

man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

USS "PONCHATOULA"

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a naval vessel and crew that served with distinction during an important chapter of U.S. military history.

The Navy's modernization program of the 1950s included construction of a new class of fleet tankers that combined speed and an enlarged capacity to deliver fuel to the fleet. One of the vessels ordered in this modernization effort was named the USS *Ponchatoula*, AO-148. The vessel was laid down in Camden, NJ on March 1, 1954. The new fleet tanker displaced 38,000 tons when fully loaded greatly exceeding the capacity of tankers used during World War II. The ship had a complement of 324 officers and men. Although the USS *Ponchatoula* was a support vessel rather than a combat warship, she was armed with two 5-inch guns and twelve 3-inch antiaircraft guns.

The launching of the USS *Ponchatoula* into the waters of the Delaware River took place on July 9, 1954, at Camden, and she subsequently sailed across the river to Philadelphia, where the vessel was commissioned on January 12, 1956.

Assigned to the Pacific Fleet, USS *Ponchatoula* made the long voyage to the west coast. Following her arrival at Long Beach, CA, on March 10, 1956, the oiler conducted her shakedown cruise off the California coast.

In the fall of 1956, USS *Ponchatoula* was ordered to the western Pacific, her home waters for most of her active career. While en-route to Sasebo, Japan, to join Seventh Fleet as a unit of Service Squadron Three, she assisted a disabled Panamanian merchant ship that had been battered by two typhoons.

USS *Ponchatoula* accompanied the Seventh Fleet in early 1958 as the Navy sailed into harm's way in the Formosa Strait off the coast of the People's Republic of China, PRC. PRC forces were threatening to occupy several small islands off the coast of China, notably Quemoy and Matsu. President Eisenhower ordered the Navy to the area to symbolize American determination and support Taiwanese forces holding those small islands. President Eisenhower's tough stand and the presence of the Seventh Fleet off shore forced the PRC to back down.

In late April and early May of 1962, USS *Ponchatoula* replenished ships in the task force that participated in the atmospheric nuclear test Operation Dominic near Christmas Island.

In September 1962, the oiler sailed to Midway Island to supply ships involved in the recovery of CDR Wally Schirra's Project Mercury Space Capsule *Sigma 8* and in May 1963 supported the recovery of the then-Major Gordon Cooper's Mercury Space Capsule *Faith 7*. USS *Ponchatoula* also supported recovery

operations for *Gemini 4*, *6*, and *7* in 1965 and *Apollo 7* in 1968.

When hostilities began to escalate in Vietnam during the summer and fall of 1964, USS *Ponchatoula* was deployed to the South China Sea to support fleet operations off the coast of Vietnam. She refueled numerous warships in those waters during the 1964 and 1965 bombing campaign against targets in North Vietnam.

In the summer of 1969 and into 1970 the USS *Ponchatoula* returned to Pearl Harbor and served the fleet in Hawaiian waters.

During the 1970s USS *Ponchatoula*'s area of operations expanded into the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, reflecting growing U.S. Navy activity in that part of the globe. In September 1980 the ship was transferred to the Military Sealift Command, becoming USNS *Ponchatoula*, T-AO-148 and beginning operation with a mainly civilian crew. Based at Subic Bay for most of the next decade, she continued her underway replenishment work, helping maintain the Navy's mobility and striking power in an often troubled region. USNS *Ponchatoula* was inactivated in February 1992 and laid up at Suisun Bay, CA. Though stricken from the Naval Vessel Register at the end of August 1992, she remained in Navy custody until transferred to the Maritime Administration for disposal in May 1999.

During the 43 years between her commissioning in 1956 and her transfer to the reserve fleet in 1999, the USS *Ponchatoula* rendered meritorious service to her country, helping to stop aggression in the Taiwan Strait, assisting the space program and supporting U.S. forces in Vietnam. She and the thousands of Navy sailors who served aboard her over the decades deserve the accolades of a grateful nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

PIERMONT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I wish to honor the town of Piermont, NH, which is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its founding this year. I am delighted to recognize this very special milestone.

Piermont, a town in Grafton County, lies in the shadow of Piermont Mountain and is bordered by the Connecticut River and the magnificent White Mountain National Forest.

The town of Piermont has a unique history. It was chartered on November 6, 1764, by colonial Governor Benning Wentworth, and the town derives its name from the "Piemonte" region of Italy, which in Italian means "at the foot of the mountain." Piermont's location in the Connecticut River Valley played an important role in the development of its proud agricultural heritage.

Piermont is home to Lake Tarleton, named after Colonel William Tarleton,

who served as a delegate to the 1791 Constitutional Convention. Two well-known summer camps are located on the lake—Camp Walt Whitman and Kingswood Camp for Boys. Each year, campers come to Piermont to enjoy the great outdoors and have some good old-fashioned summer fun.

Throughout the town's history, Piermont residents have been well known for their commitment to serve our great Nation. One distinguished Piermont resident, Ira Hobart Evans, a Civil War hero, was awarded the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military honor.

As the town marks its 250th anniversary this year, Piermont citizens are demonstrating their pride and community spirit with many special events in celebrating this historic occasion—including a parade in August that brought together residents, businesses, and community organizations. I am pleased to join all Granite Staters in congratulating Piermont citizens on reaching this milestone and in thanking them for their contributions to the State of New Hampshire. Congratulations, Piermont.●

RECOGNIZING SUNSHINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a school that is celebrating its 150th year of service to students in Springfield, MO. Sunshine Elementary School began serving young people during the Civil War. The wooden one-room country school house was originally located at what is now the major intersection of Campbell Road and Sunshine Lane. During the Civil War, students often witnessed the movement of troops along the road known at the time as the Old Wire Road. Later, the adjacent Sunshine Drive took its name from the school.

According to "So That All May Learn," a history of the Springfield Public School system published in 1995, Sunshine Elementary School was annexed into the Springfield School District in the mid-1920s, and the one-room school was relocated and replaced with a larger structure at its current location. The original school site, close to what is now the headquarters of Bass Pro Shops, was sold by the district in 1930.

In the boom years following World War II, student growth surged with the start of the baby boomer generation. In the late 1940s, student enrollment at Sunshine Elementary School grew by 430 kids in a single year, creating an overcrowding issue. The solution involved moving students in grades five and six to the nearby Phelps School. The first major addition to the Sunshine School came in 1950 when six new classrooms were built, along with a multipurpose room. Forty years later, new restrooms, two classrooms, and a library were added. More recently, Sunshine Elementary School became the last traditional school building equipped with air conditioning.

In October, students, faculty, parents and community leaders observed the 150th year of educating children at Sunshine Elementary School. October 24 was designated as Sunshine Elementary School Day in Springfield, which included Civil War reenactors, games, the planting of a commemorative tree, food and other fun activities.

Current and former Sunshine Elementary School students joined together for a sesquicentennial celebration at the school. Sunshine Elementary School principal David Martin encouraged students, families, faculty, and alumni to participate in the sesquicentennial by providing oral histories and historical artifacts, including photographs, report cards, yearbooks, and newspaper articles.

Today, more than 200 students attend Sunshine Elementary School. Student to teacher ratios are 12 to 1, which is the second best among the 36 elementary schools in the Springfield district. In 2014, Sunshine Elementary School academically ranks higher than 65.3 percent of elementary schools in Missouri and 11th among those in the Springfield district. I congratulate Sunshine Elementary School and its many alumni and supporters for its decades of continued service and success. Happy 150th birthday Sunshine Elementary School.●

REMEMBERING DR. CLEMENT ALEXANDER PRICE

● Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today I recognize the life and legacy of New Jersey and Newark city historian Dr. Clement Alexander Price, who was taken from us too soon on November 5. Clem was a mentor and valued friend to me, and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

The foremost authority on the history of African Americans in New Jersey, Clement Alexander Price was born in 1945 in Washington, DC, to James Price, Sr. and Anna Christine Spann Price. He inherited his love of history from his parents and since then instilled in generations this love for history. After earning his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Bridgeport, Clem came to Newark to teach at Essex Community College. He earned his Ph.D. at Rutgers University, became a professor at Rutgers University-Newark, and founded the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience.

Clem was devoted to Newark, and he served not only as our leading historian but as a powerful spiritual force in our State's largest city. He was invested in Newark, and—ever generous with his time—was known to arrange tours for visitors that highlighted not only the city's rich history but its considerable promise. Clem always recognized the vital truth that charting a brighter course for the future requires a comprehensive understanding of the past. As a fervent believer in Newark's potential, Clem, with his unparalleled

knowledge and thoughtful advice, was invaluable to me and so many others who were elected to serve the city.

Clem's commitment to the city of Newark was surpassed only by his dedication to public service, and he lent his time and expertise to a multitude of causes and organizations. From serving as president of the Newark Education Trust to chairing President Obama's 2008 transition team for the National Endowment for the Humanities, Clem was always seeking opportunities to serve his community and his Nation. He believed in the power of civic engagement, and he dedicated his career to cultivating that engagement through historical literacy and unyielding activism in service of Newark and beyond. Clem was truly one of Newark's great statesmen.

Most of all, Clem was kind. He touched so many lives and helped all who knew him to learn, grow, heal, and come together.

Clem is mourned by his wife Mary Sue Sweeney Price, his sister Jarmila, and his brother James, and by friends and colleagues in the city of Newark, the State of New Jersey, and across the Nation. I ask that the Senate join me in remembering and honoring the extraordinary life of Dr. Clement Alexander Price.●

REMEMBERING GEOFFREY "CRAIG" HUNT

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Geoffrey "Craig" Hunt, a 13-year veteran pilot with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, CAL FIRE. Craig was an exceptional firefighting pilot, a loyal friend, and most of all a devoted family man who was tragically killed in the line of duty fighting the Dog Rock Fire near Yosemite National Park on October 7, 2014.

Craig Hunt was born in Richmond, IN, and dedicated his life to serving his country, first as a U.S. Navy P-3 pilot from 1975 to 1984 and then in the Naval Reserve for 20 years after leaving active duty. Craig was also an enthusiastic and accomplished scholar who received a master's degree in business from the University of Southern California. A lifelong interest in science and the natural world led him to also earn a master's degree in biochemistry from the University of California at Santa Cruz. His passion for learning led him to teaching. In the winter months, when the fire season was over, he worked at UC Santa Cruz as a course assistant teaching general chemistry and organic chemistry labs.

Always at home in the cockpit of a plane, Craig loved his job as a pilot with CAL FIRE. For 13 years he valiantly answered the call to protect public safety and the environment by piloting aircraft during emergencies. He had a vast knowledge about wild land fires and was skilled in pinpointing aerial attacks in places that

were difficult for ground crews to reach.

Colleagues remember Craig as an experienced and respected pilot who loved his job. He was happy and outgoing, quick with a smile, and had a fantastic sense of humor. A friend and neighbor recalled that Craig would "drop anything in a heartbeat if you needed help or assistance."

When he was not on duty, Craig was an avid outdoorsman with a passion for golfing, fly fishing, hiking, bird watching, and scuba diving. Standing beside him through it all was his beloved wife Sally, whom he met in college and married in 1975. Craig was also a devoted father to his two daughters, Sarah and Nancy. His daughter Sarah said about him, "My dad died a hero. There was not a day that went by that I didn't talk to my dad. He was my best friend."

Craig Hunt dedicated his life to his family, his community, and his country, and his courageous service will be forever remembered. On behalf of the people of California, whom he served so bravely, I extend my gratitude and deepest sympathies to his family, friends, and colleagues. He will be deeply missed.●

REMEMBERING EDGAR P. SILVER

● Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to take a moment today to honor retired Baltimore Circuit Court Judge Edgar P. Silver, who died yesterday at the age of 91. I am deeply saddened by the passing of Edgar Silver. He was a loyal friend, valued mentor, and trusted advisor—and not just to me but also to my father. Judge Silver served with my father on the Circuit Court of Baltimore City, and he also served with my uncle, Maurice Cardin, in the Maryland House of Delegates. Judge Silver was as fine a person as you could ever hope to meet, and he always found the time to listen. Foremost among his many remarkable qualities was his empathy. He had the rare ability to transcend generations and connect with people of any age: when he was a young man, he quickly won the respect of his elders, and as he became older he never lost the ability to speak to and inspire the young.

Judge Silver's parents Samuel and Lena were immigrants. His father was a tailor. Judge Silver was a native of East Baltimore and a neighbor throughout his later life, as well as a fellow alumnus of Baltimore City College. He served our Nation in the U.S. Merchant Marine from 1943 to 1945. He was a 1954 graduate of the University of Baltimore Law School and was elected as a city delegate to the general assembly that same year. He served in the house of delegates until 1965. In 1965, he moved to the judicial branch, where he served on the old Municipal Court of Baltimore City until 1971. He served on the District Court of Baltimore City until 1977, when he was appointed to the Circuit Court by acting Governor