

growing and now offer opportunities that have never been available to our Native Americans in the history of our State. More Montanans are working today and owning their own homes than at any other time in the history of our State.

I had the honor of serving with three Presidents, and one could say four, as it was in the closing days of President Reagan's term. They are all honorable men and dedicated to this Nation. I know what it is like to be in the minority, and I know what it is like to be in the majority. One great statement was made: "The majority is more funner."

I have enjoyed my work with some of the best men and women in the Senate who represented both sides of the aisle, from different regions of our country and diverse cultures of our country. I will miss them. But we have welded some friendships that will last forever. The same could be said of nations to which we have traveled and met national and international leaders on all continents.

During my tenure here, we have witnessed the crash of the Berlin Wall, freedom in the market base come to the Eastern block in Europe, and the electricity that was in the House of Representatives when a newly elected President of Poland made his historical speech in a joint session. I will tell you what: It brought joy, tears, and pride to all of us in that Chamber.

Like every Member of Congress, I wept when two of our Capitol policemen died on that summer day protecting this Capitol and us who live and work here. Still, our hearts go out to their families. They will never be forgotten.

I leave with many memories. I ask the Senate to return to the deliberative and collegial body it was designed to be. I know it has that ability because I have seen it firsthand. But the challenges ahead are tremendous for this Government. I can only list about six of them: taxation, regulation, energy, health care, education, and litigation. We must face those challenges if we are to live in this free entrepreneurial and economic country. I suggest that we don't just dwell on the national interests first and all others separate.

Members of this body are just average men and women, but they have the capabilities of rising to any occasion of crisis. They are just average, but they also have a higher degree of dedication to our country. I never underestimated any Member of the Senate, and I regard them as quiet heroes in a time of peace and in a time of turmoil and even in the most stressful time in the process of developing legislation that sets policy for our land.

I shall miss all of you. It has been my great privilege to serve with you. As I leave, I say God bless you all.

I yield the floor and 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. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL ROBERT F. ECKFIELD, JR.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor this morning to pay tribute to Marine LCpl Robert F. Eckfield, Jr., from Cleveland, OH. On October 27, 2005, Lance Corporal Eckfield died from injuries sustained in Iraq. He was 23 years of age at the time.

Lance Corporal Eckfield is survived by his father Robert, his mother and stepfather Virginia and Norman Taylor, and younger siblings Nathan, Rachel, and Norman, Jr.

Even from a very young age, Robert knew he wanted to serve in the Marines. He was adventurous, loved being outdoors, and had a strong sense of duty and patriotism. In addition, Robert's family had a long tradition of military service. His grandfather had been a marine and fought in World War II and Korea. His Uncle Bill served in the Marines at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. And Marine Cpl Derek Wright is Robert's cousin and the two enlisted together after the terrorist attacks on September 11. According to Corporal Wright, Robert wanted to be in the Marines ever since he was 12 years of age.

Robert worked hard for the privilege of wearing the Marines uniform. While working odd, part-time jobs, he enrolled in Cleveland Christian Academy and attended night classes so that he could earn his high school diploma. Immediately after graduating in 2002, Robert joined the Marines. As his mother said:

Right from the start, he wanted to [fulfill] his duty. He went right into boot camp after graduation.

Virginia was worried about Robert's decision, but she supported him because she knew how important the military was to her son. Their family drove down to Parris Island, SC, to celebrate his graduation from boot camp.

Robert was a truly brave marine. According to his family, he had his mother promise that he would be buried in Arlington if anything ever happened to him in Iraq during his third tour of duty. Robert served willingly and never questioned his duty.

In Iraq, Robert served with the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force based in North Carolina. Robert was an outstanding marine, someone who always gave it everything he had. He served with passion, honor, and dedication.

Two fellow marines who served with Robert in Iraq wrote the following to their friend on an Internet tribute Web site:

[Eckfield] was one of the most outstanding marines we had. . . . [We] want everyone to

know that Eckfield had something no other junior marine had . . . and that was heart. Eckfield never complained about anything, and he was one of the best we had.

Robert fell in love before he left for Iraq. His girlfriend was Beth Dunkle. She wrote the following words of tribute to Robert:

Bobby was a great man. We were only together for a short time, but it felt like we knew each other our entire lives. There was a connection the moment we met. Our journey started there, and my love for him will never die. He is a true hero. Words can't express how much I love him and miss him.

Robert and Beth were able to spend some time together before he left on his third deployment. Beth visited him at Camp Lejeune where Robert filled a room with rose petals, champagne, bouquets, and chocolate-covered strawberries. Beth said they talked about everything—from Robert's ambition to be in law enforcement after leaving the service to the future in general and them sharing it together for a lifetime.

In the words of Robert's mother:

He just fell in love with a wonderful woman named Beth. . . . When he was home in September, they talked about how happy they would be when he could return home for good in April, and they could be together. He sent her roses on Sweetest Day.

When Robert died, although Virginia would have liked to have had her son closer to her in Ohio, she honored his last request to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. On November 5, 2005, nearly 60 family members and friends traveled there for the service where Marine GySgt Barry L. Baker presented Robert's mother a flag in her son's honor.

Robert was a young man who had a bright future before him. He planned to attend college when he returned from Iraq and aspired to a career with either the Central Intelligence Agency or the State Department.

Robert will be dearly missed by everyone who knew him. Teachers who knew him when he attended John Marshall High School in Cleveland were so proud of his accomplishments as a marine and devastated when they heard of his death.

According to family friend Steve Dever, all activity at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport halted when Robert's body arrived. In Steve's words:

I'm glad to see he's getting a hero's funeral.

Before he was buried at Arlington, a memorial service was held in Robert's honor at St. Luke Lutheran Church in Cleveland. Robert's cousin, Richard Samkas, said he and Robert grew up like brothers, and that he remembers him as a "fun, outgoing kid [who] always had some things funny to say." After the memorial service, these were Richard's words:

If there is any way I'd want someone to remember him, it's his honor—the way he honored the military every time he put on that uniform.

The world is a better place because Robert lived among us. He was a young

man of courage and compassion, someone who served our Nation with honor and distinction. My wife Fran and I will continue to keep his family in our thoughts and in our prayers.

LANCE CORPORAL JEREMY SHOCK

Mr. President, this morning I come to the Senate floor to honor Marine LCpl Jeremy Shock. This Green Springs, OH, native died on November 19, 2006, when the vehicle he was riding in hit an improvised explosive device near Fallujah, Iraq. He was 22 years of age at the time.

Jeremy had only been in Iraq since mid-September when the incident occurred. He served as a machine gunner while in Iraq and also repaired weapons in the armory.

Friends and family said Jeremy always put others before himself. One of his former roommates Seth Mahon said this of Jeremy's selflessness:

Jeremy was the greatest guy I ever met. . . . He was the guy who, if he only had \$5 and you needed it, he was going to give it to you. He never asked for help. If you were having a bad day, he would make it a good day.

A 2002 graduate of Clyde High School, Jeremy was a lineman on the football team and set an example for his fellow classmates and teammates. During Jeremy's funeral, his uncles carried his football jersey and a football. The flag hung at half staff at the high school where his brother Zack is a sophomore and his sister Sara is a freshman. Jeremy's High School principal, Joe Webb, said this of Jeremy shortly after his funeral:

Jeremy was a great kid. He was the type of kid that was a leader through example. He would give you a great effort every time. Whatever you asked him to do, you know he would give his maximum effort and get it done. There's just no better young man who's come through Clyde High School than Jeremy Shock.

That is what his high school principal said.

After graduating from high school, Jeremy enrolled in Tiffin University. His friend Lacey Cherry remembers the first time she met him, a few days after they moved in at school. Jeremy, a large football player, would run around the dorms introducing himself to every person he met. Lacey said, "Ever since then, we had been really, really close."

Jeremy's roommates at Tiffin, Seth Mahon and Jake Tidaback, remember how Jeremy was smart, how he worked hard, and how he always would make them laugh. They recall how important joining the Marines was to him. According to Jake, there was no one who could serve our country better than Jeremy. In his words:

Jeremy was simply the typical best friend, the kid who would be there whenever you needed him. He was always happy. If you would be having a bad day, he would make it a good day.

Jeremy enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves prior to his senior year at Tiffin. He decided to join while he was interning for the International Criminal Police Organization in the summer of

2005. He then graduated with a degree in criminal justice in the spring of 2006.

Jeremy always had a positive outlook on life—an attitude he maintained while serving in Iraq. He kept in touch with his former Tiffin roommates Seth and Jake through e-mail. They remember that while Jeremy would say that serving in Iraq had its "ups and downs," he always concluded that things "didn't seem too bad." As Seth said, "Jeremy just wasn't a very negative person."

Last April, Jeremy married Clara, his college sweetheart. The two met while they were both attending Tiffin. They were married while Jeremy was home for a 3-day leave. Bonnie Tiell, former assistant athletic director and tennis coach at Tiffin University, remembers how caring Jeremy was and how he loved Clara completely. Jeremy's family and friends remember how much he was looking forward to returning home so he could spend more time with her.

During Jeremy's funeral, Clara read the last letter she wrote to him, and I would like to read an excerpt from that letter:

You've made me the happiest woman on Earth. You always give me support when I need it. Even when you're far away, you're here for me. I really don't know yet what I'm going to do without you in my life.

Jeremy will be missed by all who knew him and all who loved him. As his former roommate Seth said:

He will definitely be missed. He's taking a lot of hearts with him.

Jeremy was a humble man who never wanted to be in the spotlight. He took pride in serving his country, and he was someone full of purpose with a strong sense of duty. The military recognized Jeremy's leadership and his drive. He was honored with a National Defense Service medal and a certificate of commendation.

I would like to conclude my remarks with the words from a prayer that was posted on an Internet tribute Web site in Jeremy's honor, and this is what it said:

O Lord, into your hands, we humbly entrust our brother. In this life, you embraced him with your tender love; deliver him now from evil and bid him enter into eternal rest.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep Jeremy and his wife Clara, his father and mother, Duane and Sherry, and his brother and sister, Zack and Sara, in our thoughts and in our prayers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, first, I thank my colleague from Ohio. He has taken on a special responsibility for fallen soldiers from his State to come to the floor and pay tribute to each of them. It involves a great deal of work on his part to put together the record of their lives. It also involves a great deal of commitment on his part. He shows again to Members of the Senate that he is a man with great heart, and I know that he speaks not only for himself and his family but for all of us in extending our condolences to the

2,899 American soldiers who have fallen in the war in Iraq. I thank him for doing this on behalf of his State, and I join him in his salute.

IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a few moments ago, the Iraq Study Group presented their report. This is an historic document. It is 142 pages long and easily read. Within the confines of this publication is a very important message. I want to salute, first, the members of this Iraq Study Group. These men and one woman have risen to the call of public service in a way that is exemplary for all of us who are involved in public life. Former Secretary of State James Baker, former Congressman Lee Hamilton, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., Edwin Meese, III, former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Leon E. Panetta, William J. Perry, former Senator Charles S. Robb, and former Senator Alan K. Simpson have produced a bipartisan report on a war that troubles every single American, and their conclusion in this report is clear. Their conclusion is it is time for the American troops to leave Iraq and begin coming home. Their conclusion is that we are no longer waiting, if we ever were, for the permission of Iraq for this to happen. Instead, we are putting Iraq on notice that it is time for them to stand and make the important decisions for their future that will lead to stability in that nation.

They have shown, with this report, an impatience and frustration which has been shared with the American people. On November 7, Election Day, the American people were very clear. They said overwhelmingly by their votes across America they want a change in our policy in Iraq. It is no longer acceptable to lose so many of our best and bravest soldiers, no longer acceptable to be bringing these brave soldiers home for communities to grieve and to pray over them, as we should, but we must bring this to an end. Twenty thousand or more American soldiers were disabled in this war, some of whom will struggle for a lifetime to rebuild their lives and their futures. It is also time for us to bring an end to the expenditure of money on the war in Iraq; \$2 billion to \$3 billion a week that we are spending.

At a time when we are cutting back on research at the National Institutes of Health for medical research; at a time when we are unable to fund No Child Left Behind, when we know that our children, our future leaders, need a helping hand and we are unable to provide the resources; at a time when we cannot help working families pay for their health insurance, we are sending billions of dollars over for this war in Iraq, a war that has now lasted longer than World War II.

The report of the Iraq Study Group is a call to action. It is a call for change, and, quite frankly, it is a call on the