

where we feel it is important, especially the unemployed people who are desperate for another check and are trying to find a job.

Mr. President, the Orwellian Bush administration has now slopped over into the Senate, and now the Republican leader is becoming Orwellian himself.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the first half of the time under the control of the Republican leader or his designee and the second half of the time under control of the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from California.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak on the Democrats' time to pay tribute to Marine Cpl Sean Andrew Stokes. I thank Senator KYL for agreeing to this request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

##### CORPORAL SEAN ANDREW STOKES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, tomorrow, Wednesday, February 6, at Camp Pendleton in my home State of California, one of the true heroes of our country will receive a rare and distinguished honor. On what would have been his 25th birthday, Marine Cpl Sean Andrew Stokes—and I show you that beautiful face in this picture—will be awarded the Silver Star for heroic actions performed in the line of duty during Operation Phantom Fury in Fallujah, Iraq.

From November 9 through November 18 of 2004, then-Private Stokes took the position of "point" in his platoon. That means he was the first Marine to enter a building and the first Marine to encounter whatever and whoever was inside. Bullets, grenades, and rockets were around every corner. For 9 days and nights, Sean fought insurgents in hand-to-hand combat, in house after house, in building after building.

Most of us would lose our sanity in such a place, but Sean kept his sanity with a simple prayer of thanks after coming out of each house alive.

Word of Sean's actions over those days quickly spread. The History Chan-

nel made a documentary about the battle of Fallujah, and Sean's heroic actions were prominently featured.

Embedded in Sean's platoon was Pat O'Donnell, a historian who wrote a critically acclaimed book, "We Were One: Shoulder to Shoulder with the Marines Who Took Fallujah." Mr. O'Donnell has said Sean hid his wounds on more than one occasion so he could stay with his Marine brothers rather than take the mandatory medical evacuation. He said:

Sean always put others first before himself.

Sean will be receiving the Silver Star tomorrow for his actions on his first tour. His father Gary conducted research, and as best as he can tell, Sean is the first Marine to be awarded the Silver Star for actions while a private since two Marine privates received such an honor during the Vietnam war.

In September 2005, Sean returned to Iraq, once again at the front of his platoon, where he distinguished himself and was eventually promoted to corporal.

Sean could have left the Marine Corps at the end of that tour. His father urged him to get out, but Sean said: What about everybody else? He felt the need to stick by his buddies who had stood by his side every single day in Iraq.

In April of 2007, Sean went back for his third deployment. Sean's father wrote:

He went back to Iraq to protect his best friend, Bradley Adams, and because he wanted to be a Marine more than anything else in life.

Sean, along with Bradley, was assigned to the battalion commander's personal security detachment, a position reserved for elite and combat-seasoned warriors. The two managed to eventually maneuver their way into the lead vehicle, once again taking point, which earned Sean the nickname "Pathfinder."

That battalion commander told Gary Stokes his son had saved his life on numerous occasions, including on July 30, 2007, the day Sean Stokes died from an improvised explosive device attack while on patrol in Al Anbar Province.

Over 820 men and women who were either from California or based in California have died in Iraq. This young and heroic Marine is one of them.

Sean Stokes represented the best of the Marine Corps, the best of the United States, the best of California. He was born 25 years ago Wednesday in Fremont, CA. He grew up in the gold country of California in the town of Auburn.

He was into cars and his dad says he had lots of them. When he returned from his first tour in Iraq, the people of Auburn learned he wanted to fix up his Honda Prelude, so they, the people of the town, put on some new rims, spruced it up, and made it look good—all free of charge—for Sean.

He attended Bear River High School, where he played linebacker on the foot-

ball team and the outfield on the baseball team.

Upon learning that Sean died, Bear River retired his No. 51 football jersey, the first time the school has ever retired a number.

Of his baseball ability, Sean's dad draws a parallel to a great home-run hitter also born on Wednesday—Babe Ruth. He said it is no coincidence that he was the only kid on the all-star team to hit the ball out of Babe Ruth Baseball Park onto the nearby road, not once but three times.

Sean's dad also says he was quite popular and had lots of girlfriends. But he had found true love and was engaged to Nicole Besier, a beautiful young girl who is also a Marine.

Gary Stokes wrote to me about his son:

Sean turned out to be a great fisherman and from the time he was a little guy, he loved to fish. I remember taking Sean camping, and that is all he wanted to do the entire time during our camping trips and other outings and vacations. Even though I understand that the Tigris River was polluted and at times surrounded by terrorists, I would be surprised if Sean did not throw in a fishing line a few times during one of his three tours in Iraq.

"Sean, like his brother Kevin, is a great son," his father writes. We do have a photo, I believe, of Kevin. We are going to get out the photo to show the brothers together.

Sean, like his brother Kevin, is a great son, and we always would make sure to make time to do fun things together as much as possible, like golf, fishing, or camping.

This is a picture of Sean and his brother.

His father continues:

Sean and I made the commitment years ago to not be like the father and son in the song "Cats in the Cradle." Sean has touched many lives during his short life and he was loved and was respected by everyone whom he met.

Sean's life was short, but it was full and he always gave it his all in everything he did.

Tomorrow's ceremony at Camp Pendleton honors the heroism and the bravery of Sean Stokes. Similar to the other Marines out at Camp Pendleton and the rest of the men and women in uniform around the world, he volunteered to carry the burden of protecting our beloved Nation.

He fought for the man next to him and for the troops behind him, and he died in service to them. We owe him our gratitude. And we owe his family our gratitude and we owe the families of all the men and women who serve in harm's way our gratitude. We can never forget what they have sacrificed.

I conclude as the Senator from California, we have lost so many. As a mother, as a grandmother, I will do everything, along with my colleagues, to bring our troops home and to spare others the deep grief this family has endured.

I again thank Senator KYL for his graciousness in allowing me to have this opportunity to pay tribute to Sean.