

Travel to remote regions is inherent to military service. In 1998 alone, the United States had approximately 37,000 men and women deployed to the Persian Gulf region, preparing to go into combat, if so ordered. There were also 8,000 American troops deployed in Bosnia, and another 70,000 U.S. military personnel deployed in support of other commitments worldwide. That is a total of 108,000 women and men deployed outside of the United States, away from their primary home, protecting and furthering the freedoms we Americans hold so dear.

We cannot afford to discourage military service by penalizing military personnel with interest and penalties merely because the unique characteristics of their job makes it difficult to file their taxes on time. Military service entails sacrifice, such as long periods of time away from friends and family and the constant threat of mobilization into hostile territory. We must not use the tax code to heap additional burdens upon our women and men in uniform.

This measure will restore equity and consistency to this tax provision, and, at the same time, provide a small measure of tax relief to our men and women in the military.

I urge my colleagues to join me and my other cosponsors to support this much-needed measure.●

TRIBUTE TO MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM P. BLAND, JR.

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Major General William P. Bland, Jr., a native of Statesboro, Georgia, who after more than four decades of dedicated service to the State of Georgia and to this country as an officer in the Georgia National Guard, is retiring and coming home to the Savannah area. On January 31, 1999, Maj. Gen. Bland will be honored during a retirement ceremony at the 165th Airlift Wing's headquarters in Savannah, where he started his career with the Georgia Air National Guard in 1962.

General Bland began his military service with the 165th Tactical Airlift Group in Savannah and later served as Deputy Commander of the Air National Guard at Air National Guard Support Center at Andrews Air Force Base. During the past eight years he has served as the Adjutant General for Georgia during which time he and his staff responded to blizzards and floods, directed 15,000 National Guardsmen for Olympic security, beefed up training for Guard volunteers, upgraded the state's military capabilities and reorganized the state defense department. As adjutant general, Bland led the Georgia Department of Defense and commanded more than 12,000 volunteer and full-time members of the Georgia Army and Air National Guards.

Bill's most challenging year as adjutant general came in 1996. He super-

vised the largest relocation of an Air National Guard unit in history with the move of the 116th Bomb Wing, which included 1,000 people and eight B-1 bomber airplanes, to Robins Air Force Base near Macon. The bomb wing's move helps ensure Robins' future as a military base because the B-1 is one of the Air Force's newest bombers and will remain in active service for many years to come. Bland also oversaw the 48th Infantry Brigade's deployment to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, and witnessed the deployment of two units of the Georgia Army National Guard to Bosnia.

However, the most demanding duty in Bland's career came with the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta when he organized 15,000 National Guard volunteers from 47 States to help with security. Most recently he restructured the state Department of Defense by changing the department's contracting system and placing the Army and Air Guard recruiting under one office.

General Bland has made a positive impact on the lives of many Americans and personifies the definition of a true and loyal American who sets the standard for all citizens to live by. He is an outstanding example to his family and friends, and has been an asset to the many communities, states and nations that he has touched over the years.

Mr. President, I would like to honor and commend Major General William Bland for his outstanding and innumerable contributions over the years to the State of Georgia and to our entire nation, and I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting and congratulating Bill on his retirement and in wishing him many more joyous and successful years to come.●

SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AND AIRMEN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

● Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee in sponsoring the Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen's Bill of Rights. This legislation addresses the critical need of improving retention in our military services. The President's Budget has too long ignored the challenges facing our military recruiters as they competed against the civilian sector for highly skilled personnel. For too long, we have spend tax dollars training recruits in critical skills such as aviation maintenance, nuclear engineering, and medicine only to have these skills transferred to civilian companies. We need to stop the hemorrhaging and address the problems that underlie this issue.

First, we need to raise the pay of service personnel to keep salaries competitive with civilian equivalents. This bill raises base pay by 4.8% in 2000, with additional pay raises tied to the Employment Cost Index. Second, we

need to provide incentives for active duty personnel to keep longer service commitments. To do this, we need to repair the damage done in 1986 to the military retirement system. This bill re-establishes the pre-1986 retirement system for military personnel who commit to serving their country for 15 years or more. Finally, we need to provide service members with the opportunity to save for their retirement. This bill would allow service members to contribute up to 5% of their base pay, before taxes, into the Thrift Savings Plan. This is the same plan available to all government civilian employees and has already encouraged thousands of government employees to take an active step in their retirement planning. By extending this benefit to the military, we encourage them to think ahead and to save for their retirements.

The quality of our uniformed service is second to none in the world. We owe it to the people standing on the front lines to ensure that their commitment to our country does not include a commitment to debt and poverty. This bill is an overdue first step in improving the quality of life for all of the men and women who serve in uniform. We owe it to them; we owe it to their families. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support its passage.●

CLARK CLIFFORD

● Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, at a time when we risk the ever coarsening of our public affairs, we would do well to remember a man whose service to this country was distinguished as no other for civility and elegance. I ask that this tribute to Clark M. Clifford by Sander Vanocur be printed in the RECORD.

The tribute follows

TRIBUTE TO CLARK CLIFFORD

(By Sander Vanocur at the Washington National Cathedral, November 19, 1998)

The following anonymous poem was sent to Clark Clifford's daughters, Joyce and Randall, by their sister, Faith, who could not be here today:

Think of stepping on shore
and finding it Heaven,
Of taking hold of a hand
and finding it God's,
Of breathing new air,
and finding its celestial air,
Of feeling invigorated
and finding it immortality,
Of passing from storm and tempest
to an unbroken calm,
Of waking up,
and finding it Home.

In the secular sense, Clark Clifford found that home in Washington more than fifty years ago. And having found that home, let it be said that while he was here, he graced this place.

It was a much different place when he and Marny came here, smaller in size but larger in imagination, made larger in imagination by World War II. It may have been, then and for a good time after, as John F. Kennedy