

accomplished their rescue while sailing through one of the heaviest-laid mine fields in the history of naval warfare with no mine detectors. They had no anti-aircraft guns in case of an air attack. Radio contact with other ships was forbidden for security reasons. To add to the prolonged tension, the ship was carrying a large supply of jet fuel.

The *Meredith Victory* arrived at Pusan on the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula on Christmas eve but was not allowed to land because the port was already overflowing with refugees and rescued American troops. Captain LaRue wrote later of "these people aboard who, like the Holy Family many centuries before, were themselves refugees from a tyrannical force." The ship did land safely on Christmas Day on Koje-Do island, fifty miles southwest of Pusan.

One of the Navy officers who participated in the Hungnam evacuation was the late Admiral Arleigh Burke who became Chief of Naval Operations. He later said, "As a result of the extraordinary efforts of the men of the *Meredith Victory*, many people are now free who otherwise might well be under the Communist yoke. Many unknown Koreans owe the future freedom of their children to the efforts of these men."

Larry King, the talk show host, said "Ship of Miracles' will make you proud to be an American."

The book has already won its first award. Mr. Gilbert has been awarded the Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt Naval History Prize, awarded annually by the New York Council of the Navy League. The Council's president, Rear Admiral Robert A. Ravitz (USNR, ret.), said Mr. Gilbert was selected "because his book tells a story of American heroism and humanitarianism which has gone overlooked for 50 years and should be told and made a shining part of our military history."

Admiral Ravitz added, "At a time when we are reading other stories about what American forces did or didn't do in Korea and elsewhere, Mr. Gilbert has made a valuable contribution to American history of revealing this story of both the bravery and the goodness of America's men in time of war."

For these reasons, our nation owes a debt to Bill Gilbert on this Memorial Day for writing a book which reminds the American people of that forgotten war and of an heroic incident in that war by the brave men of the S.S. *Meredith Victory*.

IN RECOGNITION OF OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of "Older Americans Month." Since 1963 when President Kennedy began this important tradition, each May has been des-

ignated as a time for our country to honor our older citizens for their many accomplishments and contributions to our Nation. Those of us who have worked diligently in the U.S. Senate to ensure that older Americans are able to live in dignity and independence during their later years look forward to this opportunity to pause and reflect on the contributions of those individuals who have played such a major role in the shaping of our great Nation. We honor them for their hard work and the countless sacrifices they have made throughout their lifetimes, and look forward to their continued contributions to our country's welfare.

Today's older citizens have witnessed more technological advances than any other generation in our Nation's history. Seniors today have lived through times of extreme economic depression and prosperity, times of war and peace, and incredible advancements in the fields of science, medicine, transportation and communications. They have adapted to these changes remarkably well while continuing to make meaningful contributions to this country.

Recent Census figures reveal that the number of Americans 85 and older grew 37 percent during the 1990's while the nation's overall population increased only 13 percent. Baby boomers, who represented one-third of all Americans in 1994, will enter the 65-years-and-older category over the next 13-34 years, substantially increasing this segment of our population.

At the same time the number of older Americans is skyrocketing, they are in much better health and far less likely than their counterparts of previous generations to be impoverished, disabled or living in nursing homes. More older Americans are working and volunteer far beyond the traditional retirement age to give younger generations the benefit of their wisdom. These figures show that commitment to programs such as Medicare and Social Security, and investment in biomedical research and treatment are improving the quality of life for older Americans. One of our national goals must be to ensure all older Americans experience these improvements. We must continue to enact meaningful legislation to help meet the needs of this valuable and constantly expanding segment of our society.

By 2020, Medicare will be responsible for covering nearly 20 percent of the population. Yet 3 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries lack affordable, prescription drug coverage. Though Medicare works, it was created in a different time before the benefits of prescription medicines had become such an integral part of health care. Today it is unthinkable to think of quality healthcare coverage without including the medicines that treat and prevent illnesses. I have and will continue to fight for Medicare prescription drug

coverage. As a cosponsor of the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Act of 2001, I recognize the predicament many older Americans are in as they struggle to live independently on a fixed income and afford costly prescription drugs. It is imperative that we address the needs of the Americans who have devoted so much of their life experience and achievement to better our society.

The celebration of Older Americans Month provides us with the opportunity to highlight the importance of the Older Americans Act. As a vigorous and consistent supporter of measures to benefit older Americans, I am pleased that Congress and President Clinton reauthorized this important legislation last year. I commend my colleague from Maryland, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, for her tireless efforts in pressing for enactment of The Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000. This legislation funds a dynamic network of community and home-based services so critical to many of our Nation's seniors, including home care, ombudsman services for residents in long-term care facilities, and subsidized employment for older workers.

One of the most beneficial provisions of the Act is the creation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program. The Administration on Aging estimates that each day, as many as 5 million older Americans are recipients of care from more than 22 million informal caregivers. On average, these caregivers will limit their professional opportunities and lose an average of \$550,000 in total wage wealth as they care for their loved ones. Women are 50 percent more likely to be informal caregivers, and as a result, they are more likely to risk their health, earnings and retirement security. As programs such as Medicare and Medicaid continue to feel the pressures of the current Federal budget process, the noble and compassionate work of these dedicated individuals is particularly critical. The National Family Caregiver Support Program addresses the challenges faced by informal caregivers. It authorizes funding for distribution of information to caregivers regarding available services, caregiver training, and respite services to provide families temporary relief from caregiving responsibilities.

I have always believed strongly that this wise population contributes greatly to American society. Our Nation's older generations are an ever-growing resource that deserves our attention, our gratitude, and our heart-felt respect. As observance of Older American Month comes to a close, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to implement public policies that affirm the contributions of older Americans to our society and ensure that they continue to thrive with dignity.