

Howard J. Cardoza; Dennis R. Coffey; Nicholas J. Hanson; P. William Mortimer, Jr.; Evan W. Pearce; Gregory Paul Stowe; Joseph E. Ulbin; Brian Zartarian.

WEST WARWICK, RI

Paul J. Gauvin; David F. Lombardo; Jonathan Lyttle; Michael Parenteau; Michael D. Roch; Eric Scott Parkinson.

WESTERLY, RI

Richard O.W. Morgan.

WEST GREENWICH, RI

James E. Pendlebury.

WOONSOCKET, RI

David Isaac Brown; Nathaniel Ray Moretti.●

#### TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL S. PINTO, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND

● Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Michael S. Pinto, Superintendent of Schools in Middletown, Rhode Island. After 36 years, Superintendent Pinto is leaving the school system where he began his career, bound for a well-deserved retirement.

During his tenure in Middletown, Superintendent Pinto has held almost every possible position one can hold in the field of education. He has been a teacher, a principal, a business manager for the school district, an assistant superintendent, and, most recently, the superintendent.

Over the years—even when I represented Rhode Island's neighboring Congressional district in the House of Representatives, I was privileged to have the advice of Superintendent Pinto on a variety of issues related to education, from school choice to educational standards. Indeed, I could always count on hearing from Superintendent Pinto about Impact Aid. He is the program's number one advocate.

His commitment to Impact Aid underscores his overall dedication to Middletown's schools and students and the cause of education. A measure of his commitment was shown in a recent news article which reported that in the last fifteen years he has had no more than seven consecutive days off.

As superintendent, Mr. Pinto has presided over a number of successful initiatives including the fundamental repair of two schools, a new system of measuring student learning, and an optional all-day kindergarten. Superintendent Pinto has consistently sought to share the professional accolades he has received with his colleagues in Middletown. His emphasis on team work has earned him the admiration and respect of those who have worked with him.

I thank Superintendent Pinto for his tremendous dedication and congratulate him for all that he has done for Middletown. While the Middletown school system will miss Michael Pinto, I am sure that even in retirement he will continue his work to improve education and better his community.

Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator CHAFEE today in saluting Su-

perintendent Pinto and wishing him the best in his retirement.●

#### THOMAS M. BELODEAU

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the text of the eulogy I gave for my friend, Thomas M. Belodeau, on November 10, 1997.

The eulogy follows:

Mrs. Belodeau, Michael; Ann, Tommy's sisters Patricia and Mary; his brothers Leo, James, Joseph, and Larry, to all his relatives, and to his brothers from Vietnam—particularly Del Sandusky from Illinois and Gene Thorsen from Iowa—his crewman on PCF 94—to the Doghunters and to all of Tommy's friends and extended family.

A number of us thought once foolishly that we brothers of Vietnam had gotten used to saying goodbye to our friends before their time. But Tommy is proving us dangerously wrong. We will never get used to it—and well we should not.

So now the question is, how do you say goodbye to a man whose steady hand and courageous heart helped keep you alive? How do you say goodbye to a man who shared the most challenging and terrifying moments of your life?

First, you should all know that we are saying goodbye to a hero. We are saying goodbye to the genuine article—a patriot—a young kid fresh out of Chelmsford High who in difficult times saw his duty and who did it. Tommy was one of America's children who went to war against a people he knew precious little about in a land he'd never been to—for reasons never honestly stated—and he was, like so many, forever changed.

It is hard for me to convey to you the full measure of what that means in 1997, particularly here, today. But in 1966, Tommy and I unwittingly became brothers in the great, divisive, confusing enterprise called Vietnam. We were both class of '66—he from high school and me from college. Though we came from different backgrounds, we didn't in the sense that we both believed in service to our country. We both chose to go into the Navy. We both volunteered for Swift boats in Vietnam. We met when we were thrown together as a crew after his first skipper got hit in an ambush.

I inherited Tommy and the rest of his seasoned crew, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

Many of you may have read Tom's obituary the other day. It said he had won a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star with Combat V for serving in Vietnam. That only told you part of the story—and no one here would be surprised that Tommy never told you the rest.

He also won the Navy Commendation medal:

Let me share with you what Admiral Zumwalt said in awarding it to Tom:

"For heroic achievement while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in armed conflict against North Vietnamese and Viet Cong communist aggressors in the Republic of Vietnam on 5 July, 1968. Seaman Belodeau was serving as a crewman on board Patrol Craft 27 which was blockading the beach in the vicinity of air strikes on an enemy platoon near the village of My Lai, Quang Ngai Province. Observing a Viet Cong suspect run from the enemy position, Seaman Belodeau's Patrol Craft fast moved in to attempt a capture and was immediately taken under enemy fire. Seaman Belodeau, ignoring the enemy fire around him, calmly moved into the open to make the capture. He helped pull the suspect from the water and

got him aboard his boat. Seaman Belodeau's courageous actions in capturing a Viet Cong suspect under enemy fire were in the highest tradition of the United States Naval Service."

Seaman Belodeau is authorized to wear the Combat "V". That was just a day that happened to be notice, sandwiched between many more like it or worse, that were not. That was the measure of the man I inherited on my crew.

From the day we came together, we gelled as a crew. And it was the way it ought to be. The crew didn't have to prove themselves to me. I had to earn my spurs with them. When the Chief Petty Officer, Del Sandusky—known as "Sky", who came from Illinois to be with Tom today, finally gave me the seal of enlisted man's approval, Tommy was the first to enthusiastically say: "I told you so, Sky, he's from Massachusetts!!"

You have to understand that we lived together as closely and as intensely on 50 feet of floating armament as men can live. And we learned all there is to learn about each other.

Sometimes it was a funny learning process, as when Mike Medeiros exhibited a hard time understanding Tommy. "Are you from Brooklyn?" he would ask. Tommy would respond with pride and impatience: "Nah: I'm from Boston."

There was the time we were carrying special forces up a river and a mine exploded under our boat sending it 2 feet into the air. We were receiving incoming rocket and small arms fire and Tommy was returning fire with his M-60 machine gun when it literally broke apart in his hands. He was left holding the pieces unable to fire back while one of the Green Berets walked along the edge of the boat to get Tommy another M-60. As he was doing so, the boat made a high speed turn to starboard and the Green Beret kept going—straight into the river. The entire time while the boat went back to get the Green Beret, Tommy was without a machine gun or a weapon of any kind, but all the time he was hurling the greatest single string of Lowell-Chelmsford curses ever heard at the Viet Cong. He literally had swear words with tracers on them!

There was, of course, the moment in February, 1969 when he was positioned in the very bow of the boat—in the totally exposed peak tank—with more than half his body just sticking up exposed to the enemy, when 3 boats turned toward the river bank and Tommy found himself staring straight into an ambush 20 yards ahead. He never flinched as he charged the beach and routed the enemy—not just once, but twice. For Seaman Belodeau's devotion to duty, courage under fire, and exemplary professionalism, in the highest tradition of the Navy he was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat V.

I cannot adequately convey or describe to you the measure of this man at war—standing in his peak tank in the bow, screaming up a river in the dead of night, no moon, 50 yards from Cambodia literally bouncing off the river bank, waiting for a mine to go off or a rocket to explode—and always steady, always dependable, always there for the rest of the crew.

All Belodeaus, Chelmsford, Massachusetts, and the United States should be proud of this warrior.

But, perhaps the greatest reason for pride as we bid our Tommy goodbye, is not what he did, but who he was.

In many ways, Tommy walked in the footsteps of Emerson and Thoreau. He was a man who wanted to walk quietly to his own tune—never with any in your face attitude. He just quietly wanted to be, and was, his own man.

From what I know, he always had this special quiet quality. His expression spoke for