

National Defense Medal and a Purple Heart. Brandon Sturdy died a hero fighting to preserve freedom. He was a brave patriot whose presence will be missed. I am proud of the model of service he provided to Iowans and I again offer my condolences to his family.

MAJ. WILLIAM E. BURCHETT

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave man who served in the Indiana Air National Guard unit stationed in Terre Haute, IN. Major William E. Burchett, 35 years old, died during a training mission when the F-16 he was flying collided with another F-16 fighter jet, just west of Indiana on Monday, May 17, 2004.

Bill graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1991. A native of Michigan, Bill moved to Terre Haute in 2000 after leaving active duty and being reassigned to the 181st Fighter Wing. He was a seasoned fighter pilot with over 2,300 flight hours in various military aircraft, which he flew while bravely serving our Nation on numerous occasions, including missions in Kosovo, Bosnia, Yugoslavia and Saudi Arabia. His love of flying also spilled over into his civilian career. When Bill wasn't training in his Air Force flight suit, he was working in his FedEx pilot uniform flying around the packages and supplies that help keep our Nation's economy moving forward.

Bill was a man of great faith as well as a hardworking and brave airman. He leaves behind his wife, Deborah who is expecting their third child in a few weeks and his two sons, ages six and two years old. May Bill's children grow up knowing that their father gave his life to help defend our great Nation and ensure that children in other countries, like Kosovo and Iraq, will some day know the freedom they enjoy.

Today, I join Bill's family, his friends, and the entire Indiana community in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over his death, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely training and fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Bill, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of grief.

When looking back on the life of his late parishioner, Bill's minister, Mark Grayless told the Terre Haute Tribune Star that he "was a fantastic family man. He was a really neat guy and great with his kids." Bill was known for his wonderful sense of humor, his unfailing patience and the incredible love he shared with his wife and small children. According to his friends, Bill's passion for flying may not soon be forgotten for his oldest son was quoted as having proudly pronounced that he, too, wanted to be a pilot, just like his dad.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of William E. Burchett in the official

record of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. When I think about the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families such as Bill's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Bill.

MONUMENT IN TRIBUTE TO "THE GREATEST GENERATION"

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the dedication of the long overdue World War II Memorial is a moment in time that we will always remember.

I am so pleased that many Vermont veterans from the WWII will be on hand for this solemn, and triumphant, occasion.

No monument—even one so grandly placed as this gleaming tribute in stone is, between the Washington and Lincoln Monuments—can fully capture the full enormity of the service and sacrifice of the 16 million soldiers, sailors, airmen and others who served in uniform during those 5 years of war and struggle. Yet with its marble expanse, majestic pillars, and carefully chiseled engravings, this memorial will forever stand as a symbol of the Nation's appreciation for those who served and for those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

World War II was truly an epic struggle. It was a struggle that would determine the very direction of humanity, whether militarism and Nazism would supplant freedom and democracy. Every American soldier understood the purpose and the stakes of that war. They unwaveringly answered the call to duty, they won the war, they returned home, and then the greatest generation soldiered on further to also win the peace.

We in Vermont often pride ourselves on our healthy skepticism of centralized government. Yet we are early and arduous in rallying to the Nation's defense in disproportionate numbers to our relatively small population, from the Civil War onward. In World War II nearly 50,000 men from the State of Vermont fought the axis powers. More than 1,200 Vermonters lost their lives in the war. At home and overseas, Vermont women also made great contributions to the war effort, and 1,400 of them served with our armed forces.

Today a new generation of veterans is being minted. I have had the honor of meeting many of the young men and women who are serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. These soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines tell me time and time again that they look over their shoulders to take pride and courage in the examples set by our World War II veterans, as well as our veterans from more recent wars.

On behalf of all Vermonters, as an American citizen, and as a member of one of several grateful generations, I welcome our proud veterans to Washington on the occasion of the dedication of the World War II Memorial. We thank you for all that you have done, and our Nation will forever honor your sacrifices.

We cannot thank you enough, but we can, and we will, always remember.

MEMORIAL DAY 2004 AND WWII MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, on this Memorial Day, I encourage my fellow New Mexicans to take a few moments to remember those Americans who have given their lives in the name of freedom. The freedom we enjoy today remains only because of their courage and unselfish sacrifice.

American men and women, throughout our Nation's history, have fought and died because they believed in their country and believed in preserving its immeasurable blessings. Many gave their lives for her in a far away land, and failed to make it back to the country or family they loved.

With this upcoming remembrance, I am reminded of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. Holmes gave us some of the best thoughts, and his speech and writings, as a whole, will always be among the best of their kind.

On May 30, 1884, Holmes delivered a Memorial Day address before John Sedgwick Post No. 4, Grand Army of the Republic. The address reflected on the Civil War and during his address he focused on a question posed to him by a young man, about why people still kept up Memorial Day. In his wonderful style he gave attention why Memorial Day is what it is.

He said, "Not the answer that you and I should give to each other—not the expression of those feelings that, so long as you live, will make this day sacred to memories of love and grief and heroic youth—but an answer which should command the assent of those who do not share our memories, and in which we of the North and our brethren of the South could join in perfect accord. . . . but Memorial Day may and ought to have a meaning also for those who do not share our memories."

One month ago on April 29, 2004, the National World War II Memorial opened for public view. The memorial is the first national memorial dedicated to all who served during the WWII. The formal dedication will take place this Memorial Day weekend as a service and tribute to members of the World War II generation, and to share their memories. The memorial honors all military veterans of the war, the citizens of the time that stayed on the home front, and the America's moral purpose that ultimately warranted our nation's involvement.

The memorial was authorized by Congress in 1993, and this year's Memorial Day celebration on the National