

Annapolis, Merchant Marine, or Coast Guard. It always impresses me when I hear from some of them who have either told me about their experiences or, in fact, have written on issues that may concern them relative to our country.

I had a great opportunity last week to receive over my fax, obviously, a letter from a proud father, George Liedel, who is a doctor in Sebring, Florida, at Highlands Regional Medical Center. He sent this from Jennifer, Jennifer Liedel, his daughter who is at West Point. I nominated her in 1997. She sent this Friday, February 23, from her computer to her mom and dad. The subject: "I think this puts things in perspective as to where our priorities really are as a nation."

On 18 February 2001, while racing for fame and fortune, Dale Earnhardt died in the last lap of the Daytona 500. It was surely a tragedy for his family, friends and fans. He was 49 years old with grown children, one who was in the race with him. I am new to the NASCAR culture, so much of what I know has come from the newspaper and TV. He was a winner and earned everything he had. This included more than "\$41 million in winnings and 10 times that from endorsements and souvenir sales." He had a beautiful home and a private jet. He drove the most sophisticated cars allowed, and every part was inspected and replaced as soon as there was any evidence of wear. This is normally fully funded by the car and team sponsors. Today, there is no TV station that does not constantly remind us of his tragic end, and the radio already has a song of tribute to this winning driver. Nothing should be taken away from this man. He was a professional and the best in his profession. He was in a very dangerous business, but the rewards were great.

Two weeks ago, seven U.S. Army soldiers died in a training accident when two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters collided during night maneuvers in Hawaii. The soldiers were all in their twenties, pilots, crew chiefs and infantrymen. Most of them lived in substandard housing. If you add their actual duty hours, in the field, deployed, they probably earn something close to minimum wage. The aircraft they were in was between 15 and 20 years old. Many times parts were not available to keep them in good shape due to funding. They were involved in the extremely dangerous business of flying in the Kuhuku Mountains at night. It only gets worse when the weather moves in as it did that night. Most times no one is there with the yellow or red flag to slow thing down when it gets critical. Their children are mostly toddlers who will lose all memory of who 'Daddy' was as they grow up. They died training to defend our freedom.

I take nothing away from Dale Earnhardt but ask you to perform this simple test. Ask any of your friends if they know who was the NASCAR driver killed 18 February 2001. Then ask them if they can name one of the seven soldiers who died in Hawaii 2 weeks ago.

18 February 2001, Dale Earnhardt died driving for fame and glory at the Daytona 500. The Nation mourns. Seven soldiers died training to protect our freedom. No one can remember their names, and most do not even remember the incident.

For the record, the six identified casualties were Major Robert L. Olson of Minnesota; Chief Warrant Officer George P. Perry and Chief Warrant Officer Gregory I. Montgomery, both of California; Sergeant Thomas E. Barber of Champlin, Minnesota; Specialist Bob D. MacDonald of Alta Loma, California; and Specialist Rafael Olvera-Rodriguez of El Paso, Texas.

She hits pretty much the nail on the head, as they say. We are completely smitten by personalities and successful stars, rock stars, TV actors, and others; and we give scant appreciation to those who serve in the military.

Those men who just were mentioned, who died training for this country, deserve more than my speech on the floor or her memo. I hope it brings us to call to mind that the great bravery exhibited by our men and women in uniform, those on the police departments, our schoolteachers, our firefighters, you name the profession who works for the public, deserve more than thinking their life's work does not deserve headlines or certainly does not deserve the appreciation of our country.

I salute Jennifer for bringing this memo to my attention. I salute her for her service to West Point, and I praise our country for those young people who choose to serve our country in uniform.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

INDIA EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to speak about the continued relief efforts in India after the massive 7.9 earthquake that rocked the nation in January. After the earthquake, I came to the floor to request USAID to double the amount of assistance it was sending to India, from \$5 million to \$10 million.

Today, more than \$13 million has been sent. This is a good start; but clearly, the \$13 million is not enough to address the continued struggles India, particularly Gujarat, is facing at this time.

The havoc on the ground in terms of human suffering must be understood. Our friends in India will be facing monsoons very soon. We must move fast to ensure all support possible to prevent epidemic and further tragedies in the earthquake's aftermath.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address five strong areas where I think we could continue to help. Several of these ideas were discussed at a subcommittee hearing of the Committee on International Relations by several of my colleagues who visited the region after the earthquake.

First, I ask the World Bank and the Asian Development Fund to move quickly to approve India's petition for soft-window or low-interest loans funding. The ADF recently finished its appraisal of the Gujarat disaster and increased its earlier estimate of aid loans from \$350 million to \$500 million. This increase in the appraisal by the ADF clearly demonstrates the terrible need on the ground.

The President of the Asian Development Bank has pledged his support, and I laud him for that; but currently this proposal is held up before their board. The board is meeting late March to decide the \$500 million funding for ADF's Gujarat Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project.

Now normally the Asian Development Fund does not offer concessional loans to India due to India's size, but clearly Gujarat is in the midst of a great human and fiscal disaster and definitely merits these loans. We as a donor country can and must ask the ADF to make this exception.

Second, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Office of Management and Budget to improve 416(b) disaster mitigation funding. This proposal sent by nongovernmental organizations in India to the U.S. Department of Agriculture allocates estimated relief at 60,000 metric tons of vegetable oil and other commodities, valued at over \$32 million for this year. This proposal, originally designed for aid to the entire country, is now being focused on Gujarat in light of the earthquake.

We must understand that this region suffered a horrible drought in the last 2 years, so this is an emergency within an emergency. The proposal has gone through technical reviews, has received positive endorsements from USAID, State Department, and the Department of Agriculture, but is still stalled at OMB. I encourage OMB to release this funding for India immediately.

Third, Mr. Speaker, we must focus on detailed talks between the Indian National Government and FEMA to help create a FEMA-type model for India. Currently, there is an active debate in India about creating an agency like FEMA, and the Indian Government has shown great interest in collaborating with the U.S. Government. The FEMA talks are currently in the how-to stage. We must move quickly so we can implement the plans expeditiously as possible.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, we must also work with local governments in India to help create a local response system similar to ones we have in the United States, in Fairfax, Virginia, and Miami, Florida. This would certainly improve rescue operations and help minimize loss of life in the crucial hours after disaster has struck.

In addition, we should have technical experts from the earthquake-prone