Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Tomb Guards
at
Arlington National Cemetery
by Senator Chuck Hagel
April 2, 1998

Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize a very special group of Americans, the Arlington National Cemetery Tomb Guards of the Third United States Infantry. The Tomb Guards this year mark their 50th anniversary — half a century of dedicated service to the American heroes who rest at Arlington.

The dedicated and devoted men and women of the Tomb Guards stand watch over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier 24 hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of weather. Arlington’s sacred ground holds many of America’s heroes, but the unknown soldiers deserve special honor. They made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve America’s freedom, and they died in anonymity — soldiers, as inscribed on their headstones, “Known but to God.”

Since 1948, soldiers from the “Old Guard,” the Third United States Infantry, have kept watch at this most special place in Arlington National Cemetery. Only soldiers of the highest character and standards, with the greatest integrity and professional skill, are selected to serve with the Tomb Guards. These men and women are the best of the best. The competition is keen.

As young people across America search for role models, they need look no further than this group of dedicated professionals who honor the sacrifice of all who have fallen for freedom. I salute the Tomb Guards on their fifty years of dedicated service to America’s heroes and wish them well as they continue their devotion to duty. America is grateful for their service.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.