Earl is actually eligible to receive two Purple Hearts, for the incident on January 7 and then also on January 23.

The presentation of this Purple Heart with Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster is just a small recognition of the wealth of respect you deserve for your service to our country and your service in protecting all of us.

And he had done no more than lead a great company and provide jobs to great workers, he would be worthy of celebration.

But as his hometown, the Grand Rapids Press, described him with typical West Michigan understatement, Pete Wege was “an unconventional industrialist.” In a community that has benefited greatly from the public spirit of its business leaders, few have rivaled the impact of this remarkable man. Always aware of his good fortune and of the needs of his community, he poured money that could have made him one of the world’s wealthiest people into the Grand Rapids area and beyond. Libraries and schools, theaters and museums, churches and civic buildings, parks and wilderness areas all benefitted from his generosity.

And he had those two qualities—generosity and vision—in abundance. He was more than a philanthropist; he was a man on a mission. That mission began when he was on another kind of mission—his country during World War II. When he flew as a transport pilot. Piloting an aircraft to Pittsburgh during the war, the landing field was so shrouded in smog that he couldn’t land. That polluted air launched him on a lifetime of dedication to environmental causes. He created the Wege Foundation in 1967 to promote educational, cultural, environmental and scientific efforts. Two years later, he established the Center for Environmental Study. He wrote two books laying out his argument that environmental stewardship would boost the economy, rather than harming growth.

Perhaps nowhere was Pete Wege’s impact more strongly felt than in his love for the Great Lakes. In 2004, he sponsored the Healing Our Waters conference in Michigan. His agenda was simple and powerful: “The lakes are our life support system, and we’ve got to treat them that way,” he said. The conference brought together environmental leaders from across the country, and led to publication of a report on the need for a plan to restore the Great Lakes. That powerful call helped lead to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which has provided over $1 billion in funding for nearly 3,000 projects around the Great Lakes since 2010.

Throughout his life, Pete strived to make the world a better place for future generations. In that respect—as in every other endeavor he devoted himself to—Pete was an unqualified success.

He will be deeply missed, but Peter’s generous spirit will live on.
July 8, 2014

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

ARMY SPECIALIST RYAN J. GRADY

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I wish to remember the life and sacrifice of a remarkable young man, Army SPC Ryan J. Grady. Ryan died July 1, 2010 in Bagram, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom due to injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle.

Ryan was born May 30, 1985 in Marion, KS and later moved to Bristow, OK. After graduating from Thunderbird Military Academy in 2003, he joined the Army as a combat engineer. He was awarded a Purple Heart from shrapnel wounds he received when his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device during his first deployment to Iraq in 2005–2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After returning home in 2006, he joined the Oklahoma National Guard. In 2008 he transferred to the Oklahoma National Guard and then returned to the Vermont National Guard in 2009 because he heard the unit was deploying to Afghanistan.

Ryan grew up in a military family, with his father and brothers serving in the Army as well. On the day of the incident, Ryan shared a meal with his brother, Kevin Grady, who was also deployed to Afghanistan with the Vermont National Guard.

Jim Grady, Jr. said Ryan’s size 6-foot-4 and 240 pounds sometimes intimidated people, but said anyone who met him quickly could tell he had a warm heart. As a soldier, he would sign off on notes with the words “saving the world one mission at a time,” his brother said.

At the grand opening of the Grady Dining Facility on Bargram Airfield’s Camp Warrior, acting director of the Army National Guard, MG Raymond Carpenter, said “Specialist Ryan Grady represents to us what the modern National Guard is. He joined the guard because he wanted to serve his country.”

Ryan was posthumously promoted from private first class to specialist and was buried at Mountain Pleasant Cemetery in St. Johnsbury, VT.

Ryan is survived by his wife Heaven, of Bristow, OK, their daughter Alexis, his father SFC James A. Grady of West Burke, VT, his mother Debbie Hudacek of Bristow, OK, stepfather Tom Hudacek of Bristow, OK, and his brothers: Kevin Grady of St. Johnsbury, VT and James Grady of Muskogee, OK.

Today we remember Army SPC Ryan J. Grady, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SERGEANT CHARLES S. JIRLTE

Madam President, today I also wish to remember the life and sacrifice of a remarkable young man, Army SGT Charles S. Jirtle. Along with four other soldiers, Scott died June 7, 2010 of injuries he sustained from an improvised explosive device in Dangam district of Kunar Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Scott was born September 13, 1980 in Lawton, OK and graduated from MacArthur High School. After graduating, he served in the Navy Reserves in Oklahoma City.

The son of an Active Duty Army master sergeant, he enlisted in the Army in 2007. After completing basic training at Fort Benning, GA, he was assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY as an indirect fire infantryman.

Scott, who served a tour in Iraq in 2007 and 2008, knew the impact the deployments had on his family. His final post on Facebook read: “I miss my wife Savannah and baby Scott. So I'm leaving this deployment, and I pray to God that He will watch over her and my children.”

Pastor Troy Smart said Scott’s four older brothers would recruit him when they heard the ice cream truck coming down the street. “They always knew if they sent Scott to ask Terry and Virginia for money, they wouldn’t turn him down because he was the youngest,” Smart said.

His parents said, “Our son Charles Scott Jirtle joined the Army because he wanted to take care of his children. He extended his enlistment for this deployment, knowing that he was going to a very hot spot.”

Those thanking Scott for his ultimate sacrifice for the protection of this great country say John 15:13 describes his selfless virtues perfectly: “greater love hath not man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

On June 16, 2010, the family held church services at First Baptist Church East in Lawton, OK.

He is survived by his wife Savannah, daughters: Chelsie and Cheyenne, a son Jordan, unborn son Charles Scott Jirtle, Jr., stepdaughter Rylee Jo Jirtle, parents, MSG (Retired) Terry L. and Virginia Jirtle, Lawton, OK; 4 brothers: Joseph Elkins and wife Tumnny, James Jirtle, Kendall Jirtle and wife Brandi, all of Lawton and AME2 (AW) Anthony Jirtle Oak Harbor, WA; stepbrother, Danny Henry and wife Shauna; several nieces and nephews: Ashley, Kayla, Starr, Alexis, Skyler, Payton, Preston, Morgan, Bryce and Kolby.

Today we remember Army SGT Charles S. Jirtle, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SPECIALIST AUGUSTUS J. VICARI

Madam President, I now wish to pay tribute to a true American hero, Army SPC Augustus "Augy" J. Vicari of Broken Arrow, OK who died on July 29th, 2011 serving our Nation in Paktia Province, Afghanistan. Specialist Vicari was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma Army National Guard.

Specialist Vicari died of injuries sustained when his unit was attacked with an improvised explosive device while on patrol in the town of Janak Kheyl. He was 22 years old.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to those in his family he left behind: his loving parents Michael and Evelyn Vicari, and siblings: Joseph, Michael, Emily, and Mollie.

A native of Lowell, IN, Augy graduated from Lowell High School in 2008. After graduation, he and his wife then moved to Broken Arrow to be close to his father-in-law. Augy then enlisted in the Oklahoma National Guard and attended basic training and advanced individual training in 2009.

In addition to being a soldier, Augy enjoyed working on cars and spending time with family and friends. As evident by reading through some quotes from family and friends, he consistently impressed and touched the lives of those he interacted with on a daily basis.

John and Barb Slankard said “Augy’s smile lit up every room he was in . . . a truly amazing person that was taken far too soon. We thank him for his courage and sacrifice and we are honored to have known him.”

MG Myles Deering, the Oklahoma National Guard Adjutant General said, “This loss of life has shaken every member of the Oklahoma National Guard to their core. We have lost a very brave man who once raised his hand and took an oath to defend our nation. He courageously gave everything he had to ensure our freedom and safety and his sacrifice will not be forgotten.”

SSG Kyle Wachtendorf of the Oklahoma National Guard praised Augy by saying, “He was a Oklahoman who chose to stand up and fight for what was right. Chose to leave his family in order to fight for others and made the ultimate sacrifice for God and their country.”

Reverend Tony Janik said “Augy wanted to see the world. He wanted to see justice in the world.”

U.S. Congressman PETE VISNOCKY from Indiana’s 1st District honored and paid tribute to Augy, the floor of the House of Representatives on September 7, 2011.

A true warrior, Augy died while participating in a patrol in the town of Janak Kheyl of Paktia Province on his way back to the U.S. combat outpost just barely over a month after arriving in Afghanistan. This tough fight took Augy from us prematurely, but make no mistake; it is a fight we will win. We must continue our unwavering support for the men and women protecting our Nation and allies.

I extend our deepest gratitude and condolences to Augy’s family and friends. Augy lived a life of love for his