

FW: FLOOR REMARKS BY SENATOR JOHN McCAIN HONORING THE GRANITE MOUNTAIN HOTSHOTS



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FLOOR REMARKS BY SENATOR JOHN McCAIN HONORING THE GRANITE MOUNTAIN HOTSHOTS

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) today delivered the following remarks on the Senate floor honoring the Granite Mountain Hotshots:

“Mr. President, I come to the floor today with my colleague from Arizona to offer a Resolution honoring the fallen heroes of the Granite Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew. Yesterday, Senator Flake and I were privileged to attend a memorial ceremony in Prescott, Arizona honoring the service and sacrifice of the 19 brave men of the Granite Mountain Hotshots who lost their lives last week battling Yarnell Hill Fire in Yavapai County, Arizona.

“I wasn’t lucky enough to know them personally. I sure wish I had.

“These were not men merely worth knowing – they were men to admire. They were men to emulate if you have the courage and character to live as decently and honorably as they lived. Not many of us can. But, we can become better people by trying to be half as true, half as brave, half as good as they were, and to make our lives, too, count for something more than the sum of our days.

“The news accounts of their lives and the testimonials to their virtues that have appeared in the days since we lost them give the rest of us a glimpse of what a blessed memory they are to those who knew and loved them.

“Some of them were the sons of firefighters, who grew up wanting to be like Dad, their hero. Some leave behind wives and children. Some were expecting the birth of their first child. Some married their high school sweethearts. Some were engaged and looking forward to being husbands and fathers. Two were cousins and best friends. One rescued horses. One aspired to preach the word of God. One was a standout ball-player. One dressed in a yellow raincoat when he was six and pretended to put out fires.

“Some were born in Arizona. Some came from other places and fell right in love with the beauty and

people of Arizona. Some were shy. Others were practical jokers. They were all respected and admired – the kind of men who you just like being around.

“They all loved the outdoors. They were athletic and adventurous. They loved their jobs. They wanted to serve others. They wanted to make a difference. They all had a purpose greater than themselves. They were all young – so young. They were all brave – so brave. They all loved and were loved – so loved. And, they will all be missed – so terribly missed.

“I will, forever, be touched by what their families and friends have told me about them and how much they meant to them and their communities. Their stories teach us how to be better people. Their loss reminds us to hold each other a little tighter, to love each other a little harder. I will always consider myself disadvantaged for not having known them.

“From the little I know about hope in the face of daunting challenge and the indomitability of the human spirit that is so vital to helping us keep our faith and to endure, I hope I can offer some solace when I say, the courage of those who we honor today is immortal. It does not perish with them. How they lived, what they did, will inspire others to live courageously, purposefully, selflessly.

“Of these qualities, we tend to see merely flashes throughout our own lives. In these brave men of the Granite Mountain Hotshots, we see grand examples – sublime, shining and unforgettable examples – that will summon good men and women, today and long after our time is past, to live bravely and compassionately and honorably.

“In a fierce and terrifying encounter with extreme danger, they stood their ground, like the heroes they were, and fought for their community. While they did not come home to the people who loved them so much and who will miss them always, I firmly believe we will see them again in the better world that is to come.

“Until then, we fondly remember the humanity in the heroism of these brave men: their wonderfully unassuming, down-to-earth nature; all of their marvelous imperfections known only to their closest family and friends; and, how, in the face of dire peril, they rose beyond all that makes us merely ordinary and let God cradle them in His arms and carry them away.

“The lost men of the Granite Mountain Hotshots died having taught us all how to live. And, for that – as we honor them and pay our respects to their loved ones today – I submit we should all find great solace.”

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