

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEDICATION OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, over the weekend, South Dakota honored a debt long overdue.

With the dedication of the South Dakota Korean War Memorial on the capitol grounds in Pierre, our State paid tribute to the extraordinary heroism of those men and women who defended freedom and democracy on the Korean peninsula.

More than 1.8 million Americans fought in the Korean war, facing some of the fiercest fighting the world has ever seen.

More than 36,500 soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice in this effort, including nearly 200 South Dakotans. Another 103,000 Americans were wounded.

The cause for which they fought, and the freedom they won, is clear today for all to see.

On the south side of the 38th parallel lives a prosperous, free nation, fully welcomed into the family of nations.

On the north side, 22 million Koreans live under tyranny and in hunger.

The regime is rightly condemned for its abuse of its own citizens and their fundamental rights, and is an international outcast due to its spreading of missile technology and weapons-of-mass-destruction technology throughout the world.

The map shows nothing more than a line separating the two. But in a real sense, what separates North from South Korea is the heroism of the American soldiers who fought there.

Several years ago, under the direction of Sheila Hansen, a teacher in the Spearfish Middle school, the children of South Dakota set out to tell the stories of each of the 2,200 South Dakotans who gave their lives in World War II.

The project is called Fallen Heroes, and the stories of heroism these children uncovered taught all South Dakotans a lesson about the true meaning of patriotism and service.

Recently, Sheila Hansen asked her class to do the same for those South Dakotans who gave their lives in the Korean war.

I commend and thank Sheila and her eighth grade class at Spearfish Middle School, as well as Stanley County Middle School teacher Shirley Swanson, whose seventh grade class joined in the effort.

Together, the students prepared biographical profiles for those South Dakotans who lost their lives in service to their country during the Korean war.

One of the young men and women profiled was Walter Baptist LaPointe, from Mosher, SD.

Walter was the youngest of eight children born to Albert and Elizabeth Ringing Shield LaPointe.

Like so many Native Americans in South Dakota and across our country, Walter felt an obligation to serve his country.

Walter enlisted at the age of 19 and was sent overseas in 1951. Just 4 months after arriving in Korea, Walter was killed in an intense firefight near Homang-ni. He was awarded a posthumous Silver Star for "gallantry in action" and I would like to read from his citation.

It says:

As Company F attacked Hill 347, Private LaPointe moved ahead of the company line, seeking out and firing on enemy emplacements.

Ignoring the intense fire the foe was directing on the area, Private LaPointe displayed superb courage and determination by advancing whenever possible and setting up his weapon in unprotected but commanding positions.

He bravely continued in this manner, providing much needed automatic weapons fire for his comrades, until mortally wounded. Private LaPointe's gallantry reflects the highest credit on himself and the military service.

Walter was buried at the Advent Cemetery near his home in Mosher. His mother Elizabeth was touched by the warmth local veterans displayed at her son's passing.

The following Spring, Elizabeth decided to serve lunch to the local American Legion Post. She decided to make it a tradition, and each year since the Legion Post in Mosher has enjoyed a luncheon served by the LaPointe family.

Even after Elizabeth's passing, the tradition continues, and still today the members of the local Legion Post know the enduring gratitude of the LaPointe family.

Many friendships have been built over the years and a special connection between the family and Mosher's veteran community has grown. Speaking of the tradition, a family member recently said:

In this manner, we will forever preserve [Walter's] memory.

Indeed, they have done much more than that. With their generosity, they have strengthened the ties of friendship between the citizens of South Dakota and the men and women who fight to protect them. They have shown our veterans that their service will never be forgotten.

This, too, is the ultimate contribution of the Fallen Heroes project and the South Dakota Korean War Memorial dedicated this past Saturday.

Because our country was still war-weary from the end of World War II, few returning Korean war veterans were greeted with the ticker-tape parades and community celebrations that were common after World War II. The Korean war became known as the Forgotten War.

For the 12,000 Korean war veterans still living in South Dakota, and all those with whom they served, we have a simple message—you will never be forgotten.

The statue that stands on the capitol grounds in Pierre will be an enduring reminder of your contribution. But even this memorial is just a token of the gratitude and reverence South Dakota feels for you. The true memorial to your heroism is cast not in bronze, but in the hearts of millions of Koreans whose freedom you won, and in the memories of the Americans inspired by your courage.

We thank you for your service, and we salute your valor. And we will always remember.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CELEBRATING THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, every event memorable enough to be recorded becomes a part of history. But some events define and shape history with the force of plate tectonics, moving the world onto a new path. On September 17, 1787, just such an event occurred when the Constitution of the United States was signed.

I hold this Constitution in my hand.

With the adoption of this document, a new and powerful nation was created. That Nation, our Nation, still guided by the powerful hand of God in many ways and certainly still guided by the governmental structure laid out in this Constitution, is the heavyweight champion of world politics and the global economy. Actions of our Government influence world events with a speed and force of a category 5 hurricane.

The Declaration of Independence was historic. And I have it, too, here in my little book which I carry in my shirt pocket—the Declaration of Independence. The signers of that Declaration of Independence committed treason against the king. And those brave men—and they were men—who signed the Declaration of Independence, any one of them, each of them, could have been arrested, thrown into prison, sent to England in chains, and executed.

So we ought to ponder those men, their lives and those documents that they signed. We don't often enough think about the sacrifices they made, the risks they were willing to take as they pledged their lives and their fortunes and their sacred honor.

The Declaration of Independence was historic, for without it and the events that it set in motion there would be no fledgling United States of America.

The surrender at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, was also historic, marking the successful conclusion of the War for Independence. Without that surrender, there would be no United