

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN  
LEGION AUXILIARY

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary. I appreciate the opportunity to speak about this esteemed organization and recognize their efforts supporting American servicemembers, veterans, and their families. The centennial celebration is a historic occasion for the State of Michigan, as well as the entire Nation.

The American Legion Auxiliary was founded in 1919 to support the efforts of the men in the American Legion. The women of the Auxiliary saw an opportunity to embark on a mission of their own, to not only support active servicemembers and veterans of World War I but also their communities and families. This mission resonated among others and by November 1920, there were 1,342 Auxiliary units founded across 43 States.

During World War II, the Auxiliary jumped into action again to serve brave servicemembers joining the fight. They established scholarships for students to train as nurses and fulfill needs on the frontlines, donated six mobile blood units to the Red Cross, and established an Emergency Voluntary Committee to support the war effort. At the beginning of World War I, there were approximately 500,000 enrolled members. After World War II, membership rose rapidly and peaked in 1955 with 1,001,545 members. Today, the American Legion Auxiliary consists of approximately 800,000 members who continue to support troops and veterans across the world in war and peacetime.

Communities throughout the State of Michigan, as well as across the country, benefit from the Auxiliary's advocacy and outreach. This past year, their work has culminated into over 40 million volunteer hours and \$37 million to charitable efforts across the United States. Their own charitable causes include Girls Nation and State, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, and American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, as well as numerous scholarships and helping to fund veteran support services.

In addition to philanthropic work, the Auxiliary has advocated for veterans' rights and increased support for those who have served our Nation. They have advocated for legislation such as the GI bill, legislation that would expand U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, and efforts to help end homelessness among veterans.

It is my great pleasure to congratulate the American Legion Auxiliary on its centennial milestone and recognize the meaningful impact they continue to have in the State of Michigan and across our Nation. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating its members and their dedication to support servicemembers, veterans, and their families by promoting fellowship, patriotism, peace, and security throughout the world.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF MASTER  
SERGEANT MARCUS T. OATS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor CMSgt Marcus Oats for his recent promotion to Chief Master Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force and upon the completion of his Air Force fellowship with my office.

Selection for chief master sergeant is extremely competitive, as only 1 percent of the Air Force's entire enlisted population may hold the pay grade of E-9 at any time. Chief Oats clearly epitomizes the finest qualities of a military leader, as evidenced by his distinguished career and elevation to the highest enlisted level of leadership within the Air Force. Chief Master Sergeant Oats entered the U.S. Air Force on September 4, 1996, as a services specialist and was later selected for retraining into the field of acquisition. Chief Oats' honorable service has spanned numerous overseas and state-side assignments including Southwest Asia, four States, and the Nation's Capital. He has also completed several deployments in support of Operations Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, and Inherent Resolve. Chief Oats currently serves as the senior enlisted advisor in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force's Legislative Liaison Directorate. Chief Master Sergeant Oats has chosen to repeatedly lead his airmen by example.

Despite years of challenging work schedules and countless military obligations, Chief Oats elected to make his education a priority. Since 2011, he has earned two associate's degrees, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and a graduate-level certificate.

Furthermore, Chief Oats' outstanding performance has garnered numerous accolades, including the 386th Expeditionary Wing Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award, two time 7th Bomb Wing Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Award, and the Air Force Central Command Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Award. As a true testament to Chief Master Sergeant Oats' exceptional career, he was selected to represent the U.S. Air Force on Capitol Hill as its enlisted legislative fellow in 2019. I was fortunate to have Chief Oats spend the year in my office as an integral part of Team Murkowski and was pleased with his professionalism, character, and devotion to duty.

Chief Oats joined my office in January of this year while serving as my defense fellow on behalf of the U.S. Air Force Legislative Fellowship Program. As the defense fellow, Chief Oats drafted legislation, prepared floor debate materials, planned and analyzed public policy, and served as a congressional liaison between Alaskans and industry or government representatives. Chief Oats is the first enlisted contracting airman selected for this position and is one of only two enlisted Active-Duty Air Force fellows currently serving in this capacity. Chief Oats is a Memphis

resident and an alumnus of Overton High School. He holds a bachelor of science in computer information systems and management, as well as a master's in business administration.

Chief Oats served as an integral member of our defense team, and I relied on his advice in support of Alaskans and all Americans. His tireless efforts were critical to the passage of the Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal. This bill is to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the U.S. Merchant Mariners of World War II in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II—service which proved instrumental in securing victory for the Allied powers. Moreover, Chief Oats led a bipartisan effort to introduce the sixth Defense Department Regional Securities Study Center, named after the late Alaska Senator Ted Stevens. The centers aim to support defense strategy objectives and policy priorities through a unique academic forum and to foster strong international networks of security leaders. He also helped secure several wins for Alaska in the Defense appropriations bill.

Chief Oats continued the extraordinary lineage of military fellows I have had the honor of working in my office, serving as a member of my team. He was also the first enlisted contracting fellow in Congress. It has been a great privilege to work with and get to know Chief Oats over the past 11 months. I know that my entire team will agree when I say Chief Oats will always be part of the Murkowski family.

As I thank Chief Oats for his service, I also thank his wonderful family who has remained by his side for his 23-year Air Force career. Chief Oats is married to Cecilia Oats. They have three children, Kayla, Mya, and Myles.

On behalf of the U.S. Congress and a thankful Nation, I want to express our gratitude to CMSgt Marcus T. Oats for his dedicated service to the U.S. Senate and to all Alaskans. We applaud Chief Oats on his recent promotion to chief master sergeant, the highest general enlisted rank of the Air Force, and hope the best for him in his next role of Legislative Advisor to the Chief Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force. Just as I have greatly benefited from Chief Oats' leadership and advice, I have no doubt that the U.S. Air Force will also reap the benefits from this true American. Thank you for everything Marcus.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES KEMP MCLAUGHLIN

• Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today in remembrance of the life of Brig. Gen. James Kemp McLaughlin, who passed away this week after living an impressive 101 years full of honor,