

ahead of time, locating a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard, making a plan for your pets, and taking First Aid, CPR, or disaster preparedness classes.

On a Federal level, I have been working to implement precautionary measures. As chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee, I worked with my Republican and Democrat colleagues on the critically important Water Resources Development Act of 2016, which recently passed through the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. This bill would advance numerous hurricane protection efforts that will make our communities safer and better prepared for such disasters, most notably through the support it provides to coastal restoration efforts in Louisiana. Passing WRDA 2016 is an absolute top priority, and I will continue working to bring it to the Senate floor for a vote in the near future.

Regarding long-term preparedness, I am proud to announce that my bipartisan bill to reauthorize the National Estuary Program is on its way to the President's desk to be signed into law. Louisiana's estuaries create a natural buffer zone and have protected thousands of square miles of land along the coast, including some of the Nation's busiest ports, high-yielding fisheries, and vast oil and mineral deposits. My bill will make sure our critical estuaries are restored and preserved so that our coastal communities are better protected ahead of future storms.

Hurricanes are part of life, especially in Louisiana, but diligence and preparation can help reduce their impact on your family, home, and business. I urge you to take hurricane watches and warnings seriously. Please plan ahead for your family's safety, and encourage your neighbors to do the same.

#### REMEMBERING SELMER LELAND

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Selmer T. Leland, a decorated World War I veteran and longtime resident of Kalispell, MT.

Unfortunately Selmer is no longer with us, so I will be presenting his son, Orland Leland, with the medals he earned for his heroic service during World War I.

Orland, on behalf of myself, my fellow Montanans, and my fellow Americans, I would like to acknowledge your father's remarkable sacrifice and service to this Nation and thank you for your unwavering commitment to keeping his legacy alive.

Selmer was born on April 30, 1894, in Abercrombie, ND, to Isak and Sanna Leland.

He grew up alongside his seven siblings on their family farm in North Dakota. When Selmer was 8, the family moved to Canada.

Later, when he grew old enough, Selmer ventured out on his own to Montana, becoming a farmer in Big Sandy, before enlisting in the army at the age of 23.

It was in October of 1917 when Selmer joined the American Expeditionary Forces in France as a private of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Division.

Selmer was shipped off, and by May of 1918, he had earned his first Purple Heart, after enduring an onslaught of mustard gas in weeks leading up to the Battle of Cantigny.

The attack cost him a lung and resulted in lifelong respiratory issues.

Just 10 weeks later, Selmer took a bullet to the shoulder in the Second Battle of Marne, earning him a bronze oakleaf cluster to adorn his Purple Heart.

He also sustained shrapnel wounds to his chest and, as his son Orland proudly tells it, he died, more than 60 years later, with that bullet still in his arm.

Despite these two devastating injuries, Selmer persevered, spending another year overseas, even after the war had ended, as a member of the American occupation forces in Germany.

When he finally returned to the States, in September of 1919, his company was invited to Washington, DC, to meet President Woodrow Wilson, so he could thank them personally for their service.

Eventually, Selmer moved back to his family's homestead in Canada to farm again. This is where he met the love of his life, Clara.

Clara was a Kalispell girl, born and raised, who was visiting family up in Canada when she met Selmer.

The two fell in love, and, in February of 1924, they returned to Kalispell to get married.

By December, they had their first son, Robert Leland, who followed in his father's footsteps by joining the Army during WWII and fighting in the Battle of the Bulge.

Robert eventually had five kids: Marvin, Melvin, Shirley, Mark, and Robert, Jr., who went on to serve in Vietnam.

Both Robert and Robert, Jr., have since passed on, but their generations of service won't soon be forgotten.

After spending some time in the Pacific Northwest, the family eventually settled down in Kalispell, where Selmer spent his career as a sawmill worker until retiring at the age of 65, but his work was far from done.

After retiring from the sawmill, Selmer became a logger, heading to work every day in the forests well into his seventies.

Twenty years after the birth of their first son, Clara and Selmer, now 50, welcomed their second son, Orland, who I have the distinct pleasure of being with today.

Both Orland and his wife, Janet, were born and raised in Kalispell and still reside here today.

Orland, who was a firefighter for 30 years, and Janet, who is the volunteer director at the Kalispell Regional Medical Center, have both continued this family's legacy of dedicated public service.

They also have five children—Dianna, Kevin, Tammy, Sam, and Curt—some of whom are here with us today.

Thank you all for being here to celebrate Selmer's life, legacy, and history.

I have the profound honor of presenting Selmer's son Orland Leland with his father's WWI medals: Purple Heart with one bronze oakleaf cluster; World War I Victory Medal with Montdidier Noyon, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Battle Clasp and France Service Clasp; and World War I Victory Button—Silver.

Orland, these medals serve as a small token of our country's appreciation for your father's heroic service and profound sacrifice.

He is truly an American hero, and we have the utmost gratitude for his service.

#### REMEMBERING FRED DE ROCHE

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Fred D. De Roche, a decorated World War II veteran, Blackfeet tribal member, and lifelong resident of Browning, MT.

Fred was killed in action, bravely defending this Nation, so I will be presenting his son, Art De Roche, with the medals his father earned during World War II.

Art, on behalf of myself, my fellow Montanans, and my fellow Americans, I would like to acknowledge your father's gallant service to this Nation and thank you for the sacrifices you have made, losing your father at such a young age.

Fred was born on April 3, 1924, to Charlie and Annie De Roche in Browning, MT.

He grew up with many siblings, raising cows and horses on his family's ranch on the Blackfeet reservation.

He eventually met his wife, Mildred Underbear, and soon after getting married, the couple discovered they were pregnant.

As many of you know, Native Americans have always exhibited a deep and profound love of country, enlisting in the military at higher rates than any other ethnic group.

Fred was no different. In fact, Fred had enlisted in the Army earlier that year, alongside his cousin, Billy Wolftail.

In the ultimate act of patriotism, Fred deployed before his son, Art, was born on February 11, 1943.

Fred was sent to Belgium, where he served as a private in the Headquarters Company's 39th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division.

It was there that Fred earned his Bronze Star Medal on October 15, 1944, for meritorious achievement in active ground combat.

A little more than 2 months later, on December 21, 1944, Fred fought his last battle in courageous service to this great Nation.

He was awarded a Purple Heart for his valor and bravery.