

of service better than Gary Bermeosolo. Over the past decade, I have had the opportunity to work with Gary on many occasions. He has been a pleasure to work with. I have always been impressed by Gary's ability to innovate and find solutions for our Nevada veterans.

Even in retirement, I am confident that Gary will continue to be a tireless advocate for those who have worn the uniform. On behalf of all Nevadans and all Americans, I am proud to thank Gary for his service to this Nation's veterans.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN W. DEARMON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a respectable and courageous Kentucky veteran, Mr. John W. Dearmon of Somerset, KY. John served his country for 28 years, from 1943 to 1971, as one of our country's very first Navy SEALs.

John moved to Burnside, KY with his family when he was a boy in 1936. During World War II John was chosen to be part of a class of 141 that produced the first 27 Navy SEALs from underwater demolition teams. During the war, John was in command of a 45-foot intercoastal patrol boat that navigated the harbor and coast of Guam in the Western Pacific.

SEAL training for John consisted of 16 weeks of basic training, with 6 weeks of underwater swimming school. In addition, John recalls parachuting from 30,000 feet during jump school—his team was capable of jumping from up to 43,000 feet but he never had to jump from that altitude.

John is very proud of his service to his country and claims the Navy made him tough. Being a Navy SEAL instilled in John the courage to feel like he can accomplish anything, a trait he takes great pride in. John's formal education ended after he finished the 8th grade, however, he believes he received a real education about how to succeed in life from the Navy.

John W. Dearmon is a true American hero and patriot who is an inspiration to the great people of Kentucky. In fact, when asked if he ever thought about quitting during his arduous assignment, he responded, "No! Absolutely not! I'm an old Kentucky farm boy. I'm gung-ho. I never thought about quitting."

John devoted his life to protecting the liberty and freedom our great country was founded upon, and I commend him for his bravery and honor. The Pulaski County Commonwealth Journal recently published an article to honor John's life and accomplishments. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Pulaski County Commonwealth Journal, Aug. 13, 2011]

LIFE OF A SEAL: JOHN DEARMON WAS ONE OF ORIGINAL 27 ELITE FORCES (By Bill Mardis)

"It felt great! I would love to have been with them . . . I started and they finished it for me!"

A Pulaski County man can feel heartbeats of the U.S. Navy SEALs as they moved in and killed terrorist mastermind Osama Bin Laden in a firefight. John W. Dearmon knows their thoughts, their toughness and resolve. He was one of the original SEALs. In his mind, he will always be a SEAL.

Dearmon was in a class of 141 during early World War II that produced the first 27 SEALs. "In my class, we ended up with 27 SEALs, originating from underwater demolition teams. The class was too tough for 114. They didn't make it. They dropped out."

"I didn't join, I was picked. They picked the best men . . . I was one of them. I was proud to be a part," Dearmon said.

Dearmon cringed in sorrow a few days ago when a helicopter crashed in eastern Afghanistan and killed 22 Navy SEALs who were being flown in to assist an Army Rangers unit pinned down by enemy fire. The United States Navy's Sea, Air and Land Teams, commonly known as Navy SEALs, are the U.S. Navy's principal operation force and a part of the Naval Warfare Command.

SEALs are tough hombres. Few there are who can qualify.

"It just doesn't get any tougher. It's really tough. You don't make it if you don't have endurance," said Dearmon. "Basic underwater demolition training . . . that's the hard part, getting through that." "Basic training lasts 16 weeks, and there are six weeks in underwater swimming school."

"Did you ever think about quitting?" "No! Absolutely not! I'm an old Kentucky farm boy. I'm gung ho. I never thought about quitting."

"Were you ever scared?" "Well, I really don't know how to answer that. I was anxious a few times."

Dearmon was in command of a 45-foot intercoastal patrol boat, patrolling the harbor and intercoastal areas around Guam in the western Pacific. The boat carried eight depth charges, anti-submarine warfare weapons intended to destroy or cripple a target submarine by the shock of exploding near it.

"We dropped depth charges," recalled Dearmon. "I never knowingly got results, but more than likely we did (get results)," he mused. Dearmon was quick to point out that he never engaged in hand-to-hand combat as did the SEALs who killed Bin Laden.

Dearmon parachuted from 30,000 feet. "We could jump from up to 43,000 feet, but I never jumped that high." Dearmon pointed out that equipment available to his first unit of SEALs is "like a caveman" to what they have today. "The electronic equipment, it's so advanced."

"You're still tough," a reporter suggested to the young-looking 87-year-old.

"I still think I'm tough . . . at least for a little while," he grinned. Despite his age, Dearmon said he is in relatively good health and ". . . I can take care of myself."

His wife, the former Margaret Louise Bray, died July 21. They were married 57 years. "I was devastated (when she died) but I'm getting so I can get along. I'm able to get around."

He goes out for coffee with a group of friends every Thursday morning. It was a friend, Jim Cundiff, who called the Commonwealth Journal and asked: "Do you know that one of the original Navy SEALs lives in Pulaski County?"

The suggestion led to a meeting with Dearmon and a story appropriate for the

times, when Navy SEALs are again in the news.

Dearmon, a native of Tennessee, moved to Burnside with his family in 1936. He left in 1940, working with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). He joined the Navy in June 1943 and served 28 years, retiring in 1971.

"Would he do it all over again?"

I loved every minute I was in the Navy. I'm proud of my life. I didn't have much (formal) education. I finished the 8th grade . . . but in the Navy I got a real education. I feel like I can do anything. I built this house (at 125 East Summit Drive, Somerset) in 1972. I had never built anything before, but I got a 'How To' manual and went to work."

TRIBUTE TO JENNY BOWLING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a devoted mother, parent, and fixture of the Colony Elementary School lunchroom staff, Ms. Jenny Bowling of Laurel County, KY. Jenny's love for cooking and sharing great food with people led to a long and fulfilling 38-year career as a cook and lunchroom manager at Colony Elementary.

Jenny began her career as a lunchroom cook in May of 1959 so that she could be close to her three children, who were enrolled at Colony Elementary at the time. She grew close to the teachers and other school staff over the years. She also served as the lunchroom manager. This included cooking as well as running the cafeteria, keeping payroll records and processing the free lunch forms.

In addition, Jenny was an avid volunteer within the school. Jenny was a member of the PTO and rarely missed a meeting. The value and importance of school involvement to Jenny was irreplaceable, a tradition that is still very much alive within her today—Jenny still volunteers every year at Colony Elementary's annual Thanksgiving celebration by assisting in the lunchroom preparation of the traditional turkey and stuffing meals. Jenny passionately served the children and staff of Colony Elementary for almost four decades before she retired in 1997.

Ms. Jenny Bowling's lifetime commitment to serving Colony Elementary with smiles and home-style meals is truly admirable and an inspiration to the citizens of our great Commonwealth. The Laurel County Sentinel Echo published an article highlighting and thanking Jenny for her service to the people of Kentucky. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Laurel County Sentinel Echo, 2011]

HOMESTYLE TRADITIONS: JENNY BOWLING KEEPS CAFETERIA RECIPES ALIVE IN HER KITCHEN AT HOME

(By Magen McCrayer)

In May 1959, Jenny Bowling pulled a hairnet over her soft locks to prepare for 38 years working within school cafeterias.

"At the time we peeled our own potatoes," Bowling recalled.