

From these auspicious beginnings, those reporting Irish ancestry in Maryland have today grown to over 700,000, according to the 2006 American Community Survey. These sons and daughters of Eire did not grow without tribulation. As famine and hunger gripped the Emerald Isle, nearly 3.5 million Irish immigrants fled to America between 1820 and 1880, engendering discriminatory reactions that often strayed into violence. Signs of “No Irish Need Apply” appeared in business windows, and young Irishmen were often drummed into service on the quayside to fight for the Union Army. Indeed, in my own home town of Baltimore, the mayoral elections of 1856, 1857 and 1858 were marred by violence, political intimidation and well-founded accusations of ballot-box stuffing, fomented by nativist political organizations, such as the Know-Nothing Party.

Irish Americans pushed past these shortsighted prejudices, time and again, and put their shoulders to the wheel of industry in America. They helped settle and farm the breadbasket of America, they took up arms in the defense of freedom and liberty, and they helped build an ever strengthening bond with the island nation of Ireland. They built strong communities around the values of hard work, perseverance, faith, and a shared remembrance of an ancestral home across the sea. Irish Americans have ever understood that great joy is only earned with great hardship, and our 35th President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, showed this ethic. In service to our country, he faced down the threat of worldwide nuclear annihilation, and pushed our Nation to do the impossible: to claim the Moon as the province of man. Irish Americans proudly continue this tradition of service, and serve at every level of public office, including in the Governor’s Mansion in Annapolis, MD, where Maryland’s favorite Irish-American son, Governor Martin O’Malley, resides.

The millions of Irish that immigrated to the United States, escaping hunger and religious persecution, chasing the elusive American dream, forever knitted Ireland and America together. It is right that we honor this bond, and take this occasion to reflect on the deeply inlaid threads of American history and tradition that sound, look, feel, and are distinctly Irish.

HOUSE HEARINGS ON MUSLIM AMERICANS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise today about an issue of grave concern to me. All of us agree that America must be vigilant to stop violent extremists and terrorists who want to attack our Nation. We must do everything possible to fight terrorism and keep our country safe and free.

But as we have seen, the House of Representatives recently held a hearing on the “Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and

that Community’s Response,” targeting only Muslim Americans. This approach is the wrong way to fight terrorism.

History has shown us that terrorists can come from anywhere, from any country or from any faith. We sadly know this from the tragedy in Oklahoma City. Focusing only on one group is not only un-American, it also ignores real threats from homegrown terrorists. Unfortunately, there are extremists in every religion. We know that the terrorists who attacked us on September 11, 2001, had perverted the message of Islam just as people have perverted other faiths at times throughout history to justify violent acts.

America is home to millions of hard-working, patriotic Muslim Americans who stand with us in the fight against terrorism. Muslim Americans died in the attack on September 11, 2001, and Muslim-American firefighters and police officers, who rushed into the towers to save people while putting their own lives at risk, were rightly called heroes.

I am proud to represent the great State of Michigan where we benefit every day from the hard work and dedication of Muslim leaders in business, medicine, education, science and many other professions. America was founded on the premise that all of its citizens are free to practice their religion openly, without government interference. We are a country founded on the principles of equality and liberty.

I urge my colleagues to continue to forcefully fight terrorism while respecting the values that our country was built upon.

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT JAY FREDERICK SIMPSON

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I rise today in honor of a man who gave his life serving the United States of America in World War II.

LT Jay Frederick Simpson was a pilot with the “Mighty Eighth” Air Force of the U.S. Army Air Corps.

On January 9, 1944, Lieutenant Simpson’s mission was to test fly a Thunderbolt P-47 over Moreton, England. But something went wrong. His plane caught fire and flipped over in the air. As the P-47 hurtled to the ground, witnesses say Lieutenant Simpson managed to guide it away from nearby homes, avoiding certain casualties. Instead that P-47 crashed in a nearby field, killing the 27-year-old pilot.

Today, LT Jay Simpson is still celebrated as a hero in England. In fact, you can find a memorial to him in that grassy field.

But for three generations following Lieutenant Simpson’s death, his heroism was overlooked by his own country. Until a year and a half ago. That is when a young man in Billings, MT, started doing some research. With help from his father and his grandfather, 14-year-old James Simpson discovered

that his great-grandfather Jay never received the recognition he earned as a fallen American hero.

Young Jim Simpson wrote me a letter, saying proper recognition of his great-grandfather’s service and sacrifice would bring about much needed closure for his family.

Indeed, honoring our heroes brings about much needed closure for all Americans. On behalf of a grateful nation, it is my tremendous honor to present LT Jay Simpson’s medals to his great-grandson.

To Jim and all the Simpson family: Let these medals be family treasures that remind you—and all of us—that this Nation will never forget Jay’s heroism. And we will never forget all Americans—known or unknown, celebrated or overlooked—who paid the ultimate price in service to the United States.

It is said that Lieutenant Simpson was a member of the Greatest Generation. But thanks to people like young Jim Simpson, I am reminded that there is greatness in all generations.

Thank you, Jim, for your hard work in allowing us to honor your great-grandfather. God bless you and your family.

REMEMBERING FRANK BUCKLES

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I was honored to participate in the events at Arlington National Cemetery to pay tribute to Frank Woodruff Buckles, the last surviving American World War I veteran and the representative of the lost generation of our “Doughboys.” It was a moving afternoon standing with so many on the knoll and seeing Frank Buckles buried in section 34, in sight of General Pershing’s grave and among many other World War I veterans. I also thought about the American flags at half mast in our embassies in the countries of our World War I allies.

Honestly though, the way I want to remember Frank Buckles is in his study, surrounded by books and telling amazing stories about the adventures of his life. Frank Buckles’ rich and colorful life is now part of our national history, our national consciousness and our national effort to pay tribute to the men and women who died in the most significant wars of the last century.

Frank’s effort to join the Army was a deliberate commitment to join military service and he was eager to get to Europe. He loved the Army and his service in World War I as an ambulance driver which exposed him to some of the worst horrors of that conflict.

After his military service, Frank Buckles continued his efforts to engage the world. His life, a long sweeping arc across the last century, included an exciting and varied life where he traveled the world, working abroad and experiencing things that most of us can only read about. As if he hadn’t endured enough suffering in the First World