

suppressing enemy fire. Once the perimeter was finally secured, Lieutenant Ray assisted in collecting the remains of the soldiers killed in the helicopter crash.

Shortly afterwards, the stillness was broken by yet another attack and a firefight resumed. During the next 30 minutes of battle and under fire, Lieutenant Ray ran to and from each gun vehicle's position, directing counter fire and ensuring adequate ammunition. The mission was complete and all personnel and sensitive equipment attempted to withdraw to the airfield. Lieutenant Ray directed his rear security gun vehicle to assume the lead and, again, enemy militia began firing with small arms and RPG's, inflicting casualties. With four blocks to go, Lieutenant Ray remained dismounted and slowly moved south, deftly crossing intersections proven treacherous by prior American casualties.

From the onset to outcome, Lieutenant Ray was first in and last out. He performed his duty with bravery and poise. He is a decisive leader who inspires fierce soldier loyalty, trust, and cohesiveness. Because of his quick and intelligent decisions, and due to his confident direction, Lieutenant Ray's platoon, under the most extreme battle conditions, provided the decisive ingredient to the success of the mission. Due to his combat performance, Firman Ray is deserving of the Silver Star for distinctive recognition as an exceptional soldier and leader of men.

I commend Major Ray for his heroic efforts in Operation Restoration Hope and I am proud that he receives the Silver Star today. He exemplifies valor, bravery, and courage. Major Ray put his life on the line to defend our country. He put his life on the line to save his men. For that, we all owe him a huge debt of gratitude.

We are proud to call MAJ Firman Ray a Montanan. And as Montanans and Americans, we are eternally grateful for his selfless service to our country, which has made our Nation a safer place and has helped to promote and defend democracy across the globe.

Firman, as you know, receiving a Silver Star Medal is quite an accomplishment. I can think of no one more deserving than you. From one Montanan to another, thank you for your commitment to your country, service to your community, and for making America safer for each and every one of us. ●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which

was referred to the Committee on Finance.

(The nomination received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:48 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 254. An act to revise the boundary of the Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park in the State of Hawaii, and for other purposes;

S. 867. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 710 Wick Lane in Billings, Montana, as the "Ronald Reagan Post Office Building"; and

S. 1718. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3710 West 73rd Terrace in Prairie Village, Kansas, as the "Senator James B. Pearson Post Office".

The message also announced that the House passed the following bills in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 280. An act to establish certain National Heritage Areas, and for other purposes;

H.R. 1189. An act to increase the waiver requirement for certain local matching requirements for grants provided to American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes;

H.R. 1204. An act to amend the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 to establish requirements for the award of concessions in the National Wildlife Refuge System, to provide for maintenance and repair of properties located in the System by concessionaires authorized to use such properties, and for other purposes;

H.R. 1274. An act to direct the Administrator of General Services to convey to Fresno County, California, the existing Federal courthouse in that county;

H.R. 1651. An act to provide for the exchange of land within the Sierra National Forest, California, and for other purposes;

H.R. 1658. An act to amend the Railroad Right-of-Way Conveyance Validation Act to validate additional conveyances of certain lands in the State of California that form part of the right-of-way granted by the United States to facilitate the construction of the transcontinental railway, and for other purposes;

H.R. 2130. An act to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 121 Kinderkamack Road in River Edge, New Jersey, as the "New Bridge Landing Post Office";

H.R. 2907. An act to provide for a land exchange in the State of Arizona between the Secretary of Agriculture and Yavapai Ranch Limited Partnership;

H.R. 3287. An act to award congressional gold medals posthumously on behalf of Reverend Joseph A. DeLaine, Harry and Eliza Briggs, and Levi Pearson in recognition of their contributions to the Nation as pioneers in the effort to desegregate public schools that led directly to the landmark desegregation case of *Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka et al.*; and

H.R. 3300. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15500 Pearl Road in Strongsville, Ohio, as

the "Walter F. Ehrnfelt, Jr. Post Office Building."

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 69. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Althea Gibson should be recognized for her ground breaking achievements in athletics and her commitment to ending racial discrimination and prejudice within the world of sports; and

H. Con. Res. 313. Concurrent resolution to urge the President, on behalf of the United States, to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in recognition of his significant, enduring, and historic contributions to the causes of freedom, human dignity, and peace and to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of His Holiness' inauguration of his ministry as Bishop of Rome and Supreme Pastor of the Catholic Church.

ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills and joint resolutions:

S. 1066. An act to correct a technical error from Unit T-07 of the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System;

S. 1590. An act to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service, located at 315 Empire Boulevard in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, New York, as the "James E. Davis Post Office Building";

S. J. Res. 18. Joint resolution commending the Inspectors General for their efforts to prevent and detect waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the Federal Government during the past 25 years; and

S. J. Res. 22. Joint resolution recognizing Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture for 50 years of outstanding service to the Nation through agricultural research.

The enrolled bills and joint resolutions were signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

At 4:52 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1824. An act to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to reauthorize the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1813. An act to amend the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 to authorize appropriations to provide assistance for domestic and foreign centers and programs for the treatment of victims of torture, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 6:20 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1588. An act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2004 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities