

week's helicopter crash off the coast of Virginia. The crash touched my office in a personal way.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Andrew Collins was one of the three sailors who lost his life in that crash. He is the brother of one of my staffers, Morgan. My entire staff and I shared her grief as we received the news at work in our office.

Brian was 25 years old. He was born and raised in Truckee, California, and was a graduate of Truckee High School. He was an avid skier, who first strapped on his first pair of skis at the age of 2. He loved to fly down the mountains of California, bouncing in and out of the trees. After high school, Brian briefly attended trade school before deciding to enlist in the military. It was in the Navy that he found his calling.

Brian was a member of the Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron. Those teams patrol the waters to locate and destroy sea-based mines that could harm Navy vessels. Brian loved that mission. He enjoyed jumping out of helicopters and into the water as the team's primary rescue swimmer. It was during his service that he married his wife, Cheyenne. The young couple just celebrated their 1-year anniversary and had bought their first home. They were starting their life together and still had so much to experience. Cheyenne said: "We just scratched the surface."

I will never have the fortune of meeting Brian. However, I feel honored to have gotten to know him through the memories shared by the people he loved. There are few words that can comfort his family and friends in their loss. All I can offer is a sincere and humble "thank you."

Thank you for your service.

Thank you for sharing Brian's story, Cheyenne.

On behalf of all Americans, thank you to all of the military men and women in service.

I ask that this House join me in a moment of silence in honor of the life of Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Andrew Collins and in honor of his two fellow crewmembers who lost their lives in that crash, Lieutenant Sean Snyder and Lieutenant Wesley Van Dorn.

A REDUCTION OF MILITARY FORCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROKITA), my colleague.

OBAMACARE

Mr. ROKITA. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of one of my constituents—Janet, from Crawfordsville—pictured here with her husband, Steve. Like millions of our

fellow Americans, she is finding out just how deceptive ObamaCare's cheerleaders were when they sold this insidious law to the American people.

Following surgical treatment for cancer last year, Janet was receiving radiation treatment, and, as if battling a serious illness weren't stressful enough, Janet recently lost her job and was notified that the insurance provided through her severance package would be ending soon. Her family faced the decision to either continue the same coverage under what we call "COBRA" or enroll in an ObamaCare plan. She was skeptical of the process of enrolling in ObamaCare, but as the end date of her employer-sponsored insurance loomed, she was reassured by the news that the President and his team had fixed the technical glitches plaguing healthcare.gov.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could report that the story ends there on a good note, but it only gets worse, as it does for millions of Americans.

Imagine Janet's frustration when she encountered glitch after glitch throughout the enrollment process. She spent hours on the phone with call center workers, only to find out that the call center workers were as bewildered by the Web site as she was. Several times, she was cut off after holding for over 2 hours.

Mr. Speaker, I would surmise that Members of this Congress get frustrated when holding for a few minutes for anything—2 hours repeatedly, a cancer patient who can't get coverage.

Eventually, Janet had to enroll via the United States mail. This is after taxpayers—and future generations, for that matter, since we borrow 4 percent of what we spend around here—paid nearly \$500 million for a Web site that was supposed to handle a relatively simple signup process. Believing she had successfully enrolled, Janet submitted the appropriate payments for her ObamaCare coverage. She paid for it, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, Janet did not receive any confirmation that those payments were received or that she had actually enrolled in her plan.

Adding to the uncertainty, neither Obama's bureaucrats nor the insurer can verify her enrollment now. Despite efforts, my staff could not get an answer from the bureaucrats either because of how this law was designed. Meanwhile, Janet continues to receive notices that payment is due, again, adding insult to injury since she already submitted her payment.

It still doesn't end there.

Janet was also informed that she can no longer continue her cancer treatment with her doctor of choice as the provider would only be able to accept certain health care plans off the ObamaCare exchange. The plan Janet chose did not qualify, and it was virtually impossible to verify this during the enrollment period. Janet will have to continue her cancer treatment with a new doctor several times per week. Thankfully, she is allowed to do that,

but the doctor is a 60-mile round trip drive.

ObamaCare has only served to exacerbate already trying and complicated health care issues with bureaucratic red tape and customer service so terrible that it is one only this Federal Government can provide. Like many Hoosiers, Janet was misled by ObamaCare's proponents. Her choices have been severely limited, and she is hardly able to shop around for a doctor she is comfortable with. This is not health care reform. ObamaCare is leading to a health care crisis.

I continue to receive stories from Hoosiers—and I know you do as well—about how ObamaCare has misleadingly done the complete opposite of what was promised. Insurance policies continue to be canceled. Premiums are skyrocketing, and deductibles are soaring. Choice has been reduced, not amplified, and specialty services are in increasingly short supply. In other words, they are being rationed.

I will continue fighting to repeal and replace this insidious law for people like Janet and for millions of Americans in similar situations.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. ROKITA.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that maybe is unknown to many Members and many citizens but should be known, which is the reduction of forces—the reduction in the capability of our military services across all branches, across the whole spectrum—and how that process is going. It has been my studied opinion at this point that the process is what we should discuss at this time—a process that has lacked transparency, a process that has lacked deliberation.

Now, while it is this Member's belief that the chiefs at the DOD are under significant pressure from an administration to defend this Nation, they are also under significant pressure to make cuts, not only to make those cuts, but to make those cuts in a very particular way. That is part of the discussion today—the cuts to the reserve forces.

□ 1230

Before I recognize some of my colleagues, I just want to provide from the Joint Chiefs the definition of the operational reserve, which is your Guard and Reserve:

As such, the services organize, resource, equip, train, and utilize their Guard and Reserve components to support mission requirements—

This is important:

—to the same standards as their Active components.

To the same standards, which is interesting to me because some of the recent reports and quotes that I have heard are things like it is structured to be complementary, and capabilities in its three components are not interchangeable. So that statement flies in the face of the original definition of what Guard and Reserve forces do.

And things like saying that Guard and Reserve members only train 39 days a year, which, again, I think the

Chiefs are under considerable pressure. DOD is fighting for its life—not among its members but, in my opinion, against an administration; and they are doing what they have to do.

I am an Army soldier. I joined an Army of one, not an Army of some of us get this and some of us get that. We all do the same work together at the same level; and that is the expectation, as it should be. But that is what we are going to discuss for the next hour.

At this time, I yield to my colleague and friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Representative PERRY. I really appreciate this opportunity to talk about the National Guard.

I first want to start by thanking Congressman PERRY for his service in the Pennsylvania National Guard for some time. He is very committed to our country and committed to the Guard. I commend him for putting this on.

I also want to commend his chief of staff, who is seated right next to him, Colonel Lauren Muglia, who is also an active guardswoman; and I am very proud of her service at Fort Indiantown Gap in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, at the National Guard center up there, which is located in my congressional district—a very important asset to this country's homeland security and emergency preparedness, as well as any other missions that would be called upon them.

But I have a few things I just wanted to say about the Guard very, very quickly.

The Army's plan for the National Guard includes, frankly, drastic plans to slash the force structure, end strength and aviation assets, and will put the Guard on the back shelf as a strategic reserve. I am very concerned about this. And I know many of my colleagues are as well.

Congress has made a very significant investment in the Guard over the past 12-or-so years to train and equip the Guard as an operational reserve. At a time when the Pentagon must dig very deep for savings in their programs and agencies, the Guard remains a viable investment.

I say this as a member of the Appropriations Committee. We have to make a lot of very hard choices with respect to how we allocate our very limited resources. The Defense Department is coming under a great deal of stress.

But I want you to consider this: the most recent report of the Reserve Forces Policy Board, or RFPB, concluded that a National Guard member costs about one-third of their Active component counterpart. This would translate into nearly \$2.6 billion in savings for every 10,000 positions shifted from a full-time to a part-time status.

What's more, the Army National Guard provides 32 percent of the Army's total personnel and 40 percent of its operating force, while only consuming 11 percent of the Army's budget. That represents a value to this country and, frankly, to the taxpayer.

I mean no disrespect to anybody, but I think we have to understand the real value of this National Guard to the taxpayer.

The Air National Guard provides 19 percent of the Air Force's total personnel and 30 to 40 percent of its overall fighter, tanker, and airlift capacity, at 6 percent of the Air Force budget.

Many of those Air National Guardsmen and pilots are very experienced and have many, many hours of service. So I think we should acknowledge how experienced those folks are.

In conclusion, I just wanted to say that not only does the Guard provide this operational asset to our overall national security and defense structure; but, just as important, it provides an emergency preparedness and homeland security function that they have to help us deal with all the time. In my State, it is usually floods and weather emergencies. The Guard plays an absolutely critical role to help us during those times.

So they have that operational component. They obviously contribute significantly in the wars, and we have seen this, too. By the way, if you have been to Afghanistan or Iraq—and I know some of our colleagues here have served there and paid very heavy prices—frankly, we have seen how well integrated our Guard and Reserve units are with regular Army and regular Air Force units. So I am very proud of that service.

Again, that dual mission—they can help us fight wars and they are certainly a critical component to our overall homeland security and emergency preparedness strategy in the country.

With that, I thank Congressman PERRY for his leadership on this issue, and I really appreciate that he put this Special Order together.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Representative DENT. I appreciate your comments and I appreciate your support for our Guard.

Again, that is the discussion—a discussion about a process that should be open, that we should have a part in. What we would ask at this point is that the DOD not proceed with the plan until they have had input from everybody involved, which includes our Nation's Guard and Reserve and includes hometown heroes that serve right in every single town, every city, every hamlet, every village across the country, and serve their Nation well.

In this Nation's wars in the last 10 to 15 years, they have been 50 percent of the fighting force. Why haven't we included them in the conversation in a meaningful way?

With that, I would like to again yield to another colleague of mine from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. I would like to thank my good friend and fellow Pennsylvanian (Mr. PERRY) for hosting this important discussion.

As my colleague Congressman DENT noted, it is Colonel Perry who in 2008 left the comforts of our country to

serve in Iraq. His chief, Lauren Muglia, also is with the National Guard and went overseas for our country.

I rise today in support of the Pennsylvania National Guard and, in particular, the brave soldiers who serve in the 1-104th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, based in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Their future, like that of many other National Guard units across the Commonwealth, is being placed in serious jeopardy as part of the Army's most recent force structure plan.

Major General Wesley Craig, the adjutant general for the Pennsylvania National Guard, put it best when he wrote in a letter to the editor that recently appeared in one of our local newspapers, the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat, that the 1-104th is "under attack." In fact, Major General Craig's letter encapsulates this issue so well that I would like to read it into the RECORD now.

Major General Craig writes:

Johnstown battalion is under attack.

The more than 250 members of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 1-104th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, based in Johnstown, may lose their Apache helicopters and a number of them could be furloughed if the Army has its way.

These are the same highly trained soldiers who recently returned from a year-long deployment in Afghanistan, where they provided aerial support using AH-64 Apache helicopters fighting side-by-side with their active component counterparts.

The Army wants to restructure its aviation fleet by divesting itself from Kiowa helicopters and replacing them with Apache helicopters taken from the Army National Guard.

Consequently, the removal of 24 Apaches from our inventory in Johnstown will render the 1-104th a nonmission-capable force when it comes to defending our Nation at home and abroad.

In turn, the Army proposes to replace the Apaches with only 12 other aircraft—a 50 percent reduction in the number of aircraft that we have in Johnstown.

Detrimental actions like this prove that the National Guard is still considered "second-rate" by the Active component despite us demonstrating our competence and effectiveness over the last 11 years of war.

Taking away highly trained personnel and equipment from the Reserve component—which cost a fraction of what it does in the Active component to operate—does not make sense for our community, Commonwealth or country.

Major General Craig concludes:

Having worn the uniform for more than 40 years, I, too, have been trained to fight; and fight I will for the skilled and courageous troops of our Nation's reserve forces.

Signed, Major General Wesley E. Craig, Adjutant General, Pennsylvania National Guard.

Mr. Speaker, there are better options than this. Let us commit to working together to ensure that the National Guard units like the 1-104th continue to receive the support they have earned and deserve.

Mr. PERRY. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

At this time, we are going to talk a little bit about aviation, and Guard

aviation in particular, because it is something I have been familiar with since the mid-1980s, when I first went to flight school. It is one of the issues that has become the forefront of this discussion and this argument.

Mr. ROTHFUS noted the drawdown and the cuts to Guard aviation and the claim, or the charge, that the Guard is not trained, accessible, or ready. With that, I just harken back to my short time in Iraq when I served with some of the finest aviators on the planet from Alpha 106 from Indiana, a group of fine people under my command in the task that had been to Iraq, many of them, before. They told me the stories of their time there before.

They were just above reproach, and they were the most professional and well-trained individuals that were competent to do the mission from the day they showed up on the ground; and they proved that every single day for a year.

With that, I yield to my friend from the great State of Illinois, who also served with those fine individuals from that very company and has sacrificed greatly for our Nation. She would like to discuss this issue as well.

Congresswoman DUCKWORTH.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, my National Guard aviation battalion was deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. We performed missions ranging from forward refueling point operations to air assaults all across the battlefield in Iraq. We were so effective that the multinational forces headquarters assigned us to help Active Duty aviation units to fly their missions as well as our own. Yet when we first reported to coordinate these missions, our Active Duty counterparts welcomed us literally by dismissively saying, Well, here comes the JV team.

Despite this less than friendly welcome, my Guard unit seamlessly integrated and carried out not only our own, but also their Active flight missions as well. In the process, we gained trust and mutual appreciation and respect.

We have come so far as a Nation and as a military. For 12 years, our Guard and Reserve units have fought side-by-side with our Active Duty counterparts in combat zones all over the world. This Nation spent precious blood, sweat, and treasure to build a fully interchangeable, cost-effective operational reserve that has been key to our successes in defending our Nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic. To squander this investment and divest our training and equipping of the reserve forces is a huge disservice to our taxpayers and to our national security.

The Guardsman is "twice the citizen," relied on heavily by our Governors and generals alike. They respond whether the duty station is a mountain pass in Afghanistan or the flooding banks of the Mississippi River.

The Guardsman is one-third the cost of an Active Duty soldier or airman. The Guardsman is the least expensive asset our military has and a critical and complementary component of our overall force structure.

We are a better Nation with a better military than to dismantle the sacrifices made on the battlefield with false claims of National Guard and Reserves' lack of capability. For 22 years I have served in the Reserves and in the Guard, the last 8 years of which were without pay.

I certainly have devoted much more than 39 days a year to serving my Nation as a military pilot; and so have my fellow Guard troops, whose sacrifices and capabilities are often underrepresented and under appreciated.

I urge my colleagues to join me in helping preserve the operational capability of the Guard in this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you.

At this time I would also like to yield to my colleague from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO), for a few comments.

Mr. PALAZZO. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania, as he is being called today, Colonel PERRY, for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, the recent comments by Army leadership are as ridiculous as anything I have seen in quite some time. In a transparent effort to protect their own, they have effectively thrown the men and women of the National Guard out with the bath water.

It is a fact that the average National Guardsman costs one-third of what his Active Duty counterpart does.

□ 1245

Now, I ask the American people, what is the better investment here?

Giving these brave citizens soldiers a pink slip is not only ridiculous from a readiness standpoint, but it amounts to throwing away billions of dollars and hours of training.

Here is your pink slip. Thanks for all your hard work, but we won't be needing you anymore is basically what they are saying.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the men and women of our National Guard are not only the smarter financial decision, but they have also earned their stripes over the past 12 years at war.

As a current member of the Mississippi National Guard, I know that the men and women I serve with and those who come from all over the United States and the territories to train at Camp Shelby before deployment are some of the most professional and most capable soldiers and airmen that our Nation has ever produced, regardless of what General Odierno has said. These men and women are the best-trained, most battle-hardened force that the Guard has seen in their 377-year history. These men and women have fought side by side for over 12 years with the men and women of our Active Duty. To put them back on the shelf will not only waste that experi-

ence, but it does nothing to deal with what many military leaders have said is the biggest threat to our national security, and that is our national debt.

Meanwhile, some Members of this body are content to watch our national debt climb on the back of runaway entitlement spending that continues to suck away resources from every sector. We are cutting right to the bone from our best capabilities. I honestly have trouble believing that Army leadership truly thinks the best way to handle budget pressures is to gut our military capability, but that is exactly what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I promise that if the Army and the President bring this half-baked idea to us here in Congress, I will do everything, along with my colleagues, in my power as a Member of this House and as a member of the House Armed Services Committee to ensure that it is soundly defeated.

Congressman, thank you very much for putting on this Special Order.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi for his comments.

Again, we are not saying that the Guard and the Reserve aren't willing to do their part. It is my belief, it is this Member's belief, that the DOD and the Chiefs are under significant pressure from the administration to do what they are doing.

We are asking for an open process and to be involved in the conversation because we want to do our part. But we can't watch the investments that have been mentioned here today be eviscerated, be thrown away, be cast away like so many things.

We understand very clearly over the course of this last 5 years this administration's tenor and attitude towards our Nation's fighting forces, but we must continue on for the sake of what we have invested in and the sacrifices that have been made by members of our hometowns in the Guard and Reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the fine gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ENYART).

Mr. ENYART. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. PERRY and I might debate about the causes for the budget cuts at the Pentagon and for the reasons for the budget cuts there, but what we do not debate and what we stand shoulder to shoulder on is the fact that the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, is the best-trained, best-equipped, best-led National Guard force that we have ever had in our history.

I had the honor, before I came to Congress, of serving as the Adjutant General, commanding the 13,000 Army and Air National Guardsmen of the great State of Illinois.

Unfortunately what has happened, as the drawdown has started to occur, the Pentagon has put forth a plan that would slash the Army National Guard. The Army National Guard and, for that matter, the Air National Guard—today we are specifically talking about the Army, but every remark I make applies to the Air National Guard as well.

The Army National Guard serves as America's insurance policy. It serves as the shock absorber for our military. We can't maintain a large enough military to answer every contingency, and that is why we have the Army National Guard and that is why we have the Army Reserve. Those are the soldiers that we call forth when we need them. When we don't need them, they train at home.

In 2005, in Iraq, 51 percent of the soldiers in Iraq were Army National Guardsmen and Reservists—51 percent. Over half were Army National Guard and Reserves. Yet today, folks in the Pentagon want to slash the Army National Guard.

We had a blizzard in Illinois last week. That blizzard was so bad that Interstate 57 at its juncture with Interstate 70 in Effingham, Illinois was closed. There were six jackknifed semitrucks. There were 375 cars stacked up, couldn't get through, snow blowing, 35-below windchill factor. That blizzard was so bad that the wreckers couldn't get through. That blizzard was so bad that the snowplows, the Illinois Department of Transportation could not get through.

Who got through? What did the Governor do? The Governor called out the Illinois National Guard. He called out those battlefield wreckers that serve the purpose in battle of going forth on the battlefield and pulling the Humvees and other Army vehicles that are damaged and inoperable off the battlefield. Those eight wheel-drive vehicles could get through that blizzard. They could get through those snowdrifts. They rescued those hundreds of stranded people in those 375 cars and six semitrucks on Interstate 57.

Now, that equipment, that is wartime equipment. And you know what the folks over at the Pentagon are arguing today? Well, they are going to strip every single AH-64 attack helicopter out of the Army National Guard, saying, well, the Governors don't need them. What do you need an attack helicopter in the Illinois National Guard or the Pennsylvania National Guard or any other National Guard for?

And, by the way, Illinois doesn't have AH-64s, so I don't have a dog in this fight other than supporting the National Guard.

The Pentagon is saying you don't need them.

What is the first maxim you learn in the Army? You train as you fight. You have to train as you fight so you know what you are doing when you go into battle. That is why the Army National Guard needs those attack helicopters, so they can go into battle with them. They will train with them so that they can fight with them.

Based on the Army's logic, the Illinois National Guard wouldn't have had those battlefield wreckers to go in and rescue those people.

We can't let this happen to the National Guard.

I went to the retirement ceremony for Lieutenant General Bill Ingram this week over at Fort Myer, and General Ingram was the TAG of North Carolina. We served together as TAGs. He commanded North Carolina; I had Illinois. He got promoted to Lieutenant General; I got demoted to Congress.

But at his retirement ceremony, he got up and spoke. And what was the first unit that the Army called up out of North Carolina in 2001 when we were ready to go to war? It was the attack helicopters. It was the AH-64s. They were the shock absorber. They were the insurance policy for America.

While we are talking about the Pentagon, when you look at the Pentagon today, you look at the Active Duty military establishment. We have more generals and admirals today than we had during World War II. We have an army of less than 500,000 people. In World War II, it was about 5 million. It was about 10 times the size. But today we have more generals, and every one of those generals on Active Duty Has a staff, and they have cooks and drivers and so on and so forth. Right now they have 250 one- or two-star generals serving on Active Duty in the Army.

Now, a division, you need to understand, is commanded by a two-star general.

Does anybody in here besides Representative PERRY and Representative DUCKWORTH know how many Active Duty divisions we have in the United States Army?

We have 10. That is 10 two-star generals. We have 250 on Active Duty.

I think before we start cutting those soldiers who go out onto that battlefield of a blizzard, operating that battlefield wrecker, pulling people and saving lives, doing that double duty, doing that double duty of saving lives in floods, blizzards, and hurricanes, as well as deploying to Afghanistan, I think maybe we need to look at cutting some of the fat, some of that excess, some of those excess two-stars.

That is what we need to do. We need to preserve our insurance policy. We need to preserve that best-trained, best-equipped and best-led National Guard force that has fought for us, not only in Afghanistan, not only in Iraq, but also on the home front.

And one last pitch for the Illinois National Guard. We have had Illinois National Guard soldiers on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in the battle, first in Iraq, and then in Afghanistan, every day since we went into Iraq—every single day, National Guard soldiers. So to those folks over in the Pentagon who think that National Guard soldiers are second-class soldiers, I have got a few brave people I would like you to meet, and one of them is sitting right there, Lieutenant Colonel TAMMY DUCKWORTH.

Thank you very much, Mr. PERRY.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ENYART for his service to our Nation, both in the military forces as well as here in Congress. I would like to just

reflect upon his remarks as well. It is my intent to bring a different standard of decorum and bearing to the discussion.

Again, we understand that DOD is under significant pressure and fighting for its life. We would like a place at the table to have a discussion, because we don't think that a proportional cut—if you are cutting 100 percent, and you say 50 percent to the active component and 50 percent to the reserve component is the same thing, it is not the same thing if the reserve component costs one-third, yet you yield the same results when you have those servicemembers on the battlefield.

We are going to continue the discussion, but at this time I would like to yield to my friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO).

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, my friend, Congressman PERRY, from the great State of Pennsylvania, for organizing this Special Order to talk about the importance of the National Guard to our great Nation.

The Third District of Florida is home to the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center and to over 2,000 National Guardsmen and -women and their families. And we in the Third District of Florida, as well as the State of Florida, are extremely proud of the National Guard and of their service in the past, and especially in the recent years in the wars in the Middle East. They answered the call and performed admirably.

The National Guard is a cost-effective force that is integral to the effectiveness of the United States military. Over the past 12 years, Congress has invested billions of dollars to train and equip the National Guard as an operational reserve. It would be a disservice to the taxpayers and to national security to squander this investment away.

They are that well-regulated militia, the minutemen of our Nation, which is necessary in order to have a free and secure Nation. They are ready, when called upon, to aid our Nation in times of need. Be it for national security or for national disaster, they answer the call.

We must ensure that their effectiveness and readiness is not adversely affected by a lack of our foresight. We are proud of all of our Guardsmen and -women, and we must not forget the great sacrifices that they have made in defense of our Nation.

Again, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. PERRY, for arranging this Special Order. Thank you for your service, too.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. YOHO.

And to continue the conversation, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Arizona (Ms. SINEMA).

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you to the gentleman from Pennsylvania for hosting that bipartisan Special Order.

Unfortunately, these days in Washington there are too few issues that bring Republicans and Democrats together to find reasonable solutions to

the challenges facing our country, but supporting the National Guard is one issue that certainly brings us together, which is why I appreciate the opportunity to join my colleagues today.

The United States needs a fully functional and operational National Guard. The active military and the National Guard may have different attributes, but they train and certify to the same standards, and Guard units and personnel can function interchangeably with their Active Duty brothers and sisters.

We rely on the National Guard to protect our country overseas and here at home. Arizona has a proud tradition of service, and we are proud of our fellow Arizonans who become citizen soldiers.

Since September 11, over 12,000 members of the Arizona National Guard have deployed, and we have 150 members currently mobilized.

Not only does the Arizona National Guard deploy overseas, it has a critical mission here at home: responding to natural disasters, improving border security, and performing counterdrug operations.

The Arizona National Guard is also leading the way in helping our citizen soldiers and their families balance the challenges of service with civilian life.

Under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Denise Sweeney, Director of Arizona's National Guard Total Force Team, the Be Resilient Program is promoting mission readiness and retention by increasing the resilience of each servicemember and their family.

□ 1300

The Total Force Team focuses on integrating and coordinating the efforts of all resilience and support programs for Arizona National Guard members and their families, and it leverages public-private partnership to engage the broader community.

This program is strengthening servicemembers and their families and is another example of why the Arizona National Guard is so important to our State and why the National Guard deserves our full support.

I support a defense budget that responsibly uses taxpayer dollars and keeps our country safe and secure. I have serious concerns that the proposed cuts to our National and Reserve component would undermine the ability of Arizona's National Guard to perform its critical missions.

Substantially reducing the size of National Guard, and in particular, removing all helicopter attack aviation, could hurt Arizona and our national security. You can't build emergency response, combat, and leadership capabilities overnight. We will continue to call on our National Guard in times of need. We should make sure they have all the training, tools, and force strength to answer that call.

As a member of a military family, I understand that these citizen soldiers and their families make great sac-

rifices in order to serve our country. We should stand up and support these brave and committed men and women, and give them the tools that they need to keep us safe.

Thank you, Colonel PERRY, for hosting this time. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this important issue more.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Arizona and would also like to commend her on her comments regarding the Guard.

Specifically, for me as an Army aviator, one of the main topics of discussion in the reduction of forces in the Guard is Army-Guard aviation. The comments that, quite frankly, that are disappointing and hit my heart are that Guardsmen train 39 days a year, and that is 2 days a month and 15 days a year of annual training. I would suggest to you that I know very few—as a matter of fact, I don't know one single Guard member that trains only 39 days a year.

As a commissioned officer who was on flight status, I spent the bulk of my time during the 2 days a month, and 15 days in the year, commanding, doing administrative things, leading my troops, planning for the future, planning their training.

The other time that I came in at least once a week, if not more often, was to get my flight time because I had the exact same requirements. It is important to note when folks say, well, they are not as trained, they are not accessible, and not ready as Active components, it is not to take anything away from the Active component, because they train every single day.

I will tell you this: I have the same standards, require the same amount of flight hours, the same check rides, flight evaluations, the same physical requirements every single year as an Active Duty aviator. If I am a gun pilot, I must do gunnery. If I am a utility pilot, I must do sling loads, I must fly with night-vision goggles so that I am ready to go. Indeed, we are ready to go every single time.

People say, well, why do we need attack assets? Why do we need the AH-64 Apache in the Guard? I am not sure, quite honestly, from the standpoint of are you protecting your State that we need that AH-64 Apache in the Guard, but I will tell this: most Guard units are replete with former members of the Active component. They did their time on Active Duty, whether it was 6 years, or whether it was 15 or 18, and then they came to the Guard, and they enhanced their skills.

As a matter of fact, on Active Duty when you are downrange, when you are over the wire, and you are serving with Active Duty members and Guard and Reservists, oftentimes if given a choice to fly with members of the Guard as opposed to Active Duty, many Active Duty components will choose to fly with the Guard members.

There is one simple reason. It is because the Active Duty component, even

though they are serving all day long, every day of the year, as a captain you are administering your administrative duties. You are leading your troops. You are planning their training, but you are not flying. So the bulk of the experience in doing the job of flying the aircraft is actually in the Guard. If you have a choice between flying with a captain and a lieutenant who have 800 hours between them or flying with a Guard CW-4 and a captain that have 35 to 4,000 hours between them in difficult terrain, in difficult conditions, what would you choose?

The mechanics who work on these aircraft don't work on them just a little bit and then move on to something else. They work on these aircraft for 20, 30 years at a stretch. They know every single thing about them; they live with them, they sleep with them. Oh, by the way, many of these folks are active Guard and Reserves. So it is not just 39 days a year, and not only more than that, it is every single day of the year. That is why the Guard and the Reserves are ready to go when called upon, and people will say, well, you are not ready to go. You have got to go to a MOB site and train before you can go.

As a task force commander, a battalion commander who went through that, I was ready to go. I met my minimums, and I met every single requirement that the Active component met. So did all of the members of my unit, men and women who had served for years and years. When they send you to a place like that they give you a unit from Illinois, they give you a unit from Alaska, or a unit from Oregon, a unit on Active Duty, a unit from the Reserves. You haven't worked together. You have got to spend a little time figuring out your SOPs, your standard operating procedures, so that you can work together, and that does take some time.

I would also say that sometimes the Guard and Reserve, things are placed upon them for training purposes that the Active component says we need, when we would argue we don't need, and they slow us down from getting to the fight.

As an aviator, I wondered why I had to get into the heat trainer. I had to do rollover drills in a Humvee. I am not driving a Humvee around the streets of Iraq or Afghanistan. I am flying an aircraft, and that is where I should spend my time, but the Active component says, no, you all are going to do this and it takes some time. We get that. They want us to be safe and they want us to have that training. Okay, we get it.

Our core mission, the things that we do, the things we train for, the things the taxpayers pay for is exactly the same for an Army aviator in the Guard as an Army aviator serving on Active Duty. Now, it might not be the same for artillery men or an infantryman or a medic or something like that, it might not be. I don't know because I don't serve in those branches, but I know my branch.

I would say that each of us have our strengths and we recognize that. We recognize the Active component strength. I think in my heart that the Active component, DOD recognizes the strength of the Guard, but again, it would be my contention that DOD is fighting for its life, not against its brethren who have served in an Army of one, but against an administration who arguably doesn't have the same view as many of those who serve and many Americans that support the armed services of the armed services. So they are in a difficult position.

I think about when they say that we are not ready to go, the Eastern Army Aviation Training Site, located at Fort Indiantown Gap where I serve, the folks that serve there work every single day, and they train Army aviators. That is what they do there. When you leave Fort Rucker and need to get an advanced aircraft, you come to EAATS many times—Eastern Army Aviation Training Site—and learn to fly a Chinook, learn to fly a Black Hawk. They don't do that in Fort Rucker in many cases. Your advanced training happens in the Guard. That is where that experience is.

Not only is it the same aircraft that many times the Active component is flying, but the EAATS folks oftentimes train even more advanced aircraft than the Active component's flying. I think that those EAATS guys are out training the special operations guys in the F model Chinook. These are Guard folks, training the Active component to go do their mission, and not just any Active component, special operations, the best of the best. Guard folks are training them. I don't want anybody to lose sight of that argument and that discussion.

You know, I am not saying, again, that the Guard shouldn't do its part. We are ready to do our part. We understand that the budget is tight and that changes must be made. But we are asking again for an open and a transparent conversation that meets the standards of decorum and bearing that we have so come to love, and one of the reasons why many people serve in our Armed Forces. I want to be an army of one that doesn't fight with his brothers and sisters in the Active component.

As a task force commander, I was privileged—and I mean well privileged—to command a task force of 800 to 1,000 souls that included National Guard, Active component, Reserves from the continental United States, from places in Europe, all fine individuals working under one commander, one mission, with one standard. I am concerned when I hear that the chiefs are being put into, in my opinion, a position to say that the Guard and the Reserves are lesser, because it is my experience that they are not.

It is my experience when soldiers are serving side by side that they don't see, and they don't recognize, and they don't notice any difference. They do their jobs. I don't want the chiefs to be

put in that position. So we are asking, we are pleading, through this, with the administration. Let's have an open process. Let's have one that is transparent. Let's have one that we can engage in a conversation, because if the Guard costs 30 percent of what the Active Duty costs are, then a proportional cut really isn't proportional. If we offer things that are important to the Nation, as is evidenced in the last 10 or 15 years of war by our presence, where 50 percent of the component is fighting those wars, not only in just logistics, but in kinetic activity, engaging the enemy in close combat, with the tools of the trade, with what you have offered and have sacrificed greatly, greatly, your Guard and Reserve, those men and women, they go, and some of them don't come home. Their sacrifice is just as important as those in the Active component.

It would be my contention, Mr. Speaker, that we need to slow this process down. It needs to be opened up so that everybody can see, and so that everything can be evaluated and that the Guard and Reserve can do its part but shouldn't have to do more than its part.

The Nation's investment in this readiness that you find in your States that comes into play when you have storms, when you have natural disasters, comes to play right there; that that readiness isn't lost, and that the days of the strategic Reserve are long in the past and that we don't go back to that failed model, and that we don't draw down so significantly that when we have a new administration, the American taxpayer will be asked, well, we are not ready to fight. We are not ready to meet our constitutional obligation to defend this Nation. Now we must spend more money to get back to where we were. We don't have to do that.

This administration's actions right now, we are making a conscious choice to reduce our readiness without cause, without reason, without justification, without a conversation. So, while some will say that it is too expensive, we have an obligation. It is expensive. Training and equipment is expensive. There is a great deal to be had in the Guard and Reserve. Again, I would like to have a discussion that honors the decorum and bearing that all servicemembers are bound to.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I appreciate the time that the Nation has taken to listen to this argument. I would ask that you call, that you write, that you email, that you correspond with your Representatives in this House of Representatives, and in the Senate, and with this administration to talk to them about having an open process by which we have to make changes to our fighting forces and to the defense of this Nation.

Well, let's have it open, let's have an open process, let's have a candid discussion, let's not pit one brother, one sister against another in this fight. We

are all on the same team. Let's not do that. Let's have an open conversation and let's make the best arrangement we can that serves both the Guard, both the Reserve, both the Active forces, and in particular, the necessary defense of this Nation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PERRY. With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to draconian budget cuts that would adversely impact the Army National Guard.

Currently, my State of West Virginia is under a State of Emergency because of a chemical spill into our Capital's water supply. Our state's National Guard has been critical in getting clean drinking water to affected residents and ensuring their health and safety.

The Guard's assistance is an absolute necessity in times of state emergencies, but let us not forget that the men and women of the Guard are also serving overseas and safeguarding our Nation's security as Soldiers in the Total Army, held to the same standards and exposed to the same risks as their active component counterparts.

I strongly believe that a proposal to reduce the Army National Guard to its lowest level in over 50 years would not only weaken our national security and homeland defenses, but makes very little fiscal sense within a long-term military strategy, as personnel costs for Guardsmen are roughly one-third the cost of active component personnel.

Congress should be clear from the beginning of the budget cycle that draconian, end strength reductions to the Reserve Component are dangerous. We owe our Guard and the American people better.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my concern about the proposed size of our Army. Our active Army should not be reduced to 420,000 personnel and our National Guard to 315,000 personnel as this represents a substantial risk to our national security policy. Within the Army, I am concerned about the restructuring of the Army Aviation force. This restructuring would represent a significant policy shift away from the Army's, "Total Force Policy." It would also negatively impact Army National Guard aviation and the communities in which those units are based.

I fully understand that sequestration has caused the Army to make some very difficult decisions about their future force structure. I do not want to see a repeat of the 1990s when the active and reserve components fought one another for the limited resources available. However, that seems to be the path we are on and it in no way advances our national security. That is why, I begin by asking and imploring my colleagues in the House of Representatives to work together to find a solution to sequestration and repeal this misguided method of reducing spending. It is our

Constitutional duty to provide for the common defense and we should not be reducing spending by placing half of the cuts on the back of the Department of Defense when defense spending only represents 15.1 percent of the budget.

Following the Vietnam War, former Chief of Staff of the Army, General Creighton Abrams devised the Total Force Policy. This policy vested much of the Army's reserve combat power in the hands of the Army National Guard. The Army National Guard was meant to be a "mirror image," of the active force to the extent possible and to provide strategic depth in times of conflict. Mirror imaging meant that the National Guard would be trained and fielded with the same equipment as the active Army and this proposed aviation restructuring veers away from the total force policy.

There are those that say that Army National Guard aviation currently is not a mirror image of the active force because the structure of units is different. Providing a mirror image of brigade structure is not the point, the National Guard is not resourced or intended to follow the active duty Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) structure. The mirror imaging is in smaller units such as battalions that permit the Army to have strategic depth in its forces so that in wartime, the active units do not have to bear the full brunt of the fight. Without the National Guard and strategic depth, these past 12 years of conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq would have broken our Army.

Divesting the Army National Guard of the Apache helicopter is a mistake. The active Army will have all of its attack and scout aviation power in the active force with no strategic depth and no reserve relief available if we find ourselves engaged in another major conflict. Enormous amounts of training dollars will be wasted. Years of aviation and combat experience will have been squandered.

Our National Guard Apache pilots are amongst the finest in the world. In my home state of South Carolina, the 1st of the 151st (1-151) attack reconnaissance battalion is one of the best attack battalions in the Army. There operational tempo is not as high as the active Army and it gives them a chance to train on critical skills that active duty simply does not have time for with the fight ongoing in Afghanistan. The 1-151st recently began to train its pilots on how to land an Apache on a Navy ship. Prior to these pilots becoming qualified, the Army did not have one single Apache pilot currently qualified to perform deck landings. Now however, the pilots of the 1-151 are helping to train the rest of the Army on this difficult and important task.

In closing, the battle we have is with sequestration. The active and reserve components should not be fighting one another; we in Congress should be providing them the necessary resources they require. We need to resource the Army at a level that protects our national security and keeps our personnel levels at the necessary levels, and keeps our equipment in the reserve and active components modernized and ready.

□ 1315

FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY:
PROVIDE FOR OUR COMMON DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate so much my dear friend, Mr. PERRY's, last hour, almost, talking about such an important issue. I know there are those who say the number one job of Congress is to create jobs; but I think a more appropriate reading of our constitutional duties is, number one, we are supposed to provide for the common defense. Every American should do as George Washington prayed that we would, to never forget those who have served in the field—that is our military men and women—some of whom have given all, but all gave something.

That was Washington's prayer at the end of his resignation as he resigned as the commander of the Revolutionary forces—something that had never been done before. And my understanding is it has not happened since. As a leader in the Maldives Islands said a few years ago, unsolicited, he said:

We have never had a George Washington to set the proper example, so we are always worried about a military coup.

And, unfortunately, they have had one.

What a blessed Nation we are because people like Washington were raised up for such a time as they were in. Abraham Lincoln spoke more than once so eloquently about the need to help those who have served and their widows and orphans. So it is particularly dismaying when Congress passes anything that does not properly honor and address the issues of those who have served in the field, and as we have talked about before, to follow up and fulfill our obligation to keep our promises. This government promises individuals if you come into the military and you serve until retirement, here is what you will get in return. We should not break our promises to those who have served and risked life and limb to protect us.

Just as my friend, Marcus Latrel, said recently on CNN, basically that they didn't go to the mission in Afghanistan senselessly, that it is not senseless when someone hears the call, sees the order of his country, and acts in accordance with their order, win, lose or draw. And that is the mentality. Of my 4 years in the Army, probably 2½ were under Commander Jimmy Carter and a year and a half under Commander in Chief Ronald Reagan. The last year and a half was far better because we had a Commander in Chief that truly appreciated more the opinion of those who were serving in the field and restored honor for the military. President Carter, obviously, from his background had respect, but you sure couldn't tell it from the actions when we were in the military. As a result, our reputation suffered around the world and we had an act of war on our embassy in Tehran. And other than a scaled-back rescue attempt—scaled back by the White House itself—we were embarrassed.

And it is still used for recruiting today among radical extremists. Muslim Brotherhood members abroad say that these guys don't have the backbone to do what is necessary to win.

In such an important time in this world where so much is at risk to have an administration and some in the House or Senate that think it is okay to break our word to our military. We have got to turn this around. To those who think it is okay, we need to make clear, Mr. Speaker, it is not okay. We have the moral obligation to keep our promises and to do everything we can to protect those who are protecting us and to never send them into harm's way unless they have been given authority to win.

That should have been the lesson learned from Vietnam that wasn't learned. The lesson was not that we couldn't win—we could. And as SAM JOHNSON says in his book and points out in person after his 7 years in the Hanoi Hilton—much of it in complete isolation, brutally treated—after carpet bombing North Vietnam for 2 weeks, which could have happened many years before and ended the war early, a vindictive commander at the Hanoi Hilton laughed, saying, in effect, you stupid Americans, if you had just bombed us for 1 more week, we would have had to surrender unconditionally.

So it should be. We should not get involved anywhere where we do not give full authority to those in our military to go kick rear-ends, win, and then come home.

In an article today by Kristina Wong from "The Hill" publication, headline "Pentagon's hands tied on hunting down Benghazi attackers," this article says:

The U.S. military cannot hunt down and kill people responsible for the deadly 2012 attack on an American compound in Benghazi, Libya, as long as the terrorists are not officially deemed members or affiliates of al Qaeda, newly declassified transcripts from congressional hearings show.

This article goes on to say:

"In other words, they don't fall under the AUMF, that stands for authorized use of military force, authorized by the Congress of the United States. So we would not have the capacity to simply find them and kill them either with a remotely piloted aircraft or with an assault on the ground," Dempsey said.

They are talking about General Dempsey in his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, and those were the transcripts that were released.

But he is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and here is where I have become amazed how this administration could think that the AUMF somehow gives this President authority without consulting Congress to go over and bomb and have our military play an active role in taking out Qadhafi, provide weapons to Libyans who very well may have been used to help attack our consulate, by the way, in Benghazi. We don't know enough to know for sure, but there is a good chance we