

Combat System. His expertise and commitment were instrumental in educating Members and staff in the Senate and House on Army combat systems, modernization programs and initiatives. His tireless efforts working with Members and staff of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees were instrumental in the successful authorization and appropriation of the Abrams tank, Bradley fighting vehicle, small arms and crew-served weapons, Stryker, elements of the Future Combat System and the Paladin Integrated Management programs.

Lieutenant Colonel Jones' congressional liaison assignment was only the capstone to what is an outstanding career of service to the Army and our Nation. He served as an armor officer in numerous command and staff positions. His operational assignments began in the Mojave Desert at Fort Irwin, CA, serving as a platoon leader at the National Training Center where he trained thousands of soldiers in desert warfare. He served as commander for Alpha Company, 4th Battalion 37th Armor, Heavy, followed by command of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd of the 70th Armor Battalion with the 1st Armored Division at Fort Riley, KS. After transitioning in to the acquisition career field, Lieutenant Colonel Jones was assigned to Fort Knox, KY, as a combat development officer and as a project manager for the Army's Future Combat System, FCS, in Detroit, MI.

The strength of our soldiers comes from their families. Lieutenant Colonel Jones' strength came from his wife Dynette, and his two sons Colton and Conner. This Nation is grateful for their commitment and personal sacrifices made throughout Shel's military service. We also thank his mother Joyce, who recently passed, and his father William "Gerry" Jones for raising such a fine son and patriot. Shel is from a military family. His father is a retired soldier and his brother, Dr. Keith Jones, serves as a major in the National Guard. This Nation remains indebted to your service.

On behalf of the Senate and the United States of America, I commend Lieutenant Colonel Jones for his tireless efforts in the support of our Army, our military, and our Nation. As Shel and his family prepare to start a new life in the great State of Oklahoma, I congratulate him on completing an extremely successful military career and wish all of them the best in all their future endeavors. ●

TRIBUTE TO KAREN M. ECKERT

● Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, today I celebrate the retirement of Karen M. Eckert after 37 years of excellent service to the federal government. Karen, a remarkable public servant under both the legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and devoted resident of Buffalo, NY, retired on May 29, 2009.

Karen began her career as an immigration inspector at Niagara Falls, NY, in 1972 and quickly became knowledgeable in all areas of immigration. Her work has touched the lives of thousands—giving hope to countless immigrants and new citizens in pursuit of their dreams, as well as uniting adoptive parents with children in need of a loving home, while striving to protect children and underprivileged birth parents from exploitation.

Karen became a leading expert in intercountry adoption and child citizenship. In this role, she was invaluable in establishing the Child Citizenship Program in Buffalo, NY, drafting orphan regulations, and leading USCIS to take the steps necessary to implement the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

Her outstanding and distinguished service has been recognized through numerous awards, including an Angel in Adoption Award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute in 2003, the Department of Homeland Security Secretary's Meritorious Service Award in 2006 and the USCIS Director's Award in 2008 for her direction and participation in the Hague Implementation Working Group.

It is impossible to count the number of individuals who have personally benefited from Karen's professionalism, insights and dedication and she will be sincerely missed by her colleagues worldwide.

We congratulate Karen M. Eckert on her outstanding and distinguished career and for the inspiration she is leaving behind. ●

RECOGNIZING WORLD WAR II VETERANS

● Mr. LUGAR. Madam President, today I wish to pay tribute to the American men and women who served their country valiantly during World War II, and to a nonprofit organization known as HonorFlight which flies surviving veterans, at no expense to themselves, to Washington, DC, to visit the World War II Memorial. I wish to have printed in the RECORD a letter from Scott C. Stump, a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, describing the efforts of HonorFlight which will enable two Hoosier veterans, Harvey H. Hammerlund and Joseph B. Smrt, to visit the World War II Memorial this fall.

The letter follows:

DEAR SENATOR LUGAR: During World War II, 16 million American men and women selflessly, and unflinchingly served our country and defended our way of life for future generations. Now, more than 64 years since the end of that Great War, only three million of our World War II Veterans walk among us. Even more alarming, we are losing these veterans at the rate of 1,000 per day, which is causing their ranks to dwindle at an alarming rate. Now more than ever, we need to take pause and recognize these veterans and their contributions to making our great country what she is today. Part of that rec-

ognition, the National World War II Monument in Washington, DC, was completed and opened to World War II Veterans and the public on 29 April 2004.

Since its opening, the monument has been like a shining star, beckoning to our World War II Veterans. In fact, many of those veterans have had a dream of visiting this monument erected to the remembrance of "The Greatest Generation." Unfortunately, due to health, monetary, and other constraints, many World War II Veterans have been unable to visit "their" Memorial.

In 2005 that all began to change when a non-profit organization known as "HonorFlight" was born. Several dedicated individuals had a vision to fly any and all of our World War II Veterans to Washington, to see "their" Memorial, at absolutely no cost to the veterans. This wonderful, all volunteer force, began flying in 2005 and flew a total of 137 Veterans to see the Memorial that first year. Now, a brief four years later, there will be a total of over 42,000 veterans who have been able to fulfill their dreams and wishes of being able to visit Washington, DC and, most importantly, the World War II Memorial.

I would like to publicly thank HonorFlight and their network of dedicated volunteers for all of their efforts in making dreams come true. I am truly humbled to be a small part of such a great organization.

On this date, I would also like to recognize two very special World War II Veterans who are about to embark on a very special journey to Washington, DC. These two Hoosiers, both from the fertile farmlands of Starke County, answered their call to serve their country long ago, and in so doing served with honor, dignity, and courage.

Harvey H. Hammerlund was born on 21 December 1924 in rural Knox, Indiana. Harvey was a farm boy who enlisted in The United States Navy on 4 January 1944. Harvey served on The U.S.S. Urben 631 as an electrician. Harvey spent the remainder of the war traversing the hostile enemy-laden South Pacific. Mr. Hammerlund was discharged on 23 March 1946 at the rank of 3rd Class Petty Officer. Harvey returned home and was a farmer for the remainder of his working years. Harvey was and is a leader in Starke County serving on various boards and committees, as well as being active with V.F.W. Post 748 in Knox. Harvey resides on his farm outside of Knox with Dee, his wife of 59 years.

Joseph B. Smrt was born on 14 February 1916 in North Judson, Indiana. Joe enlisted in The United States Army on 11 December 1942. Joe served in Patton's Third Army in the 94th Division Company B 19th Engineers. Joe proudly served all over Central Europe, including the epic "Battle of the Bulge" in Belgium. Mr. Smrt was discharged on 27 December 1945 but continued serving in The U.S. Army Reserves for the next 33 years, retiring as a Sergeant First Class. Joe worked and continues to work as a Surveyor as his profession and continues to be a pillar of the Starke County Community. Joe still lives in Knox with Ursula, his wife of 58 years.

Thank you, Senator LUGAR, for recognizing a great organization and two outstanding individuals. These two men have truly played a part in shaping the America that we know and love today.

Sincerely,

SCOTT C. STUMP. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.