

But most of all I want to say a thank you to Bob Dole, and to Elizabeth, for their service to America. As my tenure as president draws to a close, I have had, as you might imagine, and up-and-down relationship with Senator Dole. But I liked even the bad days. I always admired him. I was always profoundly grateful for his courage and heroism in war, and 50 years of service in peace.

After a rich and long life, he could well have done something else with his time in these last few years, but he has passionately worked for this day, and I am profoundly grateful.

I also want to thank the men and women and boys and girls all across our country who participated in this fund-raising drive, taking this memorial from dream to reality. Their stories are eloquent testimony to its meaning.

Senator Dole and I were sitting up here watching the program unfold today. He told me an amazing story. He said, "You know, one day a man from Easton, Pennsylvania, called our office. He was a 73-year-old Armenian-American named Sarkus Acopious." And he said, "You know, I'd like to make a contribution to this memorial. Where do I mail my check?"—this caller.

So he was given the address, and shortly after, this man who was grateful for the opportunities America had given him, a check arrived in the office, a check for \$1 million.

But there were all the other checks as well, amounting to over \$140 million in private contributions. There were contributions from those still too young to serve, indeed, far too young to remember the war. More than 1,100 schools across our nation have raised money for the memorial by collecting cans, holding bake sales, putting on dances.

Let me just tell you about one of them: Milwaukie High School in Milwaukie, Oregon. Five years ago, a teacher named Ken Buckles wanted to pay tribute to the World War II veterans. He and his students searched out local veterans and invited them to school for a living history day.

Earlier this week, Living History Day 2000 honored more than 3,000 veterans with a re-treated USO show that filled a pro basketball arena. Last year's event raised \$10,000 for the memorial, and students think that this year they'll raise even more.

Now what makes those kids fund raise and organize and practice for weeks on end? Well, many have grandparents and other relatives who fought in the war, but there must be more to it than that. They learned from their families and teachers that the good life they enjoy as Americans was made possible by the sacrifices of others more than a half century ago.

And maybe most important, they want us to know something positive about their own generation as well, and their desire to stand for something greater than themselves. They didn't have the money to fly out here today, but let's all of us send a loud thank you to the kids at Milwaukie High School and their teacher, Ken Buckles, and all the other young people who have supported this cause.

The ground we break today is not only a timeless tribute to the bravery and honor of one generation, but a challenge to every generation that follows. This memorial is built not only for the children whose grandparents served in the war, but for the children who will visit this place a century from now, asking questions about America's great victory for freedom.

With this memorial, we secure the memory of 16 million Americans, men and women who took up arms in the greatest struggle humanity has ever known.

We hallow the ground for more than 400,000 who never came home. We acknowledge a debt that can never be repaid. We acknowledge as well the men and women and children of the home front, who tended the factories and nourished the faith that made victory possible; remember those who fought faithfully and bravely for freedom, even as their own full humanity was under assault: African-Americans who had to fight for the right to fight for our country, Japanese-Americans who served bravely under a cloud of unjust suspicion, Native American code-talkers who helped to win the war in the Pacific, women who took on new roles in the military and at home.

Remember how, in the heat of battle and the necessity of the moment, all of these folks moved closer to being simply American.

And we remember how after World War II, those who won the war on foreign battlefields dug deep and gave even more to win the peace here at home, to give us a new era of prosperity, to lay the foundation for a new global society and economy by turning old adversaries into new allies, by launching a movement for social justice that still lifts millions of Americans into dignity and opportunity.

I would like to say once more, before I go, to the veterans here today what I said in Normandy in 1994: Because of you, my generation and those who have followed live at a time of unequaled peace and prosperity. We are the children of your sacrifice and we thank you forever.

But now, as then, progress is not inevitable. It requires eternal vigilance and sacrifice. Earlier today, at the Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, we paid tribute to the fallen heroes of the United States Ship *Cole*, three of whom have recently been buried at Arlington. The captain of the ship and 20 of the crew members were there today. We honor them.

Next week I will go to Vietnam to honor the men and women America lost there, to stand with those still seeking a full accounting of the missing.

But at the same time, I want to give support to Vietnamese and Americans who are working together to build a better future, in Vietnam, under the leadership of former congressman and former Vietnam POW, Pete Peterson, who has reminded us that we can do nothing about the past but we can always change the future.

That's what all of you did after the war with Germans, Italians and Japanese. You've built the world we love and enjoy today.

The wisdom this monument will give us is to learn from the past and look to the future. May the light of freedom that will stand at the center of this memorial inspire every person who sees it to keep the flame of freedom forever burning in the eyes of our children, and to keep the memory of the greatest generation warm in the hearts of every new generation of Americans.

Thank you and God bless America.

RECOGNITION OF SALISSA WAHLERS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to commend Salissa Wahlers of Gulfport, Mississippi, for her selection to the Peace Corps program. Salissa is teaching English in Uzbekistan, where she will be working for the next two years. This is only Salissa's most recent accomplishment, and it adds to a

long list that has grown throughout her life.

Salissa graduated from Middlebury College where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and sociology/anthropology. She was named Woman of the Year by the Women's Studies Program while at Middlebury. While in college, Salissa participated in the semester abroad program by attending Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Additionally, she attended a winter semester at Berea College in Kentucky as a part of her college's winter term exchange program.

Mr. President, Salissa worked for three years during college to complete her honors thesis, which is very impressive for an undergraduate student. Her hard work paid off when she was able to present part of her thesis at the Northeastern Anthropological Association Conference in Queens, New York, this spring. She is clearly a model student, and she exemplifies the rewards that individuals and society as a whole realize when education is a priority. I know her family, especially her mother, Kemmer McCall of Gulfport, is very proud of her.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it has been over a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Last Tuesday, on Election Day, voters in Colorado and Oregon fed up with such violence voted overwhelmingly to close the gun-show loophole, which extends background checks to all prospective purchasers of firearms at gun shows. Voters in those states recognized the need to pass responsible gun laws that can keep our schools and streets safe. Now, Congress should follow their lead.

Until Congress acts, those of us in the Senate who are committed to enacting responsible gun laws, will read the names of a number of those who have lost their lives to gun violence in the past year. The following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today.

NOVEMBER 14, 1999

Kenneth Jeffcoat, 18, Washington, DC;

George Jones, 20, Washington, DC;

Derrick Rogers, 43, Detroit, MI;

Andrian Thomas, 23, Detroit, MI;

Unidentified male, 25, Long Beach, CA;

Unidentified male, 20, Norfolk, VA; and

Unidentified male, San Francisco, CA.

Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago on November 2, 1999, the last day the Senate was in session.

NOVEMBER 2, 1999

Robert Lee Covington, 51, Memphis, TN;