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Senate

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

U.S. ARMY SERGEANT RUSSELL M. DURGIN, HENNIKER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Mr. GREGG: Mr. President, I rise today to pay special tribute to U.S. Army Sergeant Russell M. Durgin, a courageous young American from Henniker, New Hampshire, who on June 13, 2006, gave his last full measure in service to our nation.

Russell, or Russ or Durgs, to family and friends, was a 2001 graduate of John Stark Regional High School, Weare, NH, where he played lacrosse. Friends say his sense of humor, adventurous spirit, love of life and wide smile made every moment spent with him a good one. Daniel Webster, speaking of early American leaders said, "While others doubted, they were resolved; where others hesitated they pressed forward." In this spirit, at the age of 17 while still in High School, Russ enlisted in the U.S. Army. He completed Basic Infantry training at Ft. Benning, GA, in July 2002. Next came a one year tour of duty in South Korea with the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, followed by assignment to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York and a one year tour of duty to Iraq from September 2003 to September 2004. Back in the United States during 2005, he successfully completed the U.S. Army's Warrior Leadership Course, Combat Life Saver Course, and Sniper School. In March 2006, he deployed with his unit to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Tragically, in June 2006 during combat operations in the mountains of Korengel, Afghanistan, this brave soldier died of injuries sustained when his unit came under small arms fire. Sergeant Durgin's awards and decorations include two Bronze Star Medals, one with the combat distinguishing "V" device, two Army Commendation Medals, one

with the combat distinguishing "V" device, two Army Achievement Medals, the Purple Heart Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Non-commissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon 2, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Expert Weapons Qualification Badge.

Patriots from the state of New Hampshire have served our nation with honor and distinction from Bunker Hill to Kabul B and U.S. Army Sergeant Russell Durgin served in that fine tradition. Friends and family said he loved his work and was fiercely committed to the Army, and to the people with whom he served. During these chaotic and violent times, Russ dedicated himself to serving his nation because in his heart, he sensed a call to duty.

My sympathy, condolences and prayers go out to Russell's parents, Jean and Lester, and to his other family members and many friends who have suffered this most grievous loss. The death of Russ, only 23-years-old, on an Afghan battlefield far from New Hampshire is also a great loss for our state, our benevolent nation and the world. He will be sorely missed by all; however, his family and friends may draw some comfort in knowing that because of his devotion, sense of duty, and selfless dedication, the safety and liberty of each and every American is more secure. In the words of Daniel Webster – may his remembrance be as long lasting as the land he honored. God bless Russell M. Durgin.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.