

Kirkland, WA. He was killed Nov. 19, 2004, as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

Army SSG Aaron N. Holleyman, 26, of Glasgow was killed Aug. 30, 2004, in Khutayiah, Iraq, when his military vehicle hit an improvised explosive device.

Marine LCpl Kane M. Funke, 20, who attended high school in Kalispell before moving to Vancouver, WA. He was killed Aug. 13, 2004, as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

Marine Cpl Dean P. Pratt, 22, of Stevensville, who died Aug. 2, 2004, also as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province.

Army PFC Owen D. Witt, 20, of Sand Springs was killed May 24, 2004, in Ad Dawr, Iraq, when his armored high-mobility-multipurpose-wheeled vehicle rolled over.

Army Reserve 1 LT Edward M. Saltz, 27, of Bigfork was killed Dec. 22, 2003, in Baghdad when the convoy in which he was riding was hit by an improvised explosive device.

Army Ranger PFC Kristofer T. Stonesifer, 28, of Missoula was killed Oct. 21, 2001, in a Blackhawk helicopter crash in Pakistan as a part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Army 1 LT Josh Hyland, a Missoula soldier who enlisted in ROTC at the University of Montana on Sept. 12, 2001, was one of four Americans killed in Afghanistan when a bomb detonated underneath a wooden bridge they were passing over.

This old Marine was lucky to come home from service in Korea. These brave souls for whatever reason were not. I thank them for what they did to protect my family and others across this country and around the world. They did not die in vain and will not be forgotten. We, as a nation, mourn the loss of every soldier, sailor, airman, and marine.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

TRIBUTE TO WARRANT OFFICER ADRIAN B. STUMP AND SERGEANT TANE TRAVIS BAUM

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, the Bible tells us that "Greater love than this has no man than to lay down his life for his friends." I rise this morning to pay tribute to two American heroes from my home town of Pendleton, OR, who made the ultimate sacrifice by laying down their lives for their friends, their country, and the cause of freedom.

WO Adrian B. Stump and SGT Tane Travis Baum were two of five soldiers who were lost in the crash of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter as it was returning from an ongoing operation in southern Afghanistan.

Warrant Officer Stump was 22 years of age. He was the son of Jerry and Anne Stump, who instilled in Adrian the values of hard work, honesty, and integrity. He was a graduate of Pendleton High School, and he was well known in my community for being an

outstanding young man, who always had a smile on his face. Like many east Oregonians, he loved the outdoors and could often be found hiking, fishing, and camping.

Adrian always dreamed of flying helicopters. And after he graduated from high school, there was no question of what he wanted to do. He wanted to serve his country. Indeed, he recently expressed to a friend of mine how great it was to be able to wake up in the morning and do what one loves to do.

SGT Tane Travis Baum was 30 years old. He was married to his high school sweetheart, Tina, and they were the parents of two beautiful children, Caelan and Dyllon. Sergeant Baum also loved the outdoors and flying helicopters. While it was difficult for Sergeant Baum to leave his family behind to serve his country, he carried out his duty like the true hero he was.

The author Herman Wouk once wrote:

Heroes are not supermen. They are good men, and embodied by the cast of destiny, the virtue of a whole people in a great hour If America is still the great beacon in dense gloom, the promise to hundreds of millions of the oppressed that liberty exists, that it is the shining future, that they can throw off their tyrants, and learn freedom and cease learning war, then we still need heroes to stand guard in the night.

As of today, Warrant Officer Stump, Sergeant Baum and more than 50 Oregonians have lost their lives keeping the promise of liberty to millions, the promise our forefathers first made and the charge that is ours to keep. They stood guard in the night and have earned the gratitude of our Nation.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER THOMAS E. BLAKE

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Navy Pilot LCDR Thomas E. Blake of Spencer, NE.

Lieutenant Commander Blake was a selfless and honorable man whose commitment and service to his country were exemplary. As a 1990 graduate of Spencer-Naper High School, Blake went on to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1994. Blake was an 11-year veteran of the Navy, and had been stationed at Sea Control Squadron 32, based at Jacksonville, Florida for the past 6 months.

On September 21, 2005, LCDR Thomas Blake died at the age of 33 when an S-3B Viking jet crashed near Jacksonville Naval Air Station, killing Blake and LCDR Scoot Bracher of Malverne, NY. Blake was the naval flight officer and mission commander on the flight.

Lieutenant Commander Blake is survived by his wife Jessica, a native of Gretna, NE. Thomas and Jessica are the parents of a 2-year-old son, and Jessica is expecting their second child soon. I would like to offer my sincere condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Lieutenant Commander Blake. His noble service to the United States of America is to be respected and remembered by all. Every Amer-

ican and all Nebraskans should be proud of the service of brave military personnel such as LCDR Thomas E. Blake.

STATEMENT ON BURMA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, many of us who closely follow the struggle for freedom in Burma have, over the years, repeatedly called upon the U.N. Security Council to discuss and debate the dire situation in that country that poses an immediate danger to the Burmese people and the entire region.

Our collective efforts may finally be gaining steam thanks to a report commissioned by former Czech President Vaclav Havel and retired South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu that in painstaking detail makes the case that the situation in Burma has the same factors that triggered Security Council consideration of tragedies in Rwanda, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Liberia, and Yemen.

I encourage my colleagues to read last Friday's Washington Post editorial entitled "A Plan to Free Burma," which highlights the Havel-Tutu report and the need for U.N. action on Burma. While I agree that the administration can and should do more to support a Burma initiative at the United Nations, I am confident that as a stalwart friend of freedom, Ambassador Bolton will make this a priority for himself and his staff. I encourage Secretary Rice to continue to make this effort a priority, as well.

Let me close with a brief word urging the United Kingdom to find its voice on Burma at the United Nations. Given Britain's history with that Southeast Asian country, Prime Minister Blair and senior officials at the Foreign Office should keep in mind that Burma's myriad problems—including humanitarian crises—are political in nature and require a political solution that involves the active participation of the National League for Democracy and ethnic minorities. Let us not forget that this is a country where the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria had to terminate its grants because of the obstructionist policies of the SDPC.

I am reminded that this year marks the 60th anniversary of the Burma Campaign of World War II, the longest British battle of that war. I hope our allies across the Atlantic will continue to show the same grit and determination in supporting freedom in Burma today as they did last century.

RESPECTING GUN LAWS IN DC

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, we owe it not only to the people who live and work in Washington, DC and the millions who visit, but to all Americans to do what we can to prevent gun violence in our nation's capital. It is important that we also respect the wishes of DC residents as they work to address the

problems of gun violence in their own communities. Unfortunately, legislation introduced earlier this year would undermine both of these objectives.

Among other things, the misnamed District of Columbia Personal Protection Act would repeal local laws in Washington, DC that ban the sale and possession of unregistered firearms, require firearm registration, impose common sense safe storage requirements, and ban semiautomatic weapons.

Elected officials and community leaders throughout Washington, DC, have made clear their opposition to this bill and any other attempt to roll back Washington's local gun safety laws. In recent months, many groups around the country working to end gun violence have also expressed strong opposition to the proposed repeal of local gun safety laws in Washington, DC. In July, 44 national, state, and local organizations issued an open letter to Congress opposing the so called District of Columbia Personal Protection Act. Among the groups who signed the letter were the United States Conference of Mayors, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Black Police Association, Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, and the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. Their letter said:

The citizens of the District of Columbia should have the power to decide by democratic means whether and how firearms are regulated in the city where they live. DC's current gun laws were passed almost 30 years ago by an elected city council, and these laws continue to enjoy broad support among business executives, law enforcement officials, health care professionals, civic organizations, and ordinary citizens. When legislation to repeal DC's gun laws was introduced last year, it generated widespread opposition—and attracted virtually no support—among DC residents.

While this bill has not yet been considered in the Senate, the citizens of Washington, DC, continue to face attempts to roll back their local gun safety laws. During consideration of the fiscal year 2006 District of Columbia appropriations bill, the House of Representatives adopted an amendment strongly supported by the National Rifle Association which would prohibit funds in the bill from being used to enforce a local requirement that District residents keep their firearms unloaded and disassembled or bound by a trigger lock in their homes. Fortunately, the current Senate version of the bill does not include a similar provision and I am hopeful the House-passed language will not become law.

The Senate should respect the will of the people of Washington, DC, with regard to local gun safety laws. I hope the Senate will focus its efforts on legislation that will help make communities across our Nation safer, not on steps which would make our Nation's Capital less safe.

I ask unanimous consent that the above-mentioned letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JULY 15, 2005.

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR: We are writing to express our strong opposition to S. 1082, a bill that would strip the District of Columbia's voters and elected officials of the power to pass gun laws.

The citizens of the District of Columbia should have the power to decide by democratic means whether and how firearms are regulated in the city where they live. DC's current gun laws were passed almost 30 years ago by an elected city council, and these laws continue to enjoy broad support among business executives, law enforcement officials, health care professionals, civic organizations, and ordinary citizens. When legislation to repeal DC's gun laws was introduced last year, it generated widespread opposition—and attracted virtually no support—among DC residents.

DC has made great strides in recent years, both in reducing violent crime and in encouraging people to establish businesses, buy homes, and build their lives in the city. The city's finances are in order (it has an "A" rating from bond analysts), the homicide rate is down (by 55 percent over the past ten years), and commercial as well as residential real estate markets are booming.

The city has many challenges ahead, but its citizens and political leaders are working to build consensus and solve problems like any other municipality in the country through vigorous debate, hard work, and participation in democratic political institutions. While some members of Congress might have different ideas about what's good for the city, we believe the choices made by DC citizens and their elected representatives in local government should be entitled to respect.

The debate over S. 1082 is about democracy, not the Second Amendment. By denying the citizens of DC—who have no representation in Congress—the right to decide how best to protect public safety and reduce violent crime, this bill would violate basic American values, and we urge you to reject it.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Justice, Americans for Democratic Action, American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, Break the Cycle Washington, DC, CeaseFire Maryland, Ceasefire NJ, Ceasefire PA, and Children's Defense Fund;

Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, Common Cause, Consumer Federation of America, DC Action for Children, DC Democracy Fund, DC Vote, The Episcopal Church, USA, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Florida Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, and Florida Consumer Action Network;

Hoosiers Concerned About Gun Violence, Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, Iowans for the Prevention of Gun Violence, Jewish Women International, The League of Women Voters of the United States, Legal Community Against Violence, and Maine Citizens Against Handgun Violence;

Michigan Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Black Police Association, National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, and North Carolinians Against Gun Violence Education Fund;

Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence, Oregon Consumer League, Physicians for So-

cial Responsibility, Saferworld, States United to Prevent Gun Violence, and United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries;

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, United States Conference of Mayors, Virginians Against Handgun Violence, Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort, and Women Against Gun Violence (California).

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to inform my colleagues as to why I missed voting on the motion to table Senator COBURN's amendment No. 2005 to the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2006. At the time the vote occurred, I was attending the funeral of a longtime employee and friend, Shawn Bentley.

Should I have been present, I would have voted in favor of tabling the amendment, which would not have changed the outcome of the vote.

GI EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, the original G.I. bill in 1944 made a sacred bargain: honor our troops for their sacrifice, and keep faith with our veterans by helping them readjust to civilian life. Historically, G.I. bill educational benefits have risen and fallen—at times covering over 100 percent of the cost of tuition, books, supplies and other educational costs. And we know how valuable its benefits have become in recruiting the world's finest military.

But each year, the G.I. bill covers a little bit less of the cost of education in this country. It's a cruel mathematical calculation—the cost of a university education is growing faster than the benefits provided by the G.I. bill. Our troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world fight just as hard and sacrifice just as much as any in American history. Yet the G.I. bill—this great act of gratitude that transformed America 60 years ago—has not kept pace. Today, our troops return home to a G.I. bill that covers only 63 percent of the average price of a 4-year public secondary education. The result is veterans struggling to afford the education they were promised and have earned.

The U.S. Congress should never break promises to our veterans—like 28-year-old Jeff Memmer. As a member of the U.S. Navy, Jeff served two deployments in the Persian Gulf between 1996 and 2002. When he came home, he had to take out tens of thousands of dollars in emergency loans and work part time as a bartender to get through school because costs kept outpacing benefits. He said, "When I started putting a plan together in 1999, the benefit would have covered two-thirds of my tuition and costs. By the time I got to college, the tuition had increased so much it only covered half, and by the time I graduated it was only covering a third of my expenses." We are not proposing that veterans live in luxury while they earn their degrees. But clearly, it shouldn't be this hard.