

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GREGORY J. BILLITER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to a 15-year veteran of the U.S. Navy who was lost in service to his country. That man is CPO Gregory J. Billiter of Villa Hills, KY. He was 36 years old.

Chief Billiter was serving near Kirkuk, Iraq, as part of a Navy Explosive Ordnance disposal unit charged with defusing the many improvised explosives and booby traps that terrorists have set in Iraq. He was the tactical commander of the third vehicle in a five-vehicle convoy patrolling the area. On April 6, 2007, his vehicle was struck by explosives, tragically taking Chief Billiter's life.

Assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit 11, based out of Whidbey Island, WA, this was Chief Billiter's third tour of duty in Iraq. For bravery and valor while wearing the uniform, he received numerous medals and awards, including the Bronze Star Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device for Valor and the Purple Heart.

To recount Chief Billiter's life and career is to recount one achievement after another, because Greg was no stranger to success. "The driving force in all those things was competition," says Barry Billiter, his father. "He was very competitive."

Growing up, Greg led his friends in whiffleball games, racing Big Wheels, or swinging over the creek on a vine, Tarzan-style. He played basketball and soccer in high school, and whatever they played, Greg often declared himself the winner or demanded a rematch. He was a "died-in-the-wool" Cincinnati Bengals fan.

He was a good kid—the police only had to visit Greg's parents once. That was the time Greg, his brother Jeff, and some neighborhood friends sat on a rock in the woods and refused to budge for the bulldozers that had come to clear the way for a new shopping center.

"Greg was all of 6 years old at the time," the Billiter family writes in a letter about Greg sent to family and friends that they have generously shared with me. "How was he ever able to get security clearance with that on his record?"

Greg attended St. Pius X and St. Joseph Elementary Schools. As a fourth-grader, one of his teachers told him he would never make it at Covington Latin School, a competitive private high school in northern Kentucky. If anything could motivate Greg, it was a challenge. He graduated from Covington Latin in 1987 at the age of 16.

Greg went to the University of Dayton and graduated with a bachelor's degree in marketing at age 19. After college, Greg worked for a while at the Levi Strauss Company but was unfulfilled. So one day he came home to his parents and announced he had joined the Navy, just like his father, Barry, a Navy veteran. Greg entered basic training in January 1992 in Orlando, FL, and graduated as the Honor Recruit.

He served aboard many ships, including the USS *Durham*, USS *Duluth*, USS *Carl Vinson*, USS *Ronald Reagan*, and USS *Nimitz*. In 1994, he qualified for and finished Navy Seal training. After a knee injury, he could no longer continue as a Seal but qualified as a surface warfare specialist. Chief Billiter kept busy. He also qualified as a Naval parachutist, a scuba and MK-16 mixed gas diving supervisor, a demolitions operations supervisor, and a helicopter rope suspension tactics specialist.

From 1997 to 2001, Greg served in Canton, OH, as a Naval recruiter. Then he transferred to specialize in explosive ordnance disposal and found that defusing explosives was the job he had been looking for.

"When he talked about it, his eyes would light up," says Greg's aunt, Paula Snow. "He loved the science of it." Explosive ordnance disposal specialists are trained to deal with explosive threats on land or underwater, including anything chemical, biological, and even nuclear. Greg conducted numerous EOD missions throughout the world and trained the foreign special operation units of France, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, and Qatar.

During his third tour in Iraq, Greg's team contributed to the collection and destruction of over 2,500 ordnance items, totaling over 5,800 pounds of net explosives weight. When he was off duty, he organized sports games, such as an Ultimate Frisbee competition of the older sailors versus the younger ones. He competed in the Navy's Ironman competition.

In 1994, while serving on board a ship home-ported in San Diego, Greg met April, a middle-school science teacher in that city. She understood a sailor's life well, having grown up the daughter of a Navy chief corpsman.

Greg and April married in November 1996 at St. Joseph Church in Crescent Springs, KY. Together they had a son, Cooper John Billiter. Greg hoped little Cooper would grow up to play sports.

Greg will be forever loved and remembered by his family and loved ones who are in my prayers now as I relate Greg's story to the Senate. Those family members include his wife, April; his son, Cooper; his mother, Pat; his father, Barry; his brothers Jeff, Kevin, and David Billiter; his sisters Beth Billiter and Jill New; his aunts Paula Snow and Barbara Horton; and his grandmothers Virginia Billiter and Clara Bosch.

When Greg was a senior in high school, he attended a Senior Christian Awakening Retreat. For the first time, he told his parents: Thank you for being such a good Mom and Dad and thank you for all the sacrifices you have made for me.

This young man who learned the meaning of sacrifice at an early age grew up to become a beloved husband and father himself who made the ultimate sacrifice for his country. I want the Billiter family to know that America and the U.S. Senate will always re-

member that sacrifice, and we salute CPO Gregory J. Billiter and his service to our country.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

FISA AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2248, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2248) to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, to modify and streamline the provisions of that Act, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, the Senate now returns to the consideration of S. 2248, the FISA Amendments Act.

As I said in December when we debated the motion to proceed to this bill, I believe this legislation is critical to our Nation's security. That phrase is thrown around a lot—"our Nation's security." It does have meaning. To protect America from the panoply of threats we face around the world, we must know what our enemies are planning and what they are doing. We get that information through our intelligence agencies, and one of the most useful sources for them is communications intelligence.

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, gives the Government the authority, with court approval, to collect communications intelligence inside the United States. Unfortunately, the law has not kept pace with the incredible advances in telecommunications technology of the last 30 years.

As this debate proceeds over these coming days, it is important for all Members to understand why FISA exists and why it is necessary for us to update it. The Congress passed FISA to protect Americans inside the United States from inappropriate eavesdropping by the Government. The FISA statute created a system that allowed the Government to go to a special court and show probable cause that someone inside the United States was an agent of a foreign power. If it agreed, if the court agreed, the court then issued an order allowing the Government to collect the intelligence.

Over time, the flow of global communications changed. The nature of these communications changed. The system of fiber optic cables carrying international communications grew, and wireless technology began to dominate our domestic system. This was a marked change from the communications architecture that existed in 1978, when FISA was started, when local