

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on the legislative day of May 19, 2006 the House voted on a procedural motion to H.R. 5385, the Fiscal 2007 Military Construction-VA Appropriations Act. On House rollcall vote No. 173, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

RECOGNITION FOR REV. BOB
RUSSELL**HON. ANNE M. NORTHUP**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the career and service of the Reverend Bob Russell, who is retiring this month after forty years of ministry at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Throughout his time at Southeast, Rev. Russell has worked diligently to follow his faith in God wherever it might lead him. His contribution to the Louisville community is unparalleled and his impact on individual lives is immeasurable.

As a young man in Pennsylvania, Rev. Russell dreamed of coaching high school basketball. However, life would hold a different plan for him. During his senior year of high school, he felt a call into ministry. He enrolled in a seminary, graduating from Cincinnati Bible Seminary in 1965.

On June 12, 1966, Rev. Russell delivered his first sermon as pastor of a nascent Southeast Christian Church. Only four years prior, Southeast was founded with seventy-seven charter members. At the time of Rev. Russell's arrival, the church had reached a membership of 120. Within two years of his first sermon, the church had more than doubled to nearly 300 members. On Easter Sunday 1976, the church hosted 1,000 worshippers for the first time. Fourteen years later in 1990, 10,000 people worshipped at Southeast on Easter Sunday. And the church set its current record of 29,424 on Easter weekend 2004 over the course of five services.

Rev. Russell's career is not, measured solely by explosive church growth, but by the many ways the church under his leadership has expanded to meet the needs of our community. The church reaches its community through ministries in counseling, disaster relief, and prison support, among others. The Southeast Outlook newspaper began publication in 1995. Rev. Russell can also be heard nationally on his syndicated radio program, *The Living Word*.

Throughout his career of four decades in ministry, Rev. Bob Russell has strived to follow his faith in God and live a life of service to the Louisville community. We as a city have been blessed to have Rev. Russell among us for so many years. His loyalty to God, his family, his church, and our city has not gone unnoticed. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my gratitude for Rev. Russell and congratulate him on a lifetime in ministry and service that

will continue to touch Louisville even after his retirement.

TRIPLE CROWN WINNER
WHIRLAWAY AND THE ARMED
SERVICES**HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the outstanding civilian support of our Armed Services that was embodied by the Triple Crown winning-horse, Whirlaway, during the beginning of World War II. As a direct result of the fundraising enabled by the popularity and talent of Whirlaway, many USO Clubs around the country were established. As a congressionally chartered, nonprofit organization, that support U.S. troops and their families wherever they serve, the USO has also recognized the contribution that Whirlaway aided in the early 1940s.

Whirlaway accomplished some impressive feats as a sports figure, including the still-unbroken record for the fastest furlong ever run in the Kentucky Derby. As a war hero, Whirlaway was an irreplaceable symbol of unity and mutual support between our civilian population and the men and women who serve our country.

As we remember the brave soldiers who have served our country in uniform this Memorial Day, we should also remember the inspiring stories of those civilians who have demonstrated extraordinary support in the past.

May God bless our men and women in uniform and all civilians who remember them on this Memorial Day.

TRIBUTE TO MINISINK HOOK &
LADDER COMPANY #1 ON 100
YEARS OF SERVICE**HON. SUE W. KELLY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Ms. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, volunteer service is vital in the basic framework of our nation. Without those sacrificing their time, energy, and efforts for the benefit of others we could not advance as a society.

It is in this notion of service that those in need are given opportunity. It is because of people who dedicate their life to helping others that our communities flourish and lives are changed.

The spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in thousands of communities with the dedicated service provided by volunteer firefighters. Their reward is not monetary, but is in the lives they change, people they save and those they protect day in and day out.

On June 10, 2006, the Minisink Hook & Ladder Company #1 will celebrate 100 years of courageous service to the people of Orange County, New York. On behalf of the people of the 19th Congressional District, in recognition of a century of service I proudly commemorate this momentous achievement. I congratulate and wish the Minisink Hook & Ladder Company continued success in serving the public and keeping people safe.

AMENDING TITLE 49, UNITED
STATES CODE**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5449 changes the rules under which the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) negotiates with Federal employees unions, such as the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), to make the FAA abide by the exact same process that other government agencies do when they negotiate with Federal employees unions. Contrary to the claims of its opponents, H.R. 5449 does not allow NATCA to indefinitely prolong negotiations. H.R. 5449 allows the FAA to act to end negotiations and bring their case before a Federal mediation board who has power to resolve the dispute. H.R. 5449 would prevent the FAA from unilaterally imposing a contract on the air traffic controllers. In contrast, the current system may provide the FAA with the opportunity to drag out negotiations, so it can ultimately declare an impasse and impose a contract. Thus, the changes made in H.R. 5449 seem reasonable.

Some people, including many House of Representatives members with whom I usually agree, are claiming that H.R. 5449 will cost American taxpayers billions of dollars. This claim is based on an assumption that the final result of the mediation process established by H.R. 5449 will be significantly more costly to the taxpayer than the contract the FAA will impose on the controllers if H.R. 5449 fails to pass. However, under H.R. 5449, the dispute will be resolved by a Federal mediation panel whose members are appointed by the president. I am skeptical that a presidentially appointed mediation board will give an exorbitant package to NATCA, especially since the difference between the FAA's current proposal and the NATCA's last offer is less than a billion dollars. It is true that a future mediation panel may be populated by people appointed by an administration more friendly to the air traffic controllers than the current administration, but it is also possible that a future Congress would use its leverage in the current process to force the FAA to accept contracts tilted in favor of the NATCA. We should not judge procedural issues based on uncertain predictions about results.

Some opponents of H.R. 5449 complain that the air traffic controllers are overpaid. However, since the air traffic control system is government controlled and government financed, the wages of air traffic controllers are not set by the market. Instead, these wages are set by political and bureaucratic fiat. Absent a market, it is impossible to say the air traffic controllers' wages are too high or too low. In fact, given the importance of air traffic control, it is possible that, in a free market, some air traffic controllers may have higher incomes than they do now. One thing I can say for sure is that air traffic controllers would still have their jobs if the Federal government were limited to its constitutional functions since air traffic controllers perform a function that would be necessary in a free market.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5449 reasonably changes the process under which the FAA negotiates with Federal employees unions. H.R. 5449 does not favor one party

over another, and, contrary to the claims of its opponents, H.R. 5449 does not preordain the conclusion of the negotiations between the FAA and NATCA.

MEMORIAL DAY SPEECH BY
STAFF SERGEANT JOSEPH M.
DIMOND

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter the following Memorial Day speech into the RECORD. It was made by Staff Sergeant Joseph M. Dimond. I am sure that you, and all who hear these words, will be moved by this unforgettable tribute to those who have fallen in the service of their country:

MEMORIAL DAY

Good morning and happy Memorial Day!

Memorial Day means many different things to many different people. To some it means BBQ's and beer, to some its just another long weekend to relax, to some it's the beginning of summer, but to people like me, and I'm guessing people like you since you are here, it means a lot more!

Since I was a boy, Memorial Day has always had a special meaning to me. I remember at 8 and 9 years old following my father, a Korean War Vet, around East Lansdowne and Upper Darby while he and his fellow American Legion brothers fired off 21 gun salutes at all the memorials. I would run around collecting all the shells from the rifles and save them as my own little memorial. Afterwards, we would put flags on the graves of all the Veterans in Fernwood Cemetery. I'm not even sure if I understood completely what we were honoring, I just knew it was very important! I knew, that for some reason, every time I heard TAPS or the National Anthem played, I would get teary eyed, but I don't think I ever really grasped the importance of it all.

Unfortunately, over the past year I had the chance to find out first hand what it all meant, why I would cry, why I felt the way I've been feeling for my entire life. I have experienced many difficult times in my life, but nothing could prepare me for the last year! You see, I was in charge of security for the bomb squad for the entire city of Fallujah. While over there, we dismantled 362 roadside bombs and, unfortunately, got hit by some too.

One of the many downfalls of being with the bomb squad in the most violent city in Iraq is that whenever an American or Iraqi soldier is killed by a roadside bomb or suicide bomber, we have to go and make sure all of the ordnance that is in the vehicles when they blow up are stabilized, and removed before the mortuary affairs people can come in and remove the bodies, so long story short, we were forced to work around the bodies of every ally killed by a bomb in Fallujah and the surrounding area. While doing this, my team had to remain calm, keep our heads and not get tied up in what we were seeing, because the bomb squad was a huge target, and I needed to do my best to keep them safe while they focused on their jobs. We were successful most of the time, but did have some bad luck too. Since October 15th, six of my very good friends were killed on the streets of Fallujah, five of which happened while I was there, all in separate incidents. One happened a week after I left Iraq, while my friend John was finishing his last week of a 9 month tour.

These men were all heroes! Whatever your politics, whether you believe we should be in this war or not, whether you are Republican or Democrat, we are all Americans! And I want to make sure you all know this: every single soldier, sailor, airman, and marine over there is there for you! They all feel they are doing what they have to do to make life better for you, our kids and me. I'm not a politician, and this isn't the time or place for politics, but the #1 question I've been asked in the past 2 months since I've been home is "Do I think we should be there?" Well, my answer to that is very simple, I don't know if we should have gone over there, but I, like these men we honor today, was asked to go so I went. I'm an enlisted man, and leave that to the people that sit behind their desks and make the big decisions. What I do know as a grunt on the ground, looking these people in the eye, day after day, is that I've never seen or imagined the hate, evil or torture that man is capable of until now! I also have no doubt that these people that I was fighting hate you, they hate all of us because we believe in a different God, they hate us because we allow our daughters and sisters to walk around malls in belly shirts, they hate us because we are different from them, they hate us because we are free!

In an America filled with violent movies, video games and violent everything else, we've all become a little desensitized. I can't tell you how many times I've been asked by naive people, "How many people have you killed?" Like it is a cool thing or something. Only someone who hasn't seen or done the things I have would ask such a question with a smile on their face. And I try to be understanding of the fact that they haven't seen it, but at the same time I feel a responsibility to let them know that there is nothing cool about people losing their lives. Whether they are wrong or deserved it or not, there will be a family mourning, somewhere.

More importantly I feel the responsibility to explain to those people who may not know better, that regardless of what Hollywood may want you to believe, there is no glory in a twenty-something year old man dying violently in the dirt thousands of miles away from his home, away from family, and the people he loves. It is important to me that people recognize and understand how devastating it is when an American, a friend, dies in such a violent way. The hurt and grief one feels when witnessing a twenty-year-old kid, who you personally trained, die in a hellhole thousands of miles away from his home is indescribable! Promising to tell a man's unborn child that her daddy loved her while he bleeds to death because it is too dangerous for a helicopter to come into the city to medivac him is something no human being should have to ever experience. Listening to a friend ask as he is dying if you think God will forgive him for all the things he had to do over here is not glamorous in any way, shape or form.

But most importantly, I feel a responsibility to explain that these men that we honor today were not looking for Glory or medals or memorials! They were all just doing what they felt was right, they were men doing the job that nobody wants! Living in misery, so the people they love could live in happiness! Dying horrible deaths, so the ones they love can live on in peace! That is why they are heroes, and that is why they deserve our thoughts, time and respect at least for this one day of the year!

There is a saying in the war fighting community that says:

"We are the unwanted, doing the impossible, for the ungrateful." Well, now that I'm moving on to the civilian sector again, I'm here to say that not everyone is ungrateful my brothers!

I've seen enough bloodshed for twenty lifetimes! And I pray for peace just as every true warrior prays for peace!

For me, every day is Memorial Day, and it is because of men like these:

Mark Adams, killed by a roadside bomb at age 24, on October 15th 2005.

Joel Dameron, killed by a roadside bomb at age 27 on 30 Oct 2005, his wife has since had their baby girl.

Michael Presley, killed by a suicide bomber at age 21 on Dec 14th 2005.

Ryan McCurdy, killed at age 20 by a sniper while dragging a wounded Marine to safety on 5 Jan 2006.

Nick Wilson, killed at age 25 by a secondary bomb while dismantling another bomb on 12 Feb 2006. He had 4 days left in the country.

John Fry, killed at age 28 by a roadside bomb on 8 March 2006, 8 days after I left the country, and 6 before he was leaving.

So, today, when you are barbecuing or spending time relaxing with your family, please take a minute and remember these men who sacrificed so much, and remember their families who are living without husbands, fathers, sons and brothers. And if you see someone who doesn't take that time, remind them of all that is done for them!

I'm not much of a speaker, and I'm not sure if I did these men justice, but when I was asked to speak I felt like it was the least I could do to remind people that these men aren't just numbers to follow on the news, but men with families and lives that they gave up for you and me. I have no doubt that I will see these men's faces in my sleep every night, and think of them at least once a day for the rest of my life. I'm just asking you to take a moment out of one day a year to remember them and the many other Americans that died before them.

God Bless, and have a great Memorial Day!

KIRSTEN SHORTRIDGE—GATORADE
NATIONAL GIRLS SOFTBALL
PLAYER OF THE YEAR

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Kirsten Shortridge for being selected as the 2006 Gatorade National Girls Softball Player of the Year.

Of the more than three-hundred and fifty-thousand student girl athletes across the country, only one person is chosen to receive this award. The honor, which also factors in academic achievements and overall character, has been awarded for 20 years to athletes in ten different sports.

Kirsten is batting .554 with two home runs, eight triples and twenty-five RBIs. In 181 innings she has pitched 365 strikeouts, 21 shutouts and eight no-hitters, including three perfect games.

She maintains a 3.5 grade point average, is a member of the Circle of Friends, and is a lunch buddy, library buddy, peer mentor, volunteers at Northwood Church with the Revive program, and also volunteers for Special Olympics.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Ms. Kirsten Shortridge for her efforts and for her success in softball and her academics. Her dedication and commitment serve as an inspiration to all.