

reduced while quality decision-making is maintained and improved unless and until additional resources are made available—resources needed to hire additional personnel and train them appropriately.

Critically needed additional funding must be requested by the Administration. Alternatively, the backlog will continue to increase and the time taken to resolve it will likewise continue to increase. Surely this will not honor our veterans.

The question today is how soon will VA exhaust funds to pay for the costs of needed additional staff? What other programs are being cut to cover the costs of the additional employees desperately needed to adjudicate claims? How many veterans will die while awaiting the adjudication of their claims? This is certainly no way for a grateful nation to honor its veterans.

Mr. Reyes and I have today introduced H.R. 1981. This bill would authorize an emergency supplemental appropriation to provide the funding needed to address the crisis in VA claims adjudication that exists today. I call on President Bush to support this legislation or submit a similar request to the Congress now.

This Memorial Day, our Nation's veterans will be the subject of many finely crafted speeches delivered to honor them. Words, however, are not enough. Our deeds are a better measure of how well we truly honor our veterans. The need for additional resources is real. Claims adjudication is, and will remain for some time, a labor-intensive work. Let our deeds match our words of commemoration and remembrance. Let us provide the critically needed funding to pay for the resources needed to address the backlog and let us do this now.

During the campaign for President, then candidate Bush said, "health care for veterans is a complicated, bureaucratic process involving too many delays and uncertainties in coverage. Disability compensation claims can be an even longer ordeal, taking an average of 165 days to complete. So chaotic is the process there is now a backlog of nearly one-half million claims. This is no way to treat any citizen, much less a veteran of our Armed Forces. The veterans health-care system and the claims process will be modernized, so that claims are handled in a fair and friendly way." Mr. President, I agree and now is the time for you to act.

Candidate Bush also said, "I have great faith in those who serve our nation—in the temper of their will and the quality of their spirit. Our men and women in uniform love their country more than their comfort. They have never failed us, and we must not fail them." Mr. President, we must not fail those who have served and sacrificed. Take action now to request the additional funding so desperately needed for our Nation to keep faith with our veterans. It is time for your words and deeds to be one.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN DAVE WALKER

HON. C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American, Dave Walker, who today will be laid to rest in Arlington Cemetery. Captain Dave Walker served his country on the sea, in the sky, and among the stars.

Captain Walker graduated from the United States Naval academy in 1966, completed his flight training, and became an F-4 Phantom Pilot. He led many combat missions over Vietnam. After returning from Vietnam, Dave became a test pilot and helped the Navy transition from the F-4 to the F-14 Tomcat that is still flown today. During his naval career, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, six Air Medals, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, among others.

In 1978 Dave was selected by NASA for astronaut training and graduated in 1979. He served in many important support roles, including chase plane pilot for STS-1, and mission support leader for STS-5 and 6. Dave first went into space aboard the Space Shuttle discovery during Mission STS 51-A in 1984—the first salvage operation completed in space.

Dave Walker returned to space in 1989 as commander of STS-30 aboard the Space Shuttle *Atlantis*. Dave and his crew again contributed to scientific knowledge by launching the Magellan space probe to Venus. He also commanded the Space Shuttles *Discovery* and *Endeavour* on important missions in recent years.

After leaving NASA in 1996 Dave Walker entered the private sector, and he and his wife purchased a home in McCall. Dave quickly advanced as President of the Idaho Aviation Association and the Idaho Aviation Foundation, and worked tirelessly to promote and protect the aviation community. He was particularly interested in working to reopen Cascade Reservoir Air Strip, one of the most beautiful fields in Idaho.

Sadly, Dave will never get the chance to fly into Cascade Reservoir airstrip again. He was diagnosed with cancer in March and passed away on April 23rd. He is survived by his wife Paige, his children Michael and Mathieson, and a grateful nation. Heroes are buried in Arlington Cemetery, but heroes like Dave Walker will live on in the lives of the people he fought to protect in Vietnam, the knowledge he contributed to space technology and aviation, and the friendships he made in Idaho.

RECOGNITION OF GLENN ROYAL BATTY

HON. GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, JR.

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2001

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, this coming weekend, the United States will observe Memorial Day and honor the service of America's soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. As

we take time this weekend to reflect on the sacrifices of members of our Armed Forces, I commend to the attention of my colleagues a poem written by a constituent, which I am entering into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Glenn Royal Batty, of Spokane, Washington, has authored a moving poem entitled "The Soldier," which serves as a reminder of both the hardships of military life and the dedication of the American soldier. As Mr. Batty noted in a personal letter introducing his poem, "There can be no greater sacrifice than to give one's life for another but no greater shame than to spend life for less." I urge my colleagues to take a moment from their busy lives and reflect upon the message in this poem.

THE SOLDIER

(By Glenn Royal Batty)

I am one of a chosen few, a warrior of might. And I will stand or I may fall, but I will join the fight.

I am he who fights for you, throughout history.

While vain men speak of glory, to hide hypocrisy.

The captain calls for volunteers, to mount a bold defense,

While shades are drawn and shutters closed with indifference.

And as the ranks are gathered, above the rolling plain.

The soldier takes his courage into battle once again.

Battle is begun, and with it fear's perfume. When this day is done, we'll see a bloody moon!

As you sing of glory and righteousness of cause,

We march courage six abreast, into the devil's jaws.

There to face our destiny with honor or in shame.

But to face it not, is not a thing we know, or can explain.

You won't feel my deadly steel or taste this fearsome blade,

But it will haunt your dreams at night, until its price is paid.

And you might wish to turn away, before the bugle sounds.

For righteousness is hard to find within a battleground.

Battle is begun! May God be on our side. We pray a kingdom come, where peace may yet abide.

For fame or notoriety, what is the value there?

For land or grudge, we cannot see. What purpose? I declare!

For names, twice whispered on men's lips or tails of great renown,

We will march to battle, for honor is our crown!

Battle is begun! The day is warm, the wind blows sweet.

It stirs the banners with each breath, While valiant souls together meet to share ignoble death.

Battle is begun no matter where or when, We will fight and die. That's how it's always been.

I am one of a chosen few You're not to blame, It's what I do.

And if God's mercy will decree, with hardened heart and strength of will,

Throughout the flow of history, I will be fighting still.