

that she had to be sent out of the battle area. Doorman was forced to abandon his advance.

Returning to Australia, *Houston* departed 15 February with a small convoy to reinforce the garrison on Timor. Before the day was out, the group was forced to beat off numerous air attacks, and next morning the Japanese attacked in full force. During this defensive action, *Houston* distinguished herself by driving off nearly the entire raid without damage to her transports.

Receiving word that the major Japanese invasion force was approaching Java protected by a formidable surface unit, Admiral Doorman resolutely determined to meet and seek to destroy the main convoy. Sailing 26 February with *Houston*, HMAs *Perth*, HNMS *De Ruyter*, HMS *Exeter*, JNMS *Java* and 10 destroyers, he met the Japanese support force under Admiral Takagi consisting of 4 cruisers and 13 destroyers. In the Battle of the Java Sea which followed, Doorman's forces fought valiantly, but were doomed by lack of air cover and communication difficulties. The ships met for the first time in the late afternoon, and as Japanese destroyers laid smoke the cruisers of both fleets opened fire. After one ineffective torpedo attack the Japanese light cruisers and destroyers launched a second at 1700, this attack sinking *Kortenaer*, *Exeter* and destroyer *Electra* were hit by gunfire, *Electra* fatally, and at 1730 Admiral Doorman turned south toward the Java coast, not wishing to be diverted from his main purpose, the destruction of the convoy itself. With dogged fighting spirit he dodged another torpedo attack and followed the coastline, during which time *Jupiter* was sunk, either by mine or internal explosion. Then *Encounter* was detached to pick up survivors from *Kortenaer*, and the American destroyers, their torpedoes expended, were ordered back to Surabaya. Now with no destroyer protection, Doorman's four remaining ships turned north again in a last gallant attempt to stop the invasion of Java.

At 2300 the same night, the cruisers again encountered the Japanese surface group. On parallel courses the opposing units opened fire, and the Japanese launched a devastating torpedo attack 30 minutes later. *De Ruiter* and *Java* caught in a spread of 12 torpedoes, exploded and sank, carrying their captains and Admiral Doorman down with them.

Before losing contact with *Perth* and *Houston*, Doorman had ordered them to retire. This was accomplished, but the next day the two ships steamed boldly into Banten Bay, hoping to damage the Japanese invasion forces there. The cruisers were almost torpedoed as they approached the bay, but evaded the nine torpedoes launched by destroyer *Fubuki*. The cruisers then sank one transport and forced three others to beach. A destroyer squadron blocked Sunda Strait, their means of retreat, and on the other hand large cruisers *Mogami* and *Mikuma* stood dangerously near. The result was foreordained, but *Houston* and *Perth* fought valiantly. *Perth* came under fire at 2336 and in an hour had been sunk from gunfire and torpedo hits. *Houston* then fought alone, her guns blazing at the enemy all around her, a champion at bay. Soon after midnight she took a torpedo and began to lose headway. During this time *Houston's* gunners scored hits on three different destroyers and sank a minesweeper, but suffered three more torpedo explosions in quick succession. Captain Rooks was killed by a bursting shell at 0030 and as the ship came to a stop Japanese destroyers swarmed over her machine gunning the decks. A few minutes later the gallant *Houston*, her name written imperishably in the records of heroism, rolled over and sank, her ensign still flying.

Houston's fate was not known by the world for almost 9 months, and the full story of her courageous fight was not fully told until after the war was over and her survivors were liberated from prison camps. Captain Rooks received posthumously the Medal of Honor for this extraordinary heroism.

In addition to two battle stars, *Houston* was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
PHILLIP LEWIS SOTO

HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 1997

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a great American who has passed on from the California sociopolitical scene. A true friend of mine who I shall miss after a long illness.

Phil Soto was born on March 3, 1926 in the east LA neighborhood of Boyle Heights. During World War II, he served as a bombardier in the South Pacific, flying B-17's and B-29's. After the war, he helped found the GI Forum, a foundation that serves veterans of Mexican American heritage.

In 1948, Phil married Nell Manuel Garcia and began a family. He started his career in the television repair business in the San Gabriel Valley community of La Puente, where he was active in little league and local civic issues. In 1956, Phil helped manage the city of La Puente city-hood campaign. In 1958 he was elected to the La Puente City Council where he served until 1962. He was a local campaign manager for the John F. Kennedy 1960 Presidential campaign.

In the 1950's Phil Soto helped organize labor initiatives with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the United Farm Workers, working closely with the late Caesar Chavez. One of the many accomplishments of Phil Soto was to petition the Attorney General to release Caesar Chavez after he was arrested and beaten by police during the union's early organizing days. When the Attorney General refused, Phil rode a bus to Delano, CA, and spent the night in jail with Mr. Chavez to guarantee his protection. On a later occasion, he spent another night in jail with Dolores Huerta, the current UFW president.

In 1962, Phil was elected to the 50th District of the California Assembly; the first of two members of Latino heritage elected to serve in the assembly in the 20th century; the other being John Moreno.

As a California Assemblyman, Phil Soto was a pioneer and role model for future Latino community leaders and elected officials. Through his dedication to the principles of the Democratic Party, he became a champion of the rights of farm workers and human rights. He also fought to improve the quality of life for all Californians through his support of public education, water projects, and other public works projects. Phil was the first of many leaders to help define the role of Latinos in modern California politics.

In 1966, Governor Ronald Reagan's Republican sweep and Phil and Nell's opposition to the growing war in Vietnam left Phil without an assembly seat. But the call to public service remained strong and Phil accepted an appointment from President Johnson to help es-

tablish economic development and job training programs in east Los Angeles. During this time, he implemented the programs he had fought for during his legislative career.

In 1968, Phil Soto's commitment to labor, jobs and his advocacy for Latino rights and equality was recognized by the Robert Kennedy Presidential primary campaign in California and he was asked to serve as a key adviser.

In his later years, Phil played the role of teacher, role model, and senior adviser for a new generation of Latino leaders and elected officials. One early race was the unsuccessful city election in east Los Angeles, which, had it been successful, would have resulted in the election of his wife Nell and future State Senator Richard Polanco to the east Los Angeles City Council. In 1988, he successfully helped elect his wife to the Pomona City Council and secure an appointment to the board of directors of the air quality management district.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues assembled here to join with me in paying condolences to his survivors, Nell his wife and a Pomona City Council member, sons; Phil IV, Robert, Michael, Patrick, Tom, and daughter Anna.

“TAXPAYER VICTORIES”

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 1997

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the American Taxpayer. I am proud of the accomplishments of my Republican colleagues, under the leadership of Speaker GINGRICH, to provide meaningful tax relief for hard-working American's.

This year has truly been historic. The Republican-led Congress has given the parents of 41 million children under 17 a child tax credit. We have created education savings accounts to allow parents to begin saving for their children's education. We have cut the capital gains tax rate to encourage savings and investment, creating more jobs. And we have slashed the oppressive death tax rate so that family farms and businesses can stay in the family.

Mr. Speaker, I have read the letters and taken the calls from my constituents and I know our work to help the American taxpayer is still not done. The people of the 48th Congressional District Add their voice to the rest of America's in calling for more tax relief and a complete overhaul of the overburdensome IRS code.

Over the next several months, Republicans in Congress will continue to work on behalf of families and the hardworking parents that keep them together. This week, in several places across the Nation, Republican victories at the polls once again proved that taxes are the issue voters care about.

Mr. Speaker, we worked hard this year to give taxpayers their first tax cut in sixteen years. As we begin to prepare our agenda for 1998, lets make it another tax cutting year and lets win another victory for America's families.