

came down and sat on the floor with the children asking them what their impressions were, what they pray for—the children were very young, 2, 3, 4, up to about 7 years of age.

One said: I pray for my daddy who is somewhere in the desert.

Another little girl raised her hand as they sat, about 20 of them, around the pastor, and said: I pray that Saddam Hussein quits doing bad things to other people.

The innocence, the understanding, and the wisdom of these young children was very apparent.

I also had a chance to talk to Michele Schumer, whose husband is a member of the Special Forces and is currently deployed in Iraq. Michele is the mother of a child in kindergarten and has another child on the way.

We talked to Adra Barna, a mother of 3-year-old twin girls, who clearly had her hands full as we watched her manage them during the church service. Her husband is deployed in Iraq as well.

I talked to Julie Sparkman. She and her husband are newlyweds. It is hard for anyone at any point to be separated, but to be separated shortly after marriage clearly introduces all sorts of feelings that we all can share with Julie and her husband. Having just been married, imagine the fear when there was that first grenade attack at Camp Pennsylvania: Was my husband involved in that or not? Was he injured or not? He was not, but again, we can personalize in many ways the experiences that result from the tremendous service of these young men and women.

Above all, these families are patriotic. I thought the atmosphere would be very somber. In truth, it was very upbeat, optimistic, and energetic. These young spouses are so proud of their husbands being able to serve all of us and able to literally put their lives on the line for those causes of freedom, democracy, and peace.

In closing, the families of Fort Campbell did ask me to share with the President their support and their prayers for the tremendous job he is doing as Commander in Chief. They are concerned about their loved ones but proud they are able to serve the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10 a.m., with the time to be equally divided between the Senator from Texas and the Democratic leader or their designees.

The Senator from Montana.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I rise to share another story that comes from the battlefield of Iraq. There are a thousand of these stories, but I think it is the way we start our day as a reminder of exactly what is going on at ground level—in other words, where the rubber hits the road.

In the last 12 or 13 days, we have seen how deeply committed our men and women in uniform are. They fight for a great cause of disarming Saddam Hussein's regime from its weapons of mass destruction, but also at the same time they understand that they are our brother's keeper.

What brought this home to me was a picture of this one marine carrying his injured comrade from the battlefield. It is as awe inspiring as any imagine that might come from the field of conflict. One man hurt his leg. His buddy slings him over his back and carries him safely, like a firefighter rescuing somebody from a burning building. Only in this case, it looks as though the enemy was not being cooperative or too helpful.

Men serving in battle form iron bonds. They have to because it is for the person next to them and for their country. Those bonds often forge the determination and the will to win. We can see the grim determination etched in the face of the marine who is doing the carrying. He seems to be thinking: It is all right, buddy. We will be out of here. You are in good hands.

Then perhaps when they reached the point where they were saved, the guy being carried likely responded: You do it for me, Semper Fi.

Some would say these two marines are heroes. But I would not put them in the hero class. They are America. They are the story of America. The marine who was hurt is from Oregon. The marine who saved him is from South Carolina. It does not matter what State one is from; their bond is in the unit in which they serve and in the miniature stars-and-stripe patch sewn on every shoulder of every sleeve.

For the marine from Oregon, his bond was his family heritage. His father was a career marine who rose to the top rank of sergeant major. His father was in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983 when terrorists bombed the Marine barracks, losing 241 of his buddies. The father served in combat in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm. The day after the son shipped out for Kuwait, that marine's father died. The son returned home to the funeral, returned to the scene, and caught up with his unit.

The depth of commitment of our brave Americans is shown on the battlefields not only here but also in our history. It is a cause to them and one that inspires us. May we who are in the policy business learn our lesson to be that inspiring. We, too, should be where most of them are, where the rubber hits the road. This is where it is carried out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. SNOWE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Ms. SNOWE. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the more than 43 United States soldiers who have sacrificed their lives in the mission to liberate the Iraqi people and to disarm Saddam Hussein: The 16 who are missing, the 7 who have been captured, the 109 who have been injured, and all of those men and women on the ground, in the skies, and on the seas, who are so bravely supporting the cause of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

By now, we have all seen the images on our television screens, yet little can we truly comprehend the real nature of the dangers they face, and the courage they must summon. Let us then dedicate these days to the acknowledgment of their heroism, for how profoundly grateful and blessed we are that these men and women are committed to serving our Nation and the ideals for which it stands during this pivotal and tumultuous chapter in America's proud history.

In particular, I rise this morning to honor two Maine sons—Marine MAJ Jay Thomas Aubin and Marine CPL Brian Matthew Kennedy—who were among the twelve U.S. and British Marines killed Thursday, March 20 when their CH-46E Sea Helicopter crashed in Kuwait, just seven miles from the Iraq border. While I never had the opportunity to meet these two exceptional Marines in person, over the last week I feel I have come to know them, at least in some small but very meaningful way.

MAJ Aubin and CPL Kennedy embodied the Marine Corps values of honor, courage and dedication—no matter the odds, no matter the fight. They had the mental, moral and physical strength to follow the U.S. Marine decree to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons. Both men willingly and knowingly laid their lives on the line to support and defend the U.S. Constitution and protect our national security. Both men believed in their mission.

Marines are often described as a family. They are initiated en masse by boot camps and extreme conditions many of us cannot even begin to imagine. They train together day in and day out and understand each other's struggles, fears, and feelings of pride. And they fight together, bound by a common code and a calling, gallantly facing any enemy whose goal is the destruction of our way of life.

Indeed, they live by one simple truth, that risking American lives is sometimes necessary to defending America's freedom. This realization and their willingness to act upon it is what makes the sacrifice of MAJ Aubin and CPL Kennedy all the more poignant.

So we must celebrate their lives and memories as the extraordinary people