

Normandy. An additional 13,000 aircraft supported Allied Forces on D-day.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower—the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe—addressed the troops immediately prior to the invasion, saying:

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force! You are about to embark upon a great crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers in arms on other fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

And by the end of August 1944, all of northern France was liberated and the invading forces were reorganized for the drive into Germany where they would eventually meet up with Soviet forces advancing from the east to bring an end to the Third Reich and its tyranny of terror.

The aftermath of World War II saw much of Europe devastated in a way that is now difficult to imagine. Over 36 million Europeans died in the conflict; 19 million of them were civilians. Millions more were left homeless, the European economy had collapsed, and much of the European industrial infrastructure was destroyed.

But from these ashes of war came the beginning of a new era for international cooperation and diplomacy. In the wake of World War II, the United Nations agreed to outlaw wars of aggression in an attempt to prevent a third world war. With the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, in 1949 and the institutionalization of the Helsinki Accords 25 years later, we committed ourselves to the work that began with the assault on those beachheads—Utah, Omaha, Juno, Sword, and Gold Beach—in June 1944.

The guiding principles of the Helsinki Final Act are the foundations of lasting peace. These principles are worth enumerating: sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty, refraining from threat or use of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity of States, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights, self determination of peoples, co-operation among States, and fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law. Additionally, the Helsinki Final Act reaffirmed mankind's fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief.

Today, we remember the tremendous efforts of Allied Forces as they signaled to the world that unprovoked aggression and genocide have no place in our international order and will be met with our greatest resolve. I am reminded of the Maryland National Guard units who participated in the D-day landings. These brave Marylanders

served with great distinction in the 29th Infantry Division, fighting their way across Western Europe and liberating France and Holland. The 29th Division suffered one of the highest casualty rates of any American division during World War II. We must honor those heroes by safeguarding all that they fought and sacrificed for.

Today, there are one million surviving World War II veterans in the U.S., and 17,346 of them are Marylanders. These same heroes who landed on those beaches in Normandy and parachuted behind enemy lines 70 years ago are joined by veterans who have served in conflicts spanning from the Korean war to the war in Afghanistan. Today, I call on each of my colleagues to commit themselves to the work of meeting our obligations to all of these veterans. The best way to honor their sacrifices is to ensure that we are unwavering in our support for them and their families.

NEVADA'S FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today I wish to congratulate two of Nevada's own, MSG Davis B. Leonard and Private Gaetano R. Benza, for being awarded the National Order of the French Legion of Honor in the rank of chevalier. Their service to our country and dedication to ensuring freedom beyond America's borders earn them a unique place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation.

As we approach the anniversary of D-day, nearly 70 years after World War II, these heroes are being honored with the Legion of Honor, France's highest distinction. Veterans who risked their lives during World War II and fought on French territory have this award bestowed upon them as a token of gratitude from France for defending liberty on their soil. The sacrifices these brave soldiers made set America and the world on a path to peace, freedom, and liberty that we as Americans enjoy today. Master Sergeant Leonard and Private Benza are joining the ranks of other notable Americans, such as GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur and even, as an institution, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, by receiving this honorable recognition.

A highly decorated veteran from Henderson, NV, MSG Davis Leonard served in the U.S. Army Air Force Reserve as part of the 8th Air Force. He was transferred to England, where he flew his first of 64 combat missions as a bombardier and navigator. Master Sergeant Leonard was active in the Battle of Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe. For his service, he earned several medals, including the Distinguished Flying Cross with two bronze and one silver oak leaf medal. Upon his return home, he worked to rebuild our country working for Pacific Telephone Company for 30

years. Now retired at the age of 91, Master Sergeant Leonard resides in Henderson with his wife.

Private Gaetano Benza from Las Vegas, NV, spent 4 months transporting supplies and ammunition to the men on Omaha Beach as a longshoreman for the Port Battalion 297th Port Company. During the invasion of Normandy, Private Benza worked tirelessly, while under heavy enemy fire, to ensure that the soldiers that landed were equipped for battle. After spending 4 months at Omaha Beach, he moved to La Havre, France, where he would remain until the end of the war. Awarded for his service to our country, Private Benza received the World War II Victory medal. Once he returned home, he continued his education and became a barber at Nellis Air Force Base. While retired from the Armed Forces, 89-year-old Private Benza refuses to retire from his active lifestyle and is still a barber in the Las Vegas area.

Their commitment to this country, as well as their dedication to their families and communities, exemplified why the legacy of all World War II veterans must be preserved for generations to come. These veterans truly are the "greatest generation"—selflessly serving not for recognition but because it was the right thing to do. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals but to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

Please join me in congratulating these men for their acts of heroism and valor that helped to defend France from the greatest enemy they or we have ever faced. May we never forget the brave actions by these heroes that allowed the Allied troops to begin a march across Europe and defeat tyranny. Today, I join the Clark County community and citizens of the Silver State to congratulate these courageous men and honorable Nevadans.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO GORDON STEWART

• Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I wish to honor Gordon Stewart, who is retiring from serving as the air traffic manager at Boise Airport.

Gordon channeled his early exposure to aviation, through family members who owned airplanes, into a distinguished career. Gordon got his start in aviation through his military service. He served for 3 years in the U.S. Army, through which he received his air traffic control training. He was a distinguished graduate at Fort Rucker, AL, in both basic and advanced individual training. He then went on to work at various helicopter training airports,

serve in Vietnam, and receive valuable experience working with a wide variety of aircraft at the joint use airfield at Fort Huachuca, AZ.

He utilized the experience and training obtained through his military service in his numerous Federal Aviation Administration assignments that built up his deep knowledge of air traffic control. After returning to his family farm in Montana and serving as acting manager at the Flight Service Station in Cut Bank, MT, he spent 3 years at Missoula International Airport, where he learned about nonradar approach. He went on to work for more than a year at Billings Logan International Airport and then at the Salt Lake City Terminal Radar Approach Control, TRACON, before returning to the Missoula International Airport, where he served as acting air traffic manager before obtaining a position at Boise Airport.

Gordon worked as a supervisor for 12 years at Boise Airport before becoming the air traffic manager for the past nearly 12 years. His leadership during his time there has been instrumental in making the airport successful. The numerous recognitions he received for his outstanding work include multiple facility of the year awards and a Fire Fighting Award for support of fire fighting in the Northwest Mountain Region.

Gordon's effort to remain true to his core values and manage the same way he has parented—fair but firm—has been exemplary. Integrity has been a central element of Gordon's work. He can always be counted on to do what is right. His principled approach to working through considerable challenges has been indispensable. This especially includes his work on the development of the new Boise Air Traffic Control Tower and the effort to locate the TRACON.

Thank you, Gordon, for your outstanding and dedicated service. As you retire, you deserve to reflect on your extraordinary career with pride in a job well done. I hope that retirement affords you more time with your friends and family, including your six children. I congratulate you on your retirement and wish you all the best.●

MINNESOTA POETRY CONTEST WINNERS

● Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, today I am proud to enter into the RECORD the poems of the winners of the 3rd Annual Minnesota Military Children's Poetry Contest. The theme of this year's competition was "Celebrating the Veteran in My Life." Each of the poems submitted by a Minnesota child paid tribute to the men and women who have honorably served and have had a profound impact on the lives of children and families in Minnesota and across our great Nation. Seventy students from kindergarten, middle and high school submitted entries for this year's contest. There were

three age categories for the competition—Kindergarten through 6th grade, 7th through 9th grade, and 10th through 12th grade—and nine poems were chosen as the winning entries.

I want to thank all the students from across Minnesota who helped us honor our veterans for their commitment and service. I also want to recognize and thank the judges of this year's contest: the Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard, MG Richard Nash; Minnesota commissioner of veterans affairs Larry Shellito; Minnesota commissioner of education Brenda Cassellius; and Minnesota poet laureate Joyce Sutphen.

I ask that nine winning poems from the 3rd Annual Minnesota Military Children's Poetry Contest be printed in the RECORD.

"DELVIN MENZE"

(By Riley Menze)

1ST PLACE GRADES K-6

A little boy turned two,
The day Pearl Harbor went boom!
You could call him my grandpa,
You could call him my friend,
You could say his job wasn't that great,
I'd say it was more awesome than cake.
Without him, the crew might've starved,
But they lived through the night,
Have you guessed it yet?
Yep, he was an Army cook.
He might slice potatoes all day,
Or make soup to warm cold souls,
But he is the greatest,
The greatest beyond great.
Today he's a farmer,
A dairy farmer to be exact,
Lives with his wife in the countryside,
Of a little town called Ottertail.
He taught me to milk cows,
Or feed romping heifers,
To drive tractors, four-wheelers,
Plus snowmobiles too.
You could call him my grandpa,
You could call him my friend,
Either way, he's better than a king,
And worth more money than the world.

"THANK YOU TO THE GREAT VETERANS IN MY
LIFE"

(By Sabastian Carlo Cerda)

2ND PLACE GRADES K-6

He is the oldest veteran I know
He is the oldest veteran I love
He is my Lolo, how Filipino grandpas are
called
Philippines is where he was born
and where he served in World War II
He was with the U.S. Army
Lolo only has three toes on one foot
He said one morning during the war
He was shot many times from the sky, from
a Japanese airplane
He lost some toes
My Lolo and Lola wanted to bring the family
to a new country
Called the United States of America
He came to a Veterans Convention in Min-
neapolis 40 years ago
It was very cold with lots of snow
They had a parade or something like that
A friend let him borrow a thick coat to wear
He was very happy and proud to be in the pa-
rade
My Lolo is a strong and brave man
He is honest and wise
Lolo's sons, my three uncles are veterans too
They serve in the U.S. Navy
Lolo is proud of all my Uncles
I am proud of my Lolo and my Uncles

They are all good men
They work so hard in their lives
They make me want to learn and do good
They show me I can do many things too
They teach me to be strong
They teach me to never give up
They teach me to live a good life

"CELEBRATING MY VETERAN"

(By Ellie Wachenheim)

3RD PLACE GRADES K-6

I like to celebrate my mom
The veteran in the house
She isn't really bossy.
And she doesn't scream or shout.
I like to make her happy
I like to make her proud
And she can tell that I try
Because I show her how.
I tell her how to do it
I tell her what to say
I tell her that I love her
In every single way.
I know my mom is smart
So she must know a lot
One thing that she knows
Is that I love her a lot.
When me and my younger brother
Know that my mom's coming home
We get all excited
and call her on the phone.
She says that she loves us
And we tell her that we know
But one of the times she's happy
Is when we celebrate that she's home.

"GRANDPA THE VETERAN"

(By Chineng Vang)

1ST PLACE GRADES 7-9

This poem can be read forwards and
backwards.

You are the best veteran I know
50 years from now, I'll still believe that
You are the greatest
There's no doubt
You're amazing
I'll never forget the fact that
You always try your best
Everyone knows
You're intelligent and smart
The whole military believes
You are gifted
With many talents
You've fought and won many battles
It's clear that
You are special
I wish I could be like you because
You're awesome
There's nothing bad about you because
You always do the right thing
I can always know that
You'll be there for me
Like you did for Grandma
Be the best veteran you can be

"NUMBERS"

(By Ezekiel Town)

2ND PLACE GRADES 7-9

Men in bitter rage of war
People scared and wounded
They bled upon the ground
And I saw only numbers
Many lie forever crippled and wounded
Few will rise again
And I saw only numbers
Every dollar spent on war
A joy never felt by the fallen
Their futures are never told
And I saw only numbers
Their blood is spilt upon the ground
The guilty and the not
Children in their youth
Dead and shot
And I saw only numbers