

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, is there an order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 10 minutes in morning business.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Thank you, Mr. President.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETURN OF AMERICAN POWS FROM VIETNAM

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my Congressman. The House of Representatives is paying tribute today to our Vietnam prisoners of war. It was 25 years ago this month that those brave men began returning home to America.

Among those heroes was SAM JOHNSON. SAM was a prisoner 6 years 10 months 18 days and 23 hours, which he can tell you to this day.

All of us who know SAM know he is a fighter. He was called "diehard" by his North Vietnamese captors.

SAM was one of 11 prisoners whose total defiance to prison authority resulted in banishment to a high security prison that was dubbed "Alcatraz." The prisoners were placed in tiny cubicles in an earthen-walled facility that was dug out of the center courtyard of the North Vietnam Ministry of Defense in downtown Hanoi. SAM and the other 10 wore leg irons and suffered from severe malnutrition.

SAM's defiance continued to the end, until February 13, 1973, when SAM boarded a plane at Gia Lam Airport to return home.

Our Nation recognized SAM JOHNSON's contributions by making him one of the most highly decorated aviators of his era. During SAM's military career, he was awarded two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, one Bronze Star with Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Air Medals, and three Outstanding Unit awards.

Mr. President, I would like to note also that here in the Senate there are many heroes from among us from World War II, the Korean war and the war in Vietnam.

Today, 25 years after the POWs in Vietnam began to come home, it is also appropriate to recall the sacrifice made by our own colleague, my good friend, JOHN MCCAIN. JOHN returned from Vietnam after his own capture and imprisonment 25 years ago next month.

Patriots like Senator JOHN MCCAIN and Congressman SAM JOHNSON remind us of what makes America great—honor, courage, and duty. They enrich the Congress and remind us every day of the important responsibility we have as stewards of the young men and women in our armed forces. As we prepare for a possible conflict in Iraq, I have no higher priority than that those troops will get everything they need to do the job if they are sent.

As Americans we have many things for which to be thankful. But perhaps

we should be most thankful for the brave Americans throughout our history who have fought the wars to keep America free. It is their sacrifice that has preserved democracy. It is their sense of patriotism and duty that Americans must always embrace if we are to remain free. Commemorating this 25th anniversary is one way that we will make sure that Americans do not forget the sacrifices that have been made for us to be able to stand here in this Senate Chamber and speak on an unfettered basis and openly and freely.

I want to say that I am proud that SAM JOHNSON is my Congressman. I also want to pay tribute to his wife, Shirley. Shirley and SAM are friends of Ray's and mine, and have been for years.

But Shirley is a hero, too. Sometimes we do not talk about those who were left home for 6 years to raise the children, to give them the hope and strength and love that both parents would normally give. It is to the Shirley Johnsons, also, that we owe a great debt of gratitude, because she was there never giving up, making sure that America never forgot that some were missing and some were imprisoned. She, too, should be commended today on this 25th anniversary.

I am honored to serve with SAM JOHNSON and Senator JOHN MCCAIN. As we honor them, we make sure that those who came home know how much we appreciate them. And, most of all, we remember those who did not come home.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Alaska is recognized to speak for up to 20 minutes.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair and wish the President a good morning.

(The remarks of Mr. MURKOWSKI pertaining to the submission of S. Con. Res. 76 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. I believe I reserved a block of time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 30 minutes.

Mr. GRAMM. Let me say to my dear colleague I will not take all of that time.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, SAM JOHNSON

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak on two topics. The first is that our dear friend and colleague, Congressman SAM JOHNSON, one of America's great warriors and one of America's great individuals, came home from Hanoi 25 years ago today, having been held as a prisoner of war for almost 7 years.

SAM grew up in Dallas. He graduated from Southern Methodist University. He went into the Air Force. He became one of the great pilots in the postwar period. He commanded the Top Gun school. He was a Thunderbird.

In fact, Senator MCCAIN loves to tell the story about the time when he and SAM were campaigning together in Texas—as all of you know, Senator MCCAIN was a great aviator in his own right and a great warrior and a real American hero—and he loves to tell the story when he and SAM were on a plane riding in the back and they came in pretty fast, and SAM calmly turned to Senator MCCAIN and said, "We're going to run off the runway." Senator MCCAIN said, "What makes you think so?" just as they hit the railing and went off the runway.

The point being that SAM JOHNSON was a great aviator. He was flying a mission over North Vietnam. He was shot down. He was taken to prison in Hanoi. The North Vietnamese correctly concluded that he was a diehard and a recalcitrant, so they put him in solitary confinement year after year, basically a dugout, a little dungeon.

After 7 years in prison, enduring almost unbelievable hardship, he came home 25 years ago.

Now, the remarkable thing about all this is not all the medals that SAM JOHNSON won. We honor those and we should. It is not really the hardship that he endured, though I doubt many of us would be capable of doing it. But what is remarkable to me is that after 7 years in a dungeon in Hanoi, SAM JOHNSON came home and started his life again. He never complained about the 7 years he lost. You never see him that he doesn't have a smile on his face. He is a sweet, gentle, loving man. It is remarkable to me that somebody could go through 7 years of that kind of hardship—hunger, exhaustion, fear, physical and mental abuse—and yet come back home and be all the things that SAM JOHNSON is.

I wanted, on this 25th anniversary of the day that he came home to America, to stand on the floor of the Senate today and say to our colleague, Congressman SAM JOHNSON, that we are proud of him and that we are proud to associate with him. For most of us, the highest credential we are ever going to have other than being members of our family and being associated with our kinfolks is that we served in Congress. Many of us get whatever stature we might have from the position we hold, a position that was given to us in trust by the voter. But SAM JOHNSON is one of those rare people who brought stature to Congress with him when he came. He is a wonderful man. I love SAM JOHNSON.

I think in an era where there are a lot of people who kind of think politicians don't represent the best that America has to offer, that somehow politicians aren't exactly the kind of people you want your children to grow up to be, I ask them to look at Congressman SAM JOHNSON. He is the kind