

him—and increasingly her—who has borne the battle, and making sure they have an education.

Today, when we remember the service of those who gave their lives, and in some cases gave sacrifice and survived D-day, I think we have to meet the obligation that service imposes on us in the Senate and as citizens.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST ROSS A. MCGINNIS

Mr. CASEY. Finally, I want to speak for a couple of moments about a Pennsylvanian. As I have mentioned before, there are more World War II Medal of Honor winners from Pennsylvania than anywhere else. We did some research, and you can go down the list of people who have served from Pennsylvania, who have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, and we note that 378 Pennsylvanians have received the Medal of Honor out of about 3,467 overall, so a high percentage.

We had 25 Medal of Honor winners from World War II and in Operation Iraqi Freedom; one is the person I want to spend a couple of moments talking about. Operation Iraqi Freedom has only four, I am told, four Medal of Honor winners across the Nation, so Pennsylvania has one of those four, and his name is Specialist Ross A. McGinnis, 1st Platoon, C Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a two-page document entitled, "The Story of PFC Ross A. McGinnis," as well as a news story from the Pittsburgh Post Gazette from this week.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I will not read all of it, but I wanted to read the description of his sacrifice and the reason he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, so rare for any soldier to be so awarded. Here is part of the official report. This is December 4, 2006.

During the course of the patrol, an unidentified insurgent positioned on a rooftop nearby threw a fragmentation grenade into the Humvee. Without hesitation or regard for his own life, McGinnis threw his back over the grenade, pinning it between his body and the Humvee's radio mount. McGinnis absorbed all lethal fragments and the concussive effects of the grenade with his own body. McGinnis, who was a private first class at the time, was posthumously promoted to specialist. Specialist McGinnis's heroic actions and tragic death are detailed in the battlescape section of this website and in his Medal of Honor Citation.

He was a young man from Knox, PA, 19 years old, when he gave, as Abraham Lincoln also said, "The last full measure of devotion to his country." And I have used that line a lot because it applies so well to those who have given their lives in Iraq or Afghanistan and other places around the world, but at

no time—at no time—that I have used that line from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address has it applied better than it does in this instance, for Ross. A McGinnis, 19 years old, born June 14, 1987, in Meadville, PA, though he grew up in Knox, PA. He was a 2005 graduate of Keystone Junior-Senior High School, and his parents were with President Bush this week when he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

So we are thinking of him today, on D-day, but we should make sure those memories we have of his service, and all those who have served in any conflict, be the inspiration for our hard work in the Senate, to make sure we are doing everything we can to earn the valor they gave so heroically for our country. And that has to be about making sure our troops are given what they need when they are on the battlefield, but also ensuring that when they come home, the help doesn't stop at the shoreline; that they are given the best health care and the best educational opportunities.

So, Mr. President, I will conclude with this: We pay tribute to those who have served our country, especially today, in remembering those who served on D-day, but in a special way we are thinking of Ross A. McGinnis, his service, his sacrifice, and we are praying for his family.

EXHIBIT 1

THE STORY OF PFC ROSS A. MCGINNIS

1ST PLATOON, C COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, 26TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 2ND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

Spc. McGinnis' dedication to duty and love for his fellow Soldiers were embodied in a statement issued by his parents shortly after his death:

"Ross did not become our hero by dying to save his fellow Soldiers from a grenade. He was a hero to us long before he died, because he was willing to risk his life to protect the ideals of freedom and justice that America represents. He has been recommended for the Medal of Honor . . . That is not why he gave his life. The lives of four men who were his Army brothers outweighed the value of his one life. It was just a matter of simple kindergarten arithmetic. Four means more than one. It didn't matter to Ross that he could have escaped the situation without a scratch. Nobody would have questioned such a reflex reaction. What mattered to him were the four men placed in his care on a moment's notice. One moment he was responsible for defending the rear of a convoy from enemy fire; the next moment he held the lives of four of his friends in his hands. The choice for Ross was simple, but simple does not mean easy. His straightforward answer to a simple but difficult choice should stand as a shining example for the rest of us. We all face simple choices, but how often do we choose to make a sacrifice to get the right answer? The right choice sometimes requires honor."

Ross Andrew McGinnis was born June 14, 1987 in Meadville, PA. His family moved to Knox, northeast of Pittsburgh, when he was three. There he attended Clarion County public schools, and was a member of the Boy Scouts as a boy. Growing up he played basketball and soccer through the YMCA, and Little League baseball. Ross was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Knox, and

a 2005 graduate of Keystone Junior-Senior High School.

Ross's interests included video games and mountain biking. He was also a car enthusiast, and took classes at the Clarion County Career Center in automotive technology. He also worked part-time at McDonald's after school.

His mother, Romaine, said Ross wanted to be a Soldier early in life. When asked to draw a picture of what he wanted to be when he grew up, Ross McGinnis, the kindergartner, drew a picture of a Soldier.

On his 17th birthday, June 14, 2004, Ross went to the Army recruiting station and joined through the delayed entry program.

After initial entry training at Fort Benning, Georgia, McGinnis was assigned to 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment in Schweinfurt, Germany. According to fellow Soldiers, he loved Soldiering and took his job seriously, but he also loved to make people laugh. One fellow Soldier commented that every time McGinnis left a room, he left the Soldiers in it laughing.

The unit deployed to Eastern Baghdad in August 2006, where sectarian violence was rampant. Ross was serving as an M2 .50 caliber machine gunner in 1st Platoon, C Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment in support of operations against insurgents in Adhamiyah, Iraq.

According to the official report, on the afternoon of Dec. 4, 2006, McGinnis' platoon was on mounted patrol in Adhamiyah to restrict enemy movement and quell sectarian violence. During the course of the patrol, an unidentified insurgent positioned on a rooftop nearby threw a fragmentation grenade into the Humvee. Without hesitation or regard for his own life, McGinnis threw his back over the grenade, pinning it between his body and the Humvee's radio mount. McGinnis absorbed all lethal fragments and the concussive effects of the grenade with his own body. McGinnis, who was a private first class at the time, was posthumously promoted to specialist. Spc. McGinnis's heroic actions and tragic death are detailed in the battlescape section of this website and in his Medal of Honor Citation.

Army Decorations: Medal of Honor (to be presented to Tom and Romaine McGinnis at a June 2, 2008 White House Ceremony), Silver Star (awarded for valor exhibited during the events of Dec. 4, 2006, pending processing and approval of Medal of Honor), Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and Combat Infantryman Badge.

[From the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette]
(By Milan Simonich)

MEDAL OF HONOR PRESENTED TO FAMILY OF A HERO

WASHINGTON.—President Bush yesterday awarded the Medal of Honor to a fallen Clarion County soldier, calling him an ordinary guy who did the extraordinary to save the lives of four buddies in Iraq.

Spc. Ross McGinnis used his body to cover a grenade that an insurgent threw from a rooftop into an Army Humvee. By turning himself into a human shield, he gave his life to protect the other men in his crew.

Mr. Bush presented the Medal of Honor, America's highest military decoration, to Tom and Romaine McGinnis, parents of the 19-year-old soldier. About 300 people—including the four soldiers who survived the grenade blast—attended the ceremony in the East Room of the White House. It ended with everybody standing and applauding for Spc. McGinnis.

By then, Mrs. McGinnis was fighting back tears. Mr. Bush turned and kissed her on the cheek, causing her to smile. Then he escorted her from the room.

Afterward, Mrs. McGinnis said the president had told her he might cry if she did.

Tom McGinnis said his son, a restless and below-average student until his senior year of high school in Knox, would have savored this day of acclamation had he lived to see it.

"He'd have had a great time. He'd have enjoyed the spotlight," Mr. McGinnis said.

In an earlier interview, he said he is certain his son never thought of medals or glory. Friendships and relationships were all that motivated his son, Mr. McGinnis said.

Sgt. Ian Newland, the only soldier to be seriously injured in the explosion, walks with a cane now. At 28, he said his goal is to run again, though doctors tell him he won't. He wants to accomplish all he can each day—his only way of repaying Spc. McGinnis.

In a news conference after the ceremony, Sgt. Newland said each moment of the grenade explosion is burned into his memory. Even so, he said, it took a few days of reflection for him to fully grasp the magnitude of Spc. McGinnis' sacrifice.

The crew was rolling through a Baghdad neighborhood the morning of Dec. 4, 2006. Spc. McGinnis rode atop the Humvee in a hatch, manning a .50-caliber machine gun.

A man on a roof threw a grenade that dropped straight through the hatch and into the Humvee, where the other four soldiers essentially were trapped.

Spc. McGinnis could have dived onto the street to safety. Instead, he jumped back inside the Humvee and pinned the grenade between his back and the vehicle.

It exploded a second or two later, piercing Spc. McGinnis' body armor and blowing the doors off the Humvee. Shrapnel tore into Sgt. Newland's head and all four limbs.

As he looks back on that day, Sgt. Newland said he focuses on two things: "The pain. The grief."

The other three soldiers—Sgt. 1st Class Cedric Thomas, Sgt. Lyle Buehler and Spc. Sean Lawson—were not hurt physically. Sgt. Buehler said survivor's guilt weighs on him. Had the grenade rolled in front of him, he would have been in the position to cover it. As it happened, only Spc. McGinnis knew where the grenade was.

The others say Spc. McGinnis took little seriously except soldiering.

"The first time I met him, he had me laughing," Spc. Lawson said.

In his combat team in the 1st Battalion, 26 Infantry Regiment, Spc. McGinnis developed a reputation for doing impressions, the soldiers said. So spot-on were his imitations that a drill instructor even laughed when he was the object of one of them.

The youngest man in his unit, Spc. McGinnis looked out for his crew as though they were brothers. Sgt. Thomas offers the most succinct description of the 6-foot, 136-pound beanpole, saying: "He is a hero."

Mr. McGinnis said his son knew that four lives were more valuable than one, so he instinctively reacted to save the others.

He remembers his son as an ordinary kid who made plenty of mistakes, then got interested in military service and fulfilled his potential in the Army.

"It wasn't an exciting story until right to the end," Mr. McGinnis said.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

TRIBUTE TO CINDY HAYDEN

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to bid farewell to my chief coun-

sel on the Judiciary Committee, Cindy Hayden, who is with me today. We all depend so much on our staff. They give of themselves, they give of their time, they are committed to their beliefs, and serve America, and we are never able to say thank you to all of them, but on special occasions, I think it is important to do so. In saying my thanks to her, I am saying thanks to all my staff, and to all the staff of the Senate, who serve us so well, often without ever receiving credit.

I am pleased for her because she will be starting a new chapter in her professional life, though her departure will be a tremendous loss to my staff and the Senate at large. I am glad she will be in DC, working close by, so we can call on her when we need her help.

Cindy Hayden is an exceptional person. I feel a great loss at her departure. Each day that we have worked together, she has shown an unwavering dedication to our shared values, to her State, and to her Nation. Her passion for the law is unmatched, and her commitment to the rule of law is unwavering. I trust her judgment, her political instincts, and her values. I have relied on her to manage my Judiciary staff and the multitude of important issues that committee handles. With so many issues arising on a daily basis, it is sometimes not possible for me to personally be aware of them all. In everything from judicial nominations, immigration, and any number of constitutional issues, Cindy has exhibited an intellectual capacity, a tenacity to principle, a strong work ethic, and a professional integrity that is above reproach.

Before joining my staff, she had a distinguished academic career at my undergraduate school, Huntington College, and the University of Alabama School of Law. At Huntington, Cindy had an outstanding record of academic excellence, receiving degrees in both chemistry and political science. I think chemistry is pretty impressive and would certainly get your attention when you looked at a resume. She then went to law school at the University of Alabama, where she graduated cum laude and served as managing editor of the Journal of Legal Profession and was a member of the moot court board. While in law school, she clerked in the office of the Alabama Attorney General under my successor, now Eleventh Circuit Judge Bill Pryor, a brilliant legal mind himself.

Immediately after taking the bar, Cindy started working as counsel on my staff, and for the past 6 years worked her way up to chief counsel. Her work on the Senate Judiciary Committee has been extraordinary, and I believe the committee is a better place for her service. The committee takes on an enormous number and wide variety of complex and sometimes controversial issues. It is one of the most demanding committees in the Senate. To be successful as an attorney on that committee you must not only be hard

working and intelligent and someone who works very long hours, but you must also be a strong negotiator, able to frame arguments in a passionate, respectful, and intellectually honest way. She has done all that with seemingly effortless skill.

I would note that the Judiciary Committee has attracted, and has right now, a host of superior attorneys who serve all of us. They are an excellent team, indeed. I would be remiss not to mention her stellar work on immigration. Since she arrived in my office, Cindy has worked tirelessly to protect the rule of law in this country, and as it turned out, she found herself at the center of a national debate on how to fix the broken immigration system in our country. Those of you who have worked on either side of the issue have certainly had to deal with Cindy and her relentless advocacy as she became the go-to person on immigration, providing a wealth of information and knowledge for all involved.

Indeed, her "alerts" that were sent out—always meticulously accurate—were picked up routinely all over the country by media outlets as accurate depictions of developments, as they were occurring so rapidly during that intense debate. So whether you were for her or against her in principle, everyone can certainly agree she handled herself with dignity, courage, tenacity, and capability during that debate.

Evidence of her dedication and influence on the committee and its staff can be seen by what some of her colleagues have had to say about her. And this is a good team, indeed. Ed Haden, my former chief counsel, who hired her, said:

Cindy immediately made a difference when she started on the committee. Her intelligence, work ethic, initiative, and willingness to stand up and defend her position made her a great asset. Her unflinching integrity and solid core values made her a success as a lawyer and as a friend.

And I would add that she was raised right. She has great values, as a product of Cullman, AL. She grew up in the heart of Alabama and was raised in an outstanding way.

William Smith, my former chief counsel and current executive director of the Americans for Limited Government Research Foundation, said the following:

I have met and worked with a number of great lawyers. Cindy Hayden is in a category more select than great. She is one of the few superior lawyers I have met. I was privileged to serve with her on the Judiciary Committee and I count her a true confidant. Our motto in the office was, "we work from sun to sun; our work is never done." Cindy has lived up to and surpassed that calling. On top of this, she is a great American. The only group I know that will truly celebrate her departure will be illegal aliens.

That is what William Smith said. Brian Darling, director of Senate Relations for the Heritage Foundation said this:

Cindy has been a hero to conservatives nationwide who believe in the rule of law.