

He will be sorely missed by all of us who have had the honor of working with him.

Roger, I wish you fair winds and following seas. It has been an honor to represent you in the U.S. Senate.●

TRIBUTE IN REMEMBRANCE OF LTC FLOYD JAMES THOMPSON

● Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the late LTC Floyd "Jim" Thompson. He spent 9 excruciating years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam fighting for his life and our Nation. As the longest-held prisoner of war, Colonel Thompson embodies the core values of the American soldier. He survived because of his spirit, courage and determination, and will forever stand as an American hero. Colonel Thompson should be remembered for his service to our great country and the tremendous sacrifices that he made. I ask that an article by Mr. Tom Philpott be printed in the RECORD.

AMERICA'S LONGEST-HELD PRISONER OF WAR REMEMBERED

Army Col. Floyd "Jim" Thompson, the longest-held prisoner of war in American history, died July 16 in Key West, Fla. At age 69, his heart finally gave out, ending one of the most remarkable lives among heroes of the Vietnam War. Thompson's death came 34 years after fellow POWs thought they saw him die in Bao Cao, the nickname of a cruel prison camp in North Vietnam. It was also 25 years after Thompson saw every dream that had kept him alive in Vietnam shattered in the aftermath of our longest war, a conflict vastly different from the war against terror in Afghanistan. "I am a soldier. Period," Thompson would say if asked about the political correctness of the Vietnam War. End of argument, and an icy stare.

Through nine years of torture, starvation, and unimaginable deprivation, Thompson showed us the resiliency of the human spirit. He refused to die, and until death had a willfulness that inspired awe. He survived on dreams of returning home to a loving wife, four adoring children, and a grateful nation. When none of that squared with reality, years of bitterness followed.

The avalanche of challenges at home, Thompson believed, did not diminish his heroics or steadfast resistance before the enemy. Those who saw his strength agree that what he endured, and how, won't be forgotten. By the spring of 1968, Thompson had been held in jungle cages and dank prison cells more than four years, all of it in solitary confinement. The experience turned a 170-pound Special Forces officer into a "skeleton with hair," said one POW, describing Thompson at first sight. His appearance literally frightened other Americans, most of them soldiers captured in the Tet offensive. Warrant Officer Michael O'Connor/glimpsed Thompson through a crack between wall and cell door. He was inches away, leaning against his own cell bars.

"This guy is dead, I thought," O'Connor told me for Glory Denied, my book about the Thompson saga. "As part of some cruel joke, I thought they had stuck a corpse up against the door. Then I realized he was moving." Dick Ziegler, a captured helicopter pilot, heard Thompson say he had been shot down in March 1964. Ziegler did a quick calculation, and began to cry. "Eyes sunk way back in his head, cheekbones sticking out. . . . He scared me to death. I understood then what

was waiting for me," Ziegler said. As the days passed, O'Connor heard Thompson scratching every morning against the other side of this cell wall.

"One day I asked him what he was doing. 'Standing up,' he said. Standing up! It took him half an hour. . . . Every day I heard him standing up." Months later, during a routine indoctrination session for POWs, Thompson collapsed into a violent convulsion. That amazing heart was in seizure, probably from starvation, doctors later surmised.

"A couple of us were told to carry him back to his cell," O'Connor recalled. "We didn't see him move." Guards came later and took Thompson away. The other POWs figured he was dying if not already dead.

Before leaving Vietnam in 1973, they learned he survived and his mystique grew, particularly among soldiers. His five years of solitary ended April 1, 1969, when he was tossed into a cell with three other Americans, including Lew Meyer, a Navy civilian firefighter. Meyer and Thompson began an astonishing daily exercise regime, leading to escape, Thompson's fifth attempt, in the fall of 1971. The pair avoided recapture in North Vietnam for two days. For his courage and leadership in this incident, the first observed by other POWs, Thompson would receive the Silver Star.

At home, within a year of losing her husband, Alyce Thompson saw her support structure collapsing. She decided to move her four children into the home of a retired soldier, and pose as his wife. She instructed the Army to withhold Thompson's name from POW lists. For years, the Army complied. By the time Thompson was freed, in March 1973, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Everett Alvarez had returned and been celebrated as the longest-held POW. Thompson became a backpage story except in his hometown newspaper.

At first, he didn't care. He was struggling to fulfill dreams of family and career. He and Alyce tried to save their marriage, with devastating consequences for the children. Thompson himself wasn't well-armed for that task, battling alcoholism, depression, and a deep sense of betrayal that never eased.

After losing his family, Thompson fought to save his career. Again, alcohol interfered, aggravating a nine-year professional gap with officer peers. Thompson never blamed the Army or the war for his troubles. He suffered a massive stroke in 1981, which forced him to retire. Disabled, he moved to Key West and shut himself off from family and friends. His identity as a former POW, as longest-held, made life worthwhile. He had flag poles installed in front of his condominium complex so one could fly the POW-MIA flag. A bronze plaque mounted nearby refers to Thompson, the resident hero. Bolted to the fender of his new black Cadillac are two large U.S. flags, fit for a motorcade. His license plate reads "POW."

Thompson left instructions to be cremated and, without ceremony, that his ashes be spread at sea—unless, at time of death, he had been awarded the Medal of Honor. In that case, with his sacrifices properly recognized, he wanted to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Whether Jim Thompson deserves the nation's highest military honor, others will decide. Surely, for what he gave, he deserved more than he got.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following joint resolution was read the first time:

S.J. Res. 43. Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to guarantee the right to use and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and the national motto.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-8402. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Libya that was declared in Executive Order 12543 of January 1986; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8403. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8404. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report concerning the continuation of the national emergency with respect to Iraq beyond August 9, 1990; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8405. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Payments for Cattle and Other Property Because of Tuberculosis" (Doc. No. 00-105-1) received on July 30, 2002; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-8406. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fee Increases for Overtime Services" (Doc. No. 00-087-2) received on July 30, 2002; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-8407. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Acephate, Amitraz, Carbaryl, Chlorpyrifos, Cryolite, et al.; Tolerance Revocations" (FRL7191-4) received on July 31, 2002; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-8408. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fludioxonil, Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL7188-7) received on July 31, 2002; to the