

Agency's participation in a successful national joint mission to destroy an out-of-control U.S. satellite laden with toxic hydrazine fuel.

General Obering has consistently exemplified a true dedication to our Nation and its ideals. His vision and drive enabled the Missile Defense Agency to field a truly worldwide ballistic missile defense capability that will be a part of this Nation's defensive infrastructure for decades to come. Our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to General Obering for his outstanding leadership and service. I am proud to express my appreciation for his service.●

#### TRIBUTE TO JAMES HERMAN FAULKNER, SR.

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to James Herman "Jimmy" Faulkner, Sr., a friend, who passed away last month. "Mr. jimmy" to the scores who knew and admired him, was a great Alabamian who, during his life, served as a mayor, State senator, candidate for governor, newspaper publisher, businessman, and philanthropist.

Born in Lamar County, AL, the son of a schoolteacher and a farmer, he lost his father at the age of 12. He attended college in Tennessee and the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. At age 20, he purchased The Baldwin Times newspaper and moved to Baldwin County, AL, where he lived his life and became one of, if not the most, well known of its citizens.

Mr. Jimmy served as the Mayor of Bay Minette, AL, from 1941 to 1943, when he was called to serve in World War II as a first lieutenant, pilot, and flight instructor. Following that service, he represented Baldwin County in the Alabama State Senate, where he became an advocate for education and the State's teachers.

He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for Alabama Christian College in Montgomery, and as a testament to his success in putting that institution in a position of financial stability and his personal generosity, it was renamed Faulkner University in his honor in 1985. Remarkably, because he was instrumental in bringing Faulkner State University, a community college, to Baldwin County, that State university is also named for him. Few persons, if any, have had both a private and State university named in their honor.

Mr. Jimmy believed in Baldwin County. He brought business to the county. A friend of his, Scott Hunter, told me that Jimmy told him in 1990 to buy all the real estate he could in Baldwin County because it would double in population by 2010. And it has. Jimmy was able to predict economic, demographic, and political changes with uncanny accuracy. He lived to know 14 Alabama governors and he wrote, "We have had some good ones and some not so good. Because of my longevity, it has been my privilege, and usually my

pleasure, to have known personally, and been on friendly terms, with every governor back to Bibb Graves."

During his lifetime, he served as president and founder of two insurance businesses, and owner and publisher of three newspapers in Baldwin County. He was the recipient of more than 35 awards including 8 honorary doctorate degrees.

Jimmy Faulkner was a great man, and a world traveler who visited over 100 countries during his lifetime. He had a unique view of the entire world and the part of it he occupied, and he used that view and his knowledge to make Alabama and our Nation a better place. Those of us who knew him are all better for having shared his interesting life and benefitted from his brilliant mind.●

#### COMMENDING THE TOWN OF BELK, ALABAMA

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I wish to tell you about the small town of Belk located in Fayette County, AL. While having a relatively small population—205 in 2007—Belk has an abundance of community spirit and people willing to give of their time and energy to make it a better place to live. They exemplify the "can-do, cooperative attitude which made America great.

I visited Belk in August and was inspired by their attitude and approach. They feel greatly blessed to obtain any assistance, and use it along with their own efforts to maximize the benefits to Belk. They have a Volunteer Fire Department with 15 active members that purchased a new fire truck in 2001 with a grant and have since purchased 2 additional pumper-service trucks.

In 2004, they built a fine new Community Center using a grant from the State of Alabama and a loan of \$48,000. Holding a number of fundraising activities, including a gospel singing, silent, auction, golf tournament, and bluegrass festival, they have reduced that loan balance to \$15,230. Every second Friday night they have a bluegrass festival at the center and volunteers donate food to be served in the kitchen. All revenues go to pay on the center's debt and everyone has a wonderful time.

In addition, in 2005 they constructed a community storm shelter using a small grant of \$52,000 from FEMA. The design work was donated by a local contractor, and local tradesmen donated their time to do plumbing, electrical and water line work.

This past spring they built a new outdoor stage using donations from corporations and local businesses for the design and materials, and the labor of local volunteers for the construction.

This is the kind of volunteer effort, self-help, and love of community that I grew up knowing. It is still a common trait of small communities in Alabama, but, frankly, is being lost too often today. Belk has taken on the task of making their piece of America

a better place to live. I would like to commend Mayor Ronald Waldrop, who sets the example, and every citizen who has volunteered their efforts to the greater good. I am truly honored to represent such people. They are men, women, and youth of faith, integrity, and hard work. Such are the people who have made America great.●

#### HONORING ALVINA ELIZABETH SCHWAB PETTIGREW

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today, out of a sense of pride and gratitude, I wish to recognize the remarkable yet unheralded work of a group of women who quite literally saved innumerable lives and made a notable contribution to the Allied victory during World War II. One might wonder what has taken us so long to honor a group of women whose efforts date back over 65 years. The reason is that the nature of their work was so secret, the women were warned that they could be shot for treason if they ever revealed their activities. And so they didn't. As a result, they never received the recognition they deserved.

I am speaking of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service), who played an instrumental role in cracking the complex codes that the Germans used to radio instructions from German headquarters to the submarines that were sinking Allied ships. And when I said I was speaking out of a sense of pride, it is because Alvina Elizabeth Schwab Pettigrew from my home State of South Dakota was among this determined group of heroes.

Alvina was born in 1919 on a farm near Mina, SD. She completed grades 1-8 in a one-room schoolhouse and graduated from Mina High School. She received a scholarship to Grand Island Business College in Nebraska in 1936. But in 1942, this everyday American embarked on a journey that would call her to do extraordinary things in the service of our Nation.

Alvina enlisted in the WAVES in October 1942 and was sent to Stillwater, OK, for 3 months of training. Following graduation, orders arrived for her to report to the Naval Communications Annex in Washington, DC. In nondescript buildings now housing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, more than 600 WAVES labored secretly in support of the war effort. German U-boats had been sinking Allied ships at alarming rates. Between January and March 1942, the Germans sank 216 ships off the east coast alone. But the Americans, improving on cryptological breakthroughs by the Poles and the British, finally cracked the German codes. The WAVES were the ones who actually operated the machines that deciphered the codes. They had the German U-boat fleet fighting for its life. The WAVES ran the machines around the clock. The noise was head-splitting, the summer heat sweltering. But they forged ahead, knowing that American lives were at stake.