

**JEREMY FITZPATRICK**

# Americans owe much to fallen

Tomorrow is Veterans Day. Time to reflect on the men and women who served and died for their country.

Who were they? People a lot like us. Many of those who served and died in our nation's wars were our age.

The mighty American armies we read about in grade school were made up of people just like the ones you would find on a college campus. If you want to imagine what these soldiers were like, take a look at your friends — or in the mirror.

What did they serve and die for? For us. For you and me.

We often take them for granted today, but our basic freedoms — to speak and write freely, to have our human rights protected — did not come cheaply. The veterans we honor tomorrow paid for them with their service and often their lives.

We would not be able to enjoy our freedoms today if past generations hadn't been brave enough to stand up for them when they were threatened.

Now, with the Cold War over, it seems unlikely that our generation will have to sacrifice in the way so many before us have. It seems unlikely we will have to die in large numbers to protect our freedoms.

So people our age especially should take time tomorrow to remember those people who died so we could be free and so we would not have to fight.

We owe something to those veterans who had their lives cut short defending America. We owe it to them to make sure the country they died to protect in war doesn't come apart in peace times.

Even though our generation may not have to go to war and many of us die to protect our freedoms, we can still serve in other ways to honor those

who sacrificed before us. On Veteran's Day, we should think about past generations of Americans who gave their lives so we could live in freedom today.

They died for America and for us. They died to protect people they didn't even know.

They gave their lives for this country. What will we give?

Because if we let this country decline, if we let our domestic problems continue to worsen, then we will be saying that the sacrifice of those who died to let us have a free life meant little.

Past generations of Americans have faced great challenges and adversaries and defeated them so we could live our lives safely.

Now our generation has its challenges and adversaries as well.

Our challenge is not from without, but from within. Can we improve this country that has been given to us? Can we make it work?

Our new enemies are not overseas, but on our street corners. Our new adversaries are homelessness and hunger, unemployment and poverty, ignorance and AIDS.

We can start doing something about these domestic problems right away. Our new president will lead us. We elected him because he said he wanted change.

But Bill Clinton can't do it all. The real test is what we are willing to do.

Presidents can make the speeches and push us forward, but we must do the work. Or refuse to do it.

We will decide whether we have real change in America. Our country's severe domestic challenges will only improve if you and I are willing to work and sacrifice to solve them.

I lived in Washington, D.C., two summers ago, and the thing I remember most about the city, even more than the White House or the Congress, was Arlington National Cemetery.

A garden of stone, it has been

called. There are just rows and rows of tombstones — each representing a person who fought for America. The rows seem to go on forever, blending in with the green grass and tall trees.

The graves of John and Robert Kennedy are there, tributes to a time when sacrifice and service were valued and rewarded.

An honor guard paces before the tomb of the unknown soldier with machine-like precision.

Arlington is a monument of sacrifice, representing what people were willing to give up to protect their freedom and their country.

I hope the monument of our generation will be a country where people do not have to live in our streets, where every American has the ability to fulfill his or her potential, where all our citizens are treated equally and fairly.

That might seem like a dream, but it can be a reality if we are willing to work and sacrifice for it.

All generations before us have been up to the challenges they faced. Will we be up to ours?

Free of a real threat of war, we are the first generation in many years that has the ability to focus its energies and talents on its domestic problems.

We have the ability and opportunity to make our country truly great. We have the ability to make America a great country for all our citizens.

Past generations of Americans served and sometimes died so we could have the America we have today. What we do with our country now will be the legacy of our generation.

We could offer no higher tribute to the men and women we honor on Veterans Day than to make that legacy a great one.

Fitzpatrick is a junior political science major, a news and sports reporter and a Daily Nebraskan Columnist.

**CRAIG HECKMAN**

# Election offers change of pace

While I was pleased with the election results Nov. 3 — surprise — and am actually glad to be done with the whole thing, I cannot help myself from reviewing one last time 1992's election.

Obviously the most visible result was the Bill Clinton-Al Gore victory. Now the Democrats have the opportunity to put their money where their mouths are. It should prove interesting to see the results we get from Washington,

D.C. No longer can government inactivity be blamed on gridlock. And no longer can government blame gridlock for not getting anything done.

Although I am optimistic, a wait-and-see attitude may be wise. Clinton proved himself adept at creating and holding together an election coalition. The real test will be if he can now remove himself from the numerous special interest groups and lead the United States.

Vice President-elect Gore has the opportunity to influence some much-needed environmental direction. Say what you will, and interpret the data however you please, but the bottom line is that humanity is ruining the earth. We are ruining the earth only in respect to our continued existence upon this planet. The Earth will survive with or without humanity.

What we need are intelligent, far-sighted, economically sound environmental programs. These are what Gore proposes, and I hope they will be implemented.

**The Year of the Woman.**

While women made definite inroads this year, the overall results were disappointing.

Carol Mosely Brown from Illinois will be the first African-American woman in the Senate. She will be

joined by Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer from California and Patty Murray, the self-styled "mom in tennis shoes" from Washington, D.C.

This brings the total number of women in the Senate to six. With women casting 54 percent of the vote this year, this number seems woefully inadequate.

Other women were not so successful. The man perhaps most responsible for the year of the woman, Arlen Specter, defeated Lynn Yeakel. Specter was heavily criticized — properly so — for his treatment of Anita Hill during the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings.

Although the voters of Pennsylvania were convinced Specter's treatment of Hill was an anomaly, I remain unconvinced. Of course, I am also keenly disappointed in our own Sen. James Exon who was among the first Democrats to support Thomas after the hearings ended.

Women in general were not so fortunate next door in Iowa. I'm not really sure why the voters were so fearful of giving women explicit equality in the Iowa state constitution by adding the word "women" after "men" in the phrase "all men are created equal."

To those who argue that women already do have equality, I would like to point out the 70 cents on every dollar that women earn compared to men, not to mention the glass ceiling keeping women out of the top management positions.

An extensive and grossly inaccurate anti-ERA movement centered on Pat Robertson and Phyllis Schlafly. For those of you not familiar with Schlafly, she is a major player in the national anti-choice movement and now has increased her scope to include being anti-women. What business her and Robertson had in Iowa is unclear.

That movement targeted elderly voters in a scare campaign that included Robertson's now infamous

lesbian and witchcraft quote. The irrationality of these anti-choice, anti-women, just plain anti-people never ceases to amaze and frighten.

On a brighter note, the voters of Oregon soundly defeated an initiative that would have called homosexuality perverse and required this view be taught in public schools. The ridiculous closed-mindedness of this initiative guaranteed its defeat — this time.

Even so, Colorado passed a measure that reversed the progress made thus far by nullifying anti-gay bias laws already on the books.

Individual rights did not fair well in the Midwest.

All 14 states with term limits on their ballots passed them. I still maintain that Nebraska made a mistake. It is wishful thinking that there will be a national movement for term limits.

As more states pass term limits, those remaining states will have more and more to gain by not having them. Their senators and representatives will rapidly gain control of the powerful positions with catastrophic results for term-limited states.

Now Exon is in the running to be the powerful committee chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee if current chairman Sam Nunn takes a position in the Clinton administration. That fact highlights the mistake we made.

A curious aspect of this is that although 70 percent of Nebraskans voted in favor of term limits, we re-elected all three representatives. This is like the serial killer turning himself in, saying, "Stop me before I kill again."

The next four years should prove interesting. Although I lament the passing of excellent column material as supplied by Bush et al, I look forward to being a part of these changing times. So should you.

Heckman is a graduate student in political science and a Daily Nebraska editorial columnist.

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