

THE BOND OF BROTHERS—THE
DOZEN RIPKOWSKIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, today I have the distinct honor of recognizing a family in the Second Congressional District in Texas where Veterans Day is a daily family event. If you looked up the word "patriot" in the dictionary, you would most likely find a photograph of the 12 Ripkowski brothers in Dayton, Texas.

The lives of all 12 brothers form a company of heroes that served in our military in various branches spanning from World War II to the Korean War. Most of them served in a time of war, and all 12 of them returned home. They truly were a band of brothers who fought for America.

Their family story began in the small town of Dayton, Texas, in the 1930s. Their parents, Stash and Mattie Ripkowski, had 12 sons and four daughters. That's right, 16 all-American children. Their names are Felix, August, Raymond, Bernie, Alex, Leon, Bill, Herman, Franklin, John, Mike, Stanley, Catherine, Virginia, Pearlina, and Anna Lee.

The Ripkowski family grew corn and cotton on their 200-acre farm. As World War II began, the brothers answered their country's call of duty to serve in the military one after the other.

Raymond served in the Air Force and was stationed in New Guinea. He was a radio operator and gunner. During his military service, he survived and recovered from an airplane crash. Bernie served in the Army and was stationed in Alaska during World War II. Felix served in the Army in Europe. August served in the Navy and was stationed in the Pacific. And Bill was also stationed in the Pacific, but he served in the United States Army. Stanley served in the Army during peacetime and then during the Korean War.

Today only 6 of the 12 Ripkowski brothers are still alive. Alex, the oldest of the surviving brothers, is 91. He served in the Army and was deployed in Europe during World War II. Mike joined the Air Force and served as a chief clerk for 2 years on the island of Okinawa. Herman served in the Army as an infantryman for 3 years, and he was a member of the 78th Lightning Division, which was the first division to cross the Rhine River in Germany towards the end of World War II in Europe. After crossing the river, German airplanes blew up the bridge, separating Herman and his division from the rest of the American troops. American troops quickly built a pontoon bridge in the former location of the blown-up bridge. At this point, Herman's division met up with Russian forces outside of Berlin shortly before the Germans surrendered. It was during this battle that Herman earned the Bronze Star for laying communications wire during enemy fire.

Leon served in the Army during World War II, and his tour of duty took him to Africa, Italy, and France, where he served in the infantry. By miraculous chance, he ran into his brother Felix in Tunisia, Africa during the Battle of El Guettar. Leon received five campaign stars while in the United States Army. Franklin served as a Merchant Marine during World War II dodging German submarines in the Atlantic. He crossed the Atlantic three times during his military service. Several years later Franklin was drafted again into the Army, and he served his country one more time, but this time during the Korean War.

John "Buster" Ripkowski served as a squad leader in the infantry division in the Army during the Korean War. He helped take care of ammunition for his entire infantry platoon.

All the brothers, except one, have spent the rest of their lives after the military in Dayton, Texas. Herman was the only one to move away from his family, and he moved to Liberty, Texas, which is 6 miles away.

What makes the Ripkowski brothers' story so remarkable is how humble and modest they are in describing their family's enormous military contribution to our great Nation. Their humility is best understood in their own words:

Mike said, "We did it to serve our country. We're just hard-working country folk."

"Thank God we are here and that all of us made it home," said Herman, when asked to describe his brothers and their service in the military.

"You had to serve your country," said John. "I enjoyed going into the service and doing my job."

This band of brothers believed that their service in the military was their duty as an American citizen. To them it was not for performing heroics or to gain medals but to answer the honorable call of duty for our country. "Medals didn't interest us," said Franklin. "Our minds were on doing our jobs and doing it better every day. Nowadays a lot of people don't care or put much of their heart into it. But the military trained you to put your heart into it. I wish every person in America would go into the military for 1 year. It would make a better person out of all of them."

The Ripkowski brothers' patriotic legacy of military service is one of the best examples of our "Greatest Generation" doing their job for America during the great World War II. They are an eternal example of the service and sacrifice given to protect freedom for our Nation. They're a good example for all of us, especially our younger generation.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, everybody in America, at least the vast majority of Americans, are very concerned about illegal immigration. And they want it stopped.

Back in the early 1980s, we passed a bill called the Simpson-Mazzoli bill. It was in about 1986, and it was supposed to stop illegal immigration. And what it ended up being was a magnet for more illegal immigration. It just simply didn't work. So today, instead of 2 or 3 million illegals in this country, we have got maybe 14, 15, 16 million. And we really need to deal with the problem.

One of the problems we have is that we are not enforcing our laws. Here in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States, a person can acquire an illegal driver's license, a fake, a fake Social Security card, a fake green card, and all they have to do is talk to somebody on the street.

My chief of staff lives over near a place here in Washington, D.C. called Adams Morgan. It's a very popular place, especially for young people. And the ABC News affiliate here in Washington, D.C., recently went down there with a camera and did an interview and watched what was going on as far as giving phony IDs to illegal aliens. And I want to read to you what happened. Here's what they said:

"On any given day, you see them walking up and down Columbia Road in Adams Morgan. As soon as you make eye contact with them, they try to offer you freedom as best they can.

"Seller: 'Green card or security card?'

"Buyer: 'Yes. What will that cost me?'

"Seller: 'The green card and Social Security card will cost you \$140. The driver's license alone will cost you \$120.'"

Now, they are selling fake IDs. And the people that attacked us on 9/11 had phony driver's licenses and had regular driver's licenses and they used them as ID to get on planes. And here in Washington, D.C., we have these people making phony ID cards, driver's licenses, green cards, Social Security cards, and they're selling them in broad daylight and we are not doing