

FALLEN: Speaker extolled the virtues of service and sacrifice

Continued from page 1

Karl Baldessari, Captain, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired). A veteran of drug interdiction and search and rescue mission in the Atlantic and Caribbean, he completed a 25-year career serving as Chief of Response for the 13th Coast Guard District, which has responsibility for all Coast Guard operations conducted in the Pacific Northwest.

Captain Baldessari urged the audience to be mindful of those who are serving in danger right now.

“For every one of us here today, there’s somebody putting themselves in harm’s way in support of their country and each other,” he said.

For Baldessari, that is the very definition of heroism.

“Call me old-fashioned, but I don’t consider actors and actresses or professional sports figures heroes,” he said. Heroes, for him, are “ordinary people, separated by a single act — or perhaps a lifetime — of sacrifice.”

The Coast Guard Captain reflected upon the nature of serving in an environment where “we literally held each others’ lives in our hands.”



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Pat Bowe, double Purple Heart recipient; John Ferguson; Lance Trowbridge; Wendell Halterman; and Earl Schroeder with new sign.

In that kind of environment, politics, race, creed, economic status all fall into the background and become nearly meaningless. All that matters is the bond of trust between those who serve and seek to complete the mission.

Baldessari noted that the question is sometimes asked regarding the death of a servicemember: Was it worth it?

“Was it worth it is the

wrong question for us to answer,” he said. “Instead it should be our commitment to make it worth it.”

That requires creating a society that is worthy of the sacrifice of the dead, where higher values are ascendant over petty concerns.

The observances were followed by a community barbecue, where all were invited to attend.

Land proposal could spark standoff

By Andrew Selsky
Associated Press

SALEM, Oregon (AP) — Sparks flew Monday, May 23, during a hearing attended by ranchers and environmentalists in the state Capitol on a proposal to turn 2.5 million acres of canyonlands and desert in southeastern Oregon into a federally protected monument.

Cattlemen said their livelihoods could be threatened.

Malheur County Sheriff Brian Wolfe told a panel of state lawmakers that he was worried armed outsiders would exploit the situation, with families in the remote area having been involved in cattle business for generations and being suspicious of the federal government and what restrictions it might impose.

“If a monument is declared in Malheur County, I am concerned about people from outside the county who will come with their own agendas ... and I fear that they will not be reasonable,” Wolfe said.

Declaring the Owyhee

Canyonlands, an area known for its spectacular, stark scenery and used by fishermen, rafters, ranchers and others, a national monument would require no legislation. President Barack Obama could endorse the proposal, but it would go through the U.S. Department of Interior first.

In a statement to The Associated Press, the department said: “No recommendations have been made from Interior to the White House about this proposal but we know that this is an important issue to many, and we continue to carefully consider all input about how to best manage these lands for current and future generations.”

The hearing room in the Capitol was so packed with its supporters and opponents that some had to go into an overflow room and watch the proceedings on TV.

Many drove for seven hours from the region to attend the informational hearing of the House Interim Committee On Rural Communities, Land Use and Water.

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“Friends of Furry Friends” - by Valerie Fercho-Tillery (46" w x 59" h)