

superior technical and operational expertise, and compassion as a pilot, leader, mentor, and friend.

Captain Romine has a distinguished career that is worthy of recognition by this Senate. Harl Romine—the son of a career Coast Guard officer—attended high school in Chantilly, VA, and graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1985 with a bachelor of science degree in government. Immediately following graduation he joined the fleet and served as a deck watch officer, law enforcement boarding officer, and weapons officer aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter CHEROKEE. Upon completing his tour on the CHEROKEE, Captain Romine attended Navy Flight School to begin his career as a Coast Guard aviator a role in which he would truly distinguish himself. Upon receiving his “wings of gold” at flight school in Pensacola, Captain Romine began a career of service that would take him from the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico to frigid seas of the Gulf of Alaska.

His first aviation assignment was to the Coast Guard’s largest and busiest air station—Air Station Clearwater, FL, where he served as a duty standing pilot in the HH-3F “Pelican” helicopter performing a wide range of missions in the Atlantic and Caribbean regions, including Search and Rescue and drug enforcement operations.

In 1991 he was assigned to Air Station Kodiak where he continued to fly the HH-3F and then transitioned to the HH-60J “Jayhawk.” Four years later, he was transferred to Coast Guard Group Astoria, OR, where he served as the administration officer, supervising the administrative and personnel support for over 300 Coast Guard personnel.

In 1998, Captain Romine was assigned as the HH-60J standardization branch chief at the Coast Guard’s Aviation Training Center in Mobile, AL. The young pilots trained under the tutelage of Captain Romine were a large part of the impressive Coast Guard Team that performed so heroically in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In 2001, Captain Romine qualified in the HC-130H “Hercules” and returned to the operations officer for Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak. During this tour he maintained a qualification in both the HH-60J “Jayhawk” and the HC-130 “Hercules” airframes and has the unique distinction of standing duty in both airframes during the same week and successfully executing a search and rescue case in both airframes during that week.

In 2004, Captain Romine received the ultimate honor and demonstration of the Coast Guard’s trust in his abilities, when he received orders to serve as the commanding officer of Coast Guard Air Station Sitka, AK.

At the heart of his career of distinguished service is commitment to rescuing those in distress. Over his career Captain Romine has personally flown,

coordinated or supervised over 800 search and rescue cases resulting in over 600 lives saved. When Americans watch with pride as an orange helicopter plucks shipwrecked mariners from an icy sea or pulls stranded men and women off of roof tops in a flooded city, they should all know that it is men and women like Harl Romine who are piloting the aircraft risking their lives to save someone else’s.

Captain Romine’s service has not gone unrecognized by his commanders. For his distinguished and heroic service, he has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, four Coast Guard Commendation Medals and three Coast Guard Achievement Medals.

Finally, for the last 3 years, Captain Romine has distinguished himself while serving as a Coast Guard fellow on the Senate Commerce Committee’s Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard Subcommittee. With the same technical expertise and devotion to duty demonstrated throughout his career as an aviator, Captain Romine earned the respect of all who have worked with him and has been an invaluable member of the Commerce Committee staff and will be sorely missed.

On July 17, Captain Romine will be retiring from the Coast Guard and will be bringing his impressive and distinguished career in the Coast Guard to an end. We would be remiss if we did not thank his family for “loaning” Harl to the Coast Guard for so many years. Life in the Coast Guard places great stress on families as well as servicemen. We want to thank Harl’s wife Laura, and his sons Hank, Carson, and Sonny for all the sacrifices they have made.

Throughout his service to our Nation, whether standing the watch, teaching the next generation of pilots who now stand the watch, or commanding those who protected our Nation’s mariners, Captain Romine has upheld the highest traditions of the Coast Guard. We would like to take this opportunity to personally commend Captain Romine for his service to our Nation, the Coast Guard and the Senate and thank him for all he has done in service to his country.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING MAJOR GENERAL ROGER W. GILBERT

• Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of Major General Roger W. Gilbert who passed away on June 13, 2009 in Lenexa, KS. I would like to express my condolences to Major General Gilbert’s family, in particular his wife of 58 years, Ruthie, his two daughters Carol and Marilee, his three granddaughters Brooke, Britni, and Allison, and his sister Beverly. They are in my thoughts and prayers.

Major General Gilbert led an honorable and extensive career which began upon his enlistment in the Army Air Corps in 1943 while he was a student at Drake University. After his pilot training, he courageously took two combat tours in Europe during World War II. He flew 50 missions in B-17s and Mosquitoes and upon his accomplishment he was awarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with five clusters and five battle stars.

In 1946, he joined the Air National Guard and flew another 50 combat missions in B-26 bombers during the Korean war. He then became squadron and later on wing commander of the Air Guard units and accumulated 7,200 hours of pilot time, 4,000 of which were served as a jet pilot. Major General Gilbert amassed a large amount of medals throughout his service career, including the Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster and another 38 awards.

Major General Gilbert retired from his career of 42 years of service in the Air Force and Air Guard. He previously was the adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard, as well as the former commander of the 132nd Fighter Wing of the Iowa National Guard, which was given three national recognitions as being an outstanding unit of the Air Force. After retirement, he spent his time hunting, skeet shooting, and taking his golden retriever, Major, out to the field.

The career of Major General Gilbert was a distinguished one and his 42-year commitment to serving the people of the United States and the State of Iowa is worthy of much admiration and honor. I am grateful for his service and pay tribute to his patriotism. ●

##### REMEMBERING JACK EBERSPACHER

• Mr. JOHANNIS. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a leader in American agriculture.

Jack Eberspacher, president and chief executive officer of the Agricultural Retailers Association, passed away on July 5, 2009, in Reston, VA. He had been courageously fighting cancer since April.

Jack was a dynamic leader and was admired throughout the industry as a strong and effective advocate for agriculture.

Jack was born in Seward, NE, in 1954. He earned an animal science degree at the University of Nebraska and completed coursework toward a master’s degree in business administration at Texas Tech University.

After several years working in various agribusiness positions throughout the United States, Jack was named the chief executive officer of the National Grain Sorghum Producers Association in 1989. His colleagues there remember him as a creative man who loved pushing the envelope and emphasizing new ideas. He focused the Association’s efforts on the needs of the producers and bringing stakeholders together.