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Senate

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAREN S. SORENSON

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, it is my privilege to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Daren S. Sorenson, an extraordinary American, whose heroic acts to defend his country and fellow servicemembers has earned him a second Distinguished Flying Cross, DFC. The State of Nevada and the U.S. Air Force are proud to commend Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson for all of his accomplishments.

I am grateful and humbled to honor Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson for his dedication and sacrifice to this Nation. He has been deployed seven times and served as the deputy mission commander during the first preemptive strike on the inaugural night of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. During this combat operation, Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson earned his first DFC for targeting and assisting the destruction of an armored unit of the Iraqi Republican Guard. Not only has Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson been recognized for this prestigious award once, but he received his second DFC during his deployment to Afghanistan for air support in Operation Enduring Freedom.

On May 25, 2011, during an operation in Eastern Afghanistan, Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson implemented techniques and strategies learned at Nevada's Nellis Air Force Base to defend and

save the lives of nearly 50 coalition members. Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson's valiant aeronautic techniques drew away opposing fire and enabled air controllers and ground forces to locate combatants and defeat the enemy. His devotion to duty in the face of perilous flying conditions is admirable and maintains the highest standards and traditions of the U.S. Air Force.

As America's oldest military aviation award, the DFC was created by Congress more than 85 years ago to award individuals for acts of heroism or achievement in aeronautics. I applaud Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson for earning this prestigious award twice during his service. His continuous acts of bravery are a testament to his commitment to the United States.

Today, we commend Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson's acts of valor and the continuous sacrifices made by all of our servicemembers to ensure the safety and security of our Nation. We owe them and their families a great deal of gratitude for their personal sacrifices. I am proud to join the citizens of Nevada in recognizing Lieutenant Colonel Sorenson's accomplishments. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and congratulating him for his incredible bravery on behalf of his comrades and this great nation.