fixture in Benjamin's life for years to come, taking on the role of the older sibling that he never had.

Of all the bonds and friendships Benjamin had, though, none was more lasting or special than his relationship with his mother, Edie Gilman. A single

mom, Edie poured her heart, soul, time, and energy into her only child. In the last letter he sent home from Iraq, Benjamin thanked his mother for everything she did for him, calling her his "best friend in the entire world."

My heart truly goes out to Edie Gilman, who has suffered the kind of loss that is difficult for most of us to comprehend. We often speak of the weighty burden borne by our men and women in uniform—and rightfully so. But we would do well to also remember the burden placed on the shoulders of the families of these brave Americans.

While our troops are defending our freedoms overseas, all across America there are husbands and wives who must bear the responsibility of raising children alone. There are sons and daughters who must do without a helping hand with their schoolwork, or an enthusiastic supporter at their soccer games. There are brothers and sisters who are missing a role model, a mentor, a friend.

There are fathers and mothers, who endure anxious days and sleepless nights knowing that their children are in harm's way. And then there are people like Edie Gilman, who one day learn the heartbreaking news that someone they love will never be coming home.

And so today I salute the courage, the commitment, and the conviction of Benjamin Gilman, a young man who lost his life fulfilling the noblest of callings, defending our Nation and the values we hold dear. And I offer my deepest and most heartfelt sympathies to Edie Gilman, who has made a sacrifice for her country that is too great for words.

TRIBUTE TO ALL MILITARY SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN AND THE BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to thank the service men and women who have served our country so bravely in Afghanistan and Iraq. I also want to thank Peter Angelos and the world-class organization that he leads, the Baltimore Orioles. All too often we hear negative stories revolving around professional athletes. With this in mind, I have to tell you about a wonderful event that took place a few nights ago.

Tuesday night, my colleagues in the Senate Democratic caucus, along with members of the Baltimore Orioles, visited Walter Reed Army Medical Center. We went to Walter Reed to personally thank and honor the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who have sacrificed so much for our country in Afghanistan and Iraq. When Peter Angelos was asked if anyone from the Orioles would be willing to visit soldiers at Walter Reed, there was an overwhelming response from players, coaches, and front office personnel alike. In fact, there were so many volunteers that not everyone could be accommodated. Specifically, I would like

to recognize the following members of the Orioles organization who joined us at Walter Reed last night: pitchers John Parrish, Rick Bauer, Julio Jorge, Sidney Ponson, and Matt Riley; outfielders Larry Bigbie and Jay Gibbons; infielders Bran Roberts and Miguel Tejada, accompanied by his wife Santa; Jim Beattie, executive vice president of baseball operations, his wife Martha; Mike Flanagan, vice president of baseball operations, his wife Alex and daughter Kerry; and bullpen coach, Elrod Hendricks.

As a Senator from the great State of North Dakota, I know all too well the sacrifices that are made by members of this country's military. I am proud to say that North Dakota has the highest National Guard membership per capita in the Nation, and not surprisingly, during the Iraq crisis has had the most mobilized personnel per capita of any State.

Thus, it was truly heartwarming, as we went from table to table at Walter Reed, to see the enthusiasm of not only my fellow Senators, but also of the Baltimore Orioles in paying tribute to and recognizing the courageous men and women of the United States military. It is their professionalism, dedication, and hard work that provide the very freedoms that make this country great and it was obvious that these ideals were not lost on the members of the Baltimore Orioles.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF BLACK EAGLE'S GRAMMY WIN

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I wish to recognize a group of musicians from my home State of New Mexico. The group, Black Eagle, won a Grammy this past Sunday night.

The Black Eagle group is from the Pueblo of Jemez, which is one of the 19 Indian pueblos in our State. Those of us who reside in the Southwest are familiar with the pueblos and their people, but many are not. The pueblos share many common traditions, but they are distinct entities and maintain unique identities. The Jemez Pueblo, located in north central New Mexico, is home to the beautiful red mesas, rich culture, and some of the most wonderfully talented people around. Uniquely, the Pueblo of Jemez is the only remaining village of the Towa speaking pueblos. The Pueblo has long been known for its artistic talent and craft, but now its distinguished musicians can now add "the Grammy winning" declaration to their accolades.

The Black Eagle group formed in the late 1980s. The group's founder, Malcom Yepa, started the group when he was in his teens. With some urging, he, several friends, and several family members began composing songs in their native Towa language. Currently, the Black Eagle's are comprised of about 20 members from all across the age spectrum.

Prior to their Grammy for best Native American Music Album, their sixth album "Flying Free," won the Best Pow Wow Album of the Year award at the 2003 Native American Music Awards held in Albuquerque this past November. Both awards are a remarkable tribute to their hard work, commitment, and determination.

In addition to being musicians, the group has often reiterated their dedication to their village and their ancient culture. Furthermore, their resolve to positively influence young people is most admirable. For that, and for all their accomplishments, I am proud, and I salute each and every one of them here in this RECORD. May their recent success be only a prelude to future accomplishments, and may they continue to represent their people and the state of New Mexico with distinction.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Message from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:31 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 743) to amend the Social Security Act and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional safeguards for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries with representative payees, to enhance program protections, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 523. An act to make technical corrections to laws relating to Native Americans, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3783. An act to provide an extension of highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a law reauthorizing the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 10:07 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by