

# United States Senate

## Yellowstone Kelly Wreath Laying Ceremony June 21, 2016

Hello, thank you for allowing me to share a few words today; I wish I could be with you in person.

I'd like to recognize all the veterans from the Casper Platoon, who are holding their annual convention here today, and personally thank them for their valiant service.

I would also like to recognize the group here from Paradise, California—who are spreading Yellowstone Kelly's story across the Golden State—and the Billings Chamber of Commerce, for all their hard work and devotion to honoring the wishes of Yellowstone Kelly's wife.

And finally, I would like to recognize the local Vietnam veterans with the American Legion here today.

Yellowstone Kelly is an enduring exemplar of the American West. He was a hunter, a scout, a soldier and an explorer, who embodied ideals—like bravery, independence, adventure, and determination—that we in the West still aspire to today. He traveled far and wide, discovering new places and meeting different people.

Yellowstone Kelly did many things, and embodied many virtues. One such virtue was his profound eagerness to contribute. He first tried to enlist in the army at just 15 years old—fearing the war would be over by the time he turned 18. Of course he was initially rejected, but applied again at a different location, and was eventually inducted into the army's ranks.

A few years later, while he was making his way through the Wild West, he got word that Fort Buford needed a rider to carry messages 50 miles down the Missouri River to Fort Stevenson. He immediately volunteered and was again, rejected due to his young age. But again, he persisted, and the folks at Fort Buford eventually decided to give him a chance.

Yellowstone Kelly never gave up, not in the face of danger, rejection, or defeat. He persisted and found a way to do his job, fulfill his mission, and achieve his goals. This is what made him such a trailblazer, because he persisted in the face of the unknown. And I think these attributes are still embodied by the residents of Montana today.

Our eagerness to contribute is why Montana has one of the highest percentages of veterans in the nation. The determination of our generation and the generations that came before us is what makes Montanans famous for their independence and work ethic. And, as we all know, Montanans are born and bred trailblazers.

So it is important to honor figures like Yellowstone Kelly because in honoring him, we are remembering, honoring, and strengthening our Western way of life.

Sincerely,

