TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL BLOUNT

- Mr. L. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to a Rhode Island hero.

Mr. President, Lieutenant General John Bruce Blount was just given an Honorary Doctorate Degree from his alma mater, the University of Rhode Island. A former star athlete, a decorated war hero of two wars, a former star athlete who set the still-standing high school basketball record for points scored in a season, in his white uniform and gold braid cap, steered his 253 foot ship into the South Street Seaport, New York City, for the last time. He barked his final commands to the officers, switched off the auxiliary engine, and ended the voyage of tall ships along the East Coast, following the war the U.S. Navy had used to ship the tall ship, and following the war the U.S. Navy had used to train the sailing officers, switched off the auxiliary engine, and ended the voyage of tall ships along the East Coast, following the war the U.S. Navy had used to train the sailing officers.

He barked his final commands to the officers, switched off the auxiliary engine, and ended the voyage of tall ships along the East Coast, following the war the U.S. Navy had used to ship the tall ship, and following the war the U.S. Navy had used to train the sailing officers.

The Providence Journal ran this article. "Hometown Hero Blount to be Honored at URI Graduation," about him.

Mr. President, I ask that the text of the article be inserted in the RECORD. The article follows:

HOMETOWN HERO BLOUNT To Be Honored at URI Graduation
(By David Henley)

KINGSTON—A favorite son will be returning soon.

A decorated hero of two wars, a former star athlete who set the still-standing high school basketball record for points scored in a game over half a century ago and a man who helped end the Army-McCarthy hearings of the 1950s, Lt. Gen. John Bruce Blount will return to the University of Rhode Island this June. Blount will be one of four recipients of honorary doctorate degrees from his alma mater at the school’s 114th commencement May 20.

I’m 50 years away from Kingston, but this is a story I have told many times, and I know people were trying to do this, but I guess the planets were just in the right alignment.

Blount, known as Bruce, is something of a local legend. He’s the former star athlete at URI, where he starred on the basketball team and later was the mascot,” Bruce Blount said. "I grew up knowing more older men, and more athletes, than I knew of kids my age." Back then, Blount would just walk around in sneakers, you had regular street shoes, and coach wouldn’t let me on the floor with them on. So I would stand in the corners during practice, and when the ball came to me instead of tossing it back in I would just put them up. I developed a really different sort of shooting style, but I could do it.

Once he started high school, Blount found himself constantly traveling between gyms, from URI’s Rodman Hall to St. Francis and Old Fagan’s Hall in Peace Dale and Kingston’s. He became a familiar sight on Kingston Road.

"I could get around better than anybody without a car," he said.

That successful basketball career could have led Blount away from Kingston but didn’t. Despite being recruited by schools like Brown and Harvard, Blount knew he wanted to attend URI, then called Rhode Island State.

"There was never any question," he said. "I was absolutely enthralled with the idea of playing for Rhode Island and Frank Keaney was an idol to me." On his way to collecting more than 1,000 points in his college career, Blount also acted as captain of both the basketball and baseball teams. But he also found time to begin what would be his ultimate career. As an ROTC cadet, Blount became cadet colonel in his senior year and was commissioned in the regular Army as a second lieutenant in the Infantry when he graduated in 1959.

Starting out as a training officer in the 4th Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne, he was made platoon commander in Korea the next year, then company executive officer, then company commander in the 65th Infantry. He was selected as aide-de-camp by Maj. Gen. C.E. Ryan, commander of the Korean Military Advisory Group, and returned to the states with Ryan after his injury.

Since then he has worked his way up the ranks, spending time as a staff officer at the Pentagon, in the Southern Command in the Canal Zone and as commander of the 12th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam. In 1969 he was made secretary of the U.S. Army Infantry School in Fort Benning, Ga., and in 1971 was assigned to the Pentagon as deputy chief of the International Military Advisory Group, eventually serving as community commander of the American Military Community in Wurzburg, Germany.

Initially, in 1983, he was promoted to lieutenant general and made chief of staff of the NATO Allied Forces South Command, consisting of units from Greece, Turkey, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"I always followed Bruce, did whatever he did, only not as well," said little brother Frank Friday. "When he was in the NATO command, I thought that was a big deal. But I had the most fun when he was on the general’s staff at DIX when he was stationed somewhere. And whenever he needed anything, they would come to me and I would call up, say, the motor pool and tell them I needed a Jeep. They’d ask who I was and I’d say "Lieutenant Blount." I had his best command voice and get whatever it was I needed.

"Of course it only lasted about a month before everybody figured it out. So at the NATO Allied Forces South Command I was Lieutenant Blounts on base, but we would begin to laugh our heads off whenever I told him what I was doing."

"I always had time in my life I was ‘Bruce Blount’s brother,’” he said. “And to this day I am very proud of that.”